

# UO employees mourn Taylor's death

**HONOR:** Friends and colleagues gathered in Johnson Hall, where Taylor worked, for the memorial service

By Regina Brown  
Higher Education Editor

Ruth Haag Taylor  
Spring 1996

*A sweet and caring friend full of loving kindness.*

The words on a plaque accompanying a memorial tree to be planted in Taylor's honor reflect an unforgettable woman who lives on in the memories of friends and colleagues, said those who attended her memorial service Thursday afternoon in Johnson Hall.

Taylor was shot to death in her home on Augusta Street a week ago Wednesday.

Taylor worked in Johnson Hall in the office of academic affairs.

"Ruth was thoughtful, kind and generous," said Lynn Buffing, who worked with Taylor.

Buffing was emotional as she shared stories of Taylor's acts of kindness toward herself and other co-workers. She told the crowd of mourners how Taylor made blouses for her friends at Christmas-time and of the genuine concern she showed for her colleagues.

"I am devastated by the loss of a friend and sister, and I share these memories today as a celebration of her life," Buffing said. "She lives on in our hearts, in our memory and in her spirit."

"Ruth's essence has truly touched me, and I feel honored and blessed to have known her. She leaves a legacy of compassion, love and inner-strength, and I for one am inspired to carry on."

Gerry Kissler, senior vice provost for academic affairs, spoke of the impact of Taylor's deaths on his life.

"That bullet tore her flesh, and it just kept on going," he said in a voice strained with anger. "It dug a canyon in my soul, and I think [it] dug a canyon in all of our souls."

"Somebody took advantage of that kindness and that sweet innocence that we all remember."

Taylor was deeply religious and would have forgiven her killer because of her kind heart and her Christian beliefs, Kissler said.

She earned her Masters in counseling from Northwest Christian College last summer. She ran a private practice as a marriage and family therapist in addition to her part-time job in the provost's office as a t assistant for academic affairs.

Taylor began working for the Oregon State System of Higher Education at Oregon State University in 1980. She transferred to the University in 1983 and began work in the provost's office in 1988.

Her kindness and generosity inspired those who knew her, Kissler said.

"Each of us will have to reach down a little deeper in ourselves to find something that Ruth gave us and then pass it on to somebody else," Kissler said. "In that way Ruth still lives in our hearts, in our memories ... In the love and caring of others."



ANDREW BRACKENSICK/EMERALD  
Dan Haag, brother of Ruth Taylor, embraces Sherrie McArthur at the memorial for Taylor.

## Husband suspected in Taylor's murder

By Brian Womack  
Community Reporter

The husband of Ruth Melody Taylor, who was fatally shot last week, is now a suspect in the police investigation of her murder, said Sgt. Rick Gilliam.

Michael Ray Taylor, 41, was the only person in the house at 1840 Augusta St. when his wife was murdered, Gilliam said. No witnesses were outside the house.

The suspect phoned Eugene police at 9:13 p.m. on April 3 to report that he had found his wife's body in the bathroom of his home.

Though Taylor is a suspect in the murder case, he has not been arrested.

"We're still working to build a strong case to make an arrest," Gilliam said. "It's too premature right now."

Ruth Taylor, 41, worked part-time as a management assistant for the senior vice provost of academic affairs, Gerald Kissler. She also maintained a private practice as a counselor.

"I hope they soon get whoever did this so justice is done," Kissler said.

Gilliam said he does not know when the investigation will close but hopes that it is soon.

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