



# Remember Gary Taylor: A Legendary Bronc

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Legendary Rider head coach Gary Taylor

Gary Taylor. A husband. A father. A wrestler. A coach. A friend. A true embodiment of what it means to bleed cranberry and grey at Rider University. Gary Taylor completely turned Rider's wrestling program upside down and one that was feared amongst its opponents during the 39 legendary years he spent as head coach of the program (1978-2017).

Throughout those 39 years, he accomplished what many strive to, and can never quite achieve. But through Gary's persistence, determination, and love for the sport of wrestling, he left behind a legacy at Rider University that will forever hold a special place in the hearts and minds of those who knew him.

Here are just some of the many accomplishments of Gary Taylor:

- His first All-American was Lou DiSerafino, who placed 3rd at 190lbs
- 17 Total All-American honors
- 15 Individual All-Americans (2 two-timers: John Carvalheira and Chad Walsh)
- In 1984, his team earned its 1st Conference Championship
- In 1997, his team was ranked 7th in the nation, and had 3 All-Americans
- 173 NCAA Qualifiers
- 14 Team Conference Championships
- 110 Individual Conference Champions

And finally, Gary ended his career with 442 dual-meet victories (3rd all-time winningest Division I wrestling coach), and a powerful impact on those around him when he retired from the Broncs program in 2017. Just one year later, in 2018, Gary was awarded the Lifetime Service Award by the National Wrestling Hall of Fame New Jersey Chapter.

Throughout his life, Gary was surrounded by people who shared an intense love of wrestling, including: Danica Taylor (daughter), Ron Taylor (brother), John Hangey (Rider University Head Coach), Lou DiSerafino (former wrestler and 1st All-American), Tim Morrison (former wrestler and 2nd All-American), Adam Derengowski (former wrestler), Rob Morrison (former wrestler), and TJ Morrison (former wrestler).

From left: Danica Taylor, Rider President Greg Dell'Omo, Coach Taylor, Rider AD Don Harnum

## **Danica Taylor**

**What was Gary Taylor like as a father?** He was truly the most incredible father anyone could have. My mom has health conditions and so she could no longer work many years ago. My Dad was the sole income. He always worked so hard to provide for our family. I remember in the evenings, he would read a story to me before bed. He would work a full day, sometimes coming home right before my bedtime, but would still make sure he read to me and with me before bed. Looking back, he was probably so exhausted, but I never knew it. He powered through to make sure he was able to provide for us while also being able to be home and spend time with his family.

**How did he separate "coach" from "father" at home?** I feel like they were combined in the best ways and separated in the best ways. The ways they were combined were always making sure that I was working hard in school and understanding responsibility. The ways they were separate was in the way that he would shut off "work mode" at home and just be there to talk with me about my life, watch the TV show Dallas together, and read together before bed.

**What were some of the most important life lessons your father taught you? And how have you been able to implement them throughout your life?** My father taught me that if you work hard, you will achieve your goals. The part about working hard included all the setbacks or problems that might arise while trying to achieve your goal. Instead of complaining, put that energy into finding a solution and always be relentless in the pursuit of your goals. My Dad was always a very humble person. He would never ever brag about his accomplishments. I am very much like him in that I am humble in my achievements. My achievements don't feel to me like these huge things that need fanfare. They are just what I worked hard for and so I accomplished them. To me, they are just the values he instilled in me. You work hard, you achieve. He showed me that you can have a quiet kind of pride. Your accomplishments and your heart will shine all on their own by your hard work, determination, and the good person that you are. These values he taught me are the reason I have a wonderful teaching job, own my own home, earned three masters, and started my own little fiber art business.

### **What were the beginning years of your father's life like at Rider University?**

The beginning years for my Dad were difficult. When he started he told everyone that he wanted to bring both eastern and national recognition to the Rider Wrestling program and he was laughed at. It literally seemed impossible without the funding and resources needed to try to compete with the larger schools that were always in the spotlight.

**What made your father so successful at Rider University?** While most people would have been discouraged by seemingly being up against impossible odds, that didn't stop him. He got busy finding a way to make it happen. To him, it was going to happen so that was his mindset and that is how he coached. For him, it was a realistic goal, but not for anyone else.

**You mentioned that your dad was more than a coach to the men in which he coached. Can you explain what he did that made him stand apart from the other Division I coaches?** My Dad looked at his wrestlers as way more than athletes on his team. They were like the sons he never had. He cared so deeply about them on a personal level. If he felt that there was any way he could possibly help one of his wrestlers, whether it be building out his attic to give a wrestler a place to live off campus, helping with funds for tuition, listening and giving life advice, or giving some guitar lessons after practice, that was what he would do. My Dad was all about connections. He was such a caring person and always valued his connections and relationships with the people around him.

**How does your father relate to the term "underdog?"** Well, my Dad would definitely have been considered an underdog when he started. He referred to the story of David and Goliath when explaining what he had done with the program. When he started out, he was David who seemed so very highly unlikely to be able to defeat Goliath. David couldn't compare in size and skill. No one would have put their money on David defeating Goliath in battle. I feel that this speaks to the values my Dad had that helped him build an incredible D1 program that seemed unlikely. Those values are having heart and courage, being committed to your purpose, always believing you can achieve, and being resilient when the setbacks happen.

**Favorite Memory:** My Dad teaching me guitar on his mini Martin (because when he tried to teach me on a regular-sized guitar, I said my hands were too small for it). Those times, and that guitar, are so special to me.

**Funniest Memory:** Whenever Paula Abdul's Straight Up song would come on, we would look at each other, and sing in a silly way to each other, the part that goes, "A ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba."

## **Ron Taylor**

**What was Gary Taylor like as a brother?** Gary was smart, compassionate, and very down to earth. He didn't make rash decisions. He was always someone our whole family depended on. He was the rock of our family, and was extremely thoughtful in everything he did. He would call me once a week to check up on me, and I'll miss that very much.

**What were some of the most important life lessons that Gary taught you? And how have you been able to implement those lessons throughout your life?** He was very much like my father in that he believed in treating people with respect. The saying goes, "Treat people the way you want to be treated." But, if you took that as a weakness and you tried to bully him, that would be a mistake. He would cut to the chase.

**Growing up, you and Gary were inseparable. Can you describe those early years, and decades following?** During the summer, we had 6-8 boys in our neighborhood and we would play baseball most of the day. We had our own field down across the railroad tracks. One of the parents from the neighborhood would mow the grass so we always had a fresh field to play in. Gary and I were both pitchers, so we would practice pitching daily. He would catch me, then I would catch him. When it got cold, we would play tackle football. Many times, Gary and I would be in the backyard playing tackle against each other. When we couldn't go outside, we would be upstairs wrestling each other.

When we got to high school, we were each other's biggest fans. We spent many Sundays in our

bathroom alongside the gas heaters. We would put all of our sweat gear on and work out with the heat as high as we could, so we could lose a couple of pounds. Once we lost the weight, we would go downstairs and eat something. Then, as we got older, we both got into coaching and would talk on the phone weekly about wrestling.

**What was so special about the brotherhood you shared with Gary, and how did it influence/impact your life?** If I ever had a problem, Gary was the one I would call. He always had good sound advice. He was someone that I always looked up to because he had such a level-headed nature. I was, and still am, very impulsive. I try to be more like him. Sometimes I succeed, and sometimes I don't. He definitely has made me think more about what is important in life. Family was very important to Gary, and I feel that my family is more important to me every single day. I never thought I would lose my brother, but here we are, and I'm doing the best I can.

**You mentioned that Gary was mentally the toughest sibling. Can you explain why you believe that to be true?** Gary wasn't afraid of anyone. He would go against anyone. He didn't get nervous. When he had to wrestle someone tough, I would always get so nervous that I couldn't always do my best. That stuff didn't bother Gary. He felt as though he could beat anyone he wrestled. Mentally, he didn't let his nerves get the best of him. Even when we were coaching, Gary always conveyed confidence, while I was always nervous. When he was coaching, he made his wrestlers think that they could beat anyone.

**Your dad stated, "Ron, that's the best friend you'll ever have." Can you explain the story in which that quote came about?** And, what does that mean to you and future generations? I think I was either in 8th or 9th grade and my dad pulled me aside when I wasn't being very nice to Gary. My dad said, "Ron, that's the best friend you'll ever have" and of course, he was right. From that point on, Gary and I have been best friends. It taught me that no matter what, family is the most important thing. I've tried to convey this to all of my kids as well. Friends will come and go, but family will always be there for you.

**What were the beginning years of Gary's life like at Rider University?** The biggest struggle was convincing the wrestlers that they were better than what they thought. He always had great confidence in his wrestlers abilities, and he conveyed that to his wrestlers in as many ways as possible.

**What made Gary so successful at Rider University?** Gary had all the leadership qualities for the job at Rider. He was very decisive once he made a final decision because he did his homework before a decision had to be made. He also had a knack for picking really good wrestlers. We would go to Sections and Districts. Each of us would pick who we thought would win, and 90% of the time, Gary was right and I was wrong.

**Favorite Memory:** I always loved listening to him play guitar and singing. But the most memorable experience was watching him be inducted into the Greenville Hall of Fame. All of our siblings were together and it was a special moment for us, and especially Gary.

**Funniest Memory:** When Gary called me while he was at college. He told my mom and dad that he missed the Mercer Exit on Interstate 80. My dad asked where he was, and he said, "Las Vegas." Gary went to Clarion University, so Interstate 80 was the easiest easy to travel from home to the University. Needless to say, my dad was not happy. I thought it was funny though, and so did Gary.

**Favorite Gary-ism:** "It is what it is." and "If it sounds too good to be true, it is."

### **Coach John Hangey**

**What did Gary Taylor mean to you as a coach?** Gary was the exact kind of coach that knew how to motivate his wrestlers. He always cared and looked out for your best interest. He also had very high goals and aspirations for his athletes and he got you to buy into them! Coach Taylor was a coach that you wanted to do well for because of his commitment to you as an individual!

**What did Gary Taylor mean to you in your personal life?** Gary was like a second father to me. He helped me develop into the person I am today and took no credit for any of it. He helped me become my best version of a student-athlete, a coach, a mentor, a friend, a husband and a father.

### **What were some of the most influential experiences in which you shared?**

There were so many but here are a few. In 1997, we finished the dual meet season ranked 7th in the nation and to go through that season together was so impactful for a young coach and team development. In 1993, when I was an All-American, the hug we embraced was a culmination of time, effort, mutual respect and love for the process and each other. Naming our competition mat after him as a surprise was another great moment, being there for his 400th victory at home and his last-ever home match are moments I'll never forget!

**Do you believe that Gary has influenced your coaching style at Rider University, and if so, how?** I am the coach I am today because of Coach Taylor. We have very similar personalities when it comes to coaching, so I tried to mirror my development after him. He emphasized the importance of relationships to be successful at a smaller school like Rider and that's the core of my coaching style.

**What does it mean to you to carry on the tradition of coaching at Rider University, given the knowledge and experience Gary has shared with you over the years?** I take this responsibility very seriously. There is not a day that goes by that I don't think about what would Coach Taylor do in a specific situation. We had many talks weekly after his retirement in the wrestling office and he would always give me his thoughts and encouragement. It is my goal to further cement Coach Taylor's legacy here at Rider.

**Favorite Memory:** When Jason Bryant announced Coach Taylor's retirement on the third day of the NCAA's when we finished the tournament with two All-Americans. He was so humble, yet honored, but never liked the attention. Chad Walsh had to make sure that he stayed and was properly recognized by the fans.

**Funniest Memory:** When Coach Taylor and Adam Derengowski were bickering at the 1991 NCAA's in Iowa (Adam's Senior year when he placed 3rd) over the rental car and each other's driving skills. The whole travel party just sat back, listened and cracked up laughing at the exchange.

Coach Taylor and current Rider head coach John Hangey

**Lou DiSerafino**

**What did Gary Taylor mean to you as a coach?** Gary was the reason that I became an All-American. Not only because of his immense technical wrestling technique knowledge, but mostly because he got me to believe in myself and my ability to beat the best in the country.

**What did Gary Taylor mean to you in your personal life?** Gary became a long-time personal friend. I will miss him immensely. Gary sang "The Wedding Song" along with my Sister-in-law at my wedding. I would go to see him perform at local clubs in New Hope, PA after his Rider coaching retirement. Our relationship grew over time from Coach-Athlete to personal friends. We touched base once or twice a month on topics ranging from wrestling to his music career. Gary was always the one on who I would bounce my tough issues off of. His sound, right-to-the-point guidance, always served me well. He said the things that needed to be said, that maybe you didn't necessarily want to hear, but that you knew were true, and left you to make your decision. He did this in wrestling, and in life.

**What did Gary Taylor mean to you in the spiritual component of your life?** Although he was not overt with his faith, Gary's faith was always there behind how he lived his life, coached his teams, and everything he did. He was appreciative of the gift of salvation, and challenged his teams and individuals to use all the talents and gifts they have been given to be their best, and would accept nothing less for them. Like Bach's philosophy in his work "Music's only purpose should be the glory of God and the recreation of the human spirit," I think Gary approached his work in this way. He was kind of like a sneaky preacher, weaving his faith into life lessons that applied to his coaching. His subtle, humorous, "take it or leave it" references to common sense or advice made you think that he was kind of cool, and surprisingly deep.

**Throughout the decades in which you were close, what were some of the most influential experiences in which you shared?** Gary was such a close friend and shared some of my family's most intimate moments. My wife LeeAnn and I asked Gary to sing "The Wedding Song," along with my Brother Rob's wife Diane at our wedding ceremony. Gary has known my wife and children, and my Brother Rob's and was close to our parents too. On the wrestling side, I stayed at Rider for two years after graduation as an assistant coach, and got my MBA. That enabled me to experience the beginning of Gary's legacy at Rider with two more years of watching him work.

**What were some of the early years like for Gary as a coach?** Gary had a vision when he came to Rider. Right during his interview, he made the bold statement that he was going to get Rider wrestling to a major power in the sport on a National level. Nobody believed that was possible for such a small school at the time. At his first conference tournament, he had three 1st seeds that year, in a conference where you had to take 1st place in your weight to get to the NCAA. Dave Doll, my Brother Rob, and I all were seeded 1st in three consecutive weight classes, and we all three lost in the finals, costing Gary his 1st trip to the NCAAs. Gary never wavered. He just doubled down on his commitment and the next year (Gary's 2nd year as Rider coach) got Rider its 1st wrestling All-American.

**What did/does it mean to you to become the 1st All-American for Gary Taylor?** Being the 1st All-American for the Rider wrestling program is an honor that gains significance as the program grows and increases notoriety, with each new All-American added. I feel like that accomplishment was the start of something bigger than just an individual milestone, and rather marked the emergence of a program that had been developed and nurtured by our 1st coach Barry Burtnett (who started the program, and recruited me and my brother) and was now ready, with Gary, to burst onto the national NCAA wrestling scene.

Quick story about being the 1st All-American. . . In 2011 the NCAA Wrestling Championships were at the Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Rider was the host institution. I was asked to be one of the people to hand out the award medals to the All-Americans at the Championships ceremony. That year, Utah Valley had their 1st All-American, Ben Kjar at 125lbs. While handing out the medals I had a chance to speak with Ben when congratulating him. I shared with him about our common experience and told him that he had done something special, and would be forever remembered as the first at Utah Valley.

**How does Gary Taylor define the word "inspiration" or "leadership?"** Gary was appreciative of his wrestlers who stepped up as examples, or who set a standard for their teammates, either as team captains or as individuals. Gary would support their role on the team, and the tough decisions that they sometimes made about the team standards and expectations. He allowed them to grow, make some mistakes, and develop into leadership roles. He recognized the value of leadership coming from the ranks vs. coming from the coaching staff and encouraged those willing to step into that role.

**Can you share your experience of leaving the sport for a short period of time, and how Gary impacted your decision in returning to the mat?** Yes. I left wrestling after getting my MBA to start my career. I felt though that my wrestling career was unfinished and I still had more in me. I spoke to Gary about it and he said you have your whole career to make money, but only this time to know how far you can go in wrestling. So after two years of working I quit my job and tried out for the 1984 LA Olympics. I made it as far as the final US trials, placing fifth. Best decision I could have made. I had great experiences that year, met some lifelong friends, and got to travel representing the US team in many matches and tournaments. Also, I know that I tried for the Olympic spot and left nothing on the table in my career. I would have always wondered and regretted not trying. That would have been haunting.

**Gary's technical abilities were unmatched by other Division I coaches. Can you share some of the ways he expressed those technical abilities?** Gary was very strong in his technical wrestling knowledge, understanding the impact of factors such as physics and leverage and angles and flexibility and strength. He also had a photographic visual memory and could recall very minute details of matches you were in, and subtle changes needed in specific positions that would change the outcome of the situation. He was like a savant for seeing a situation and knowing the exact modification required to win the situation or move. He was also super good at being able to transfer his knowledge to others who were willing to listen. Everything he advised technically worked, for a particular opponent, or for the best opponent, because his guidance was always based on physics and leverage. i.e. "If you move your hand down here, he won't be able to pull his leg back no matter what he tries."

**What principles did Gary instill in you and the other wrestlers which he coached, and how have they influenced your life?** Accountability, not accepting less for yourself than the talents and gifts you were given will allow. I try to think about that and live up to the philosophy of doing everything worth doing "for the Glory of God." Otherwise, what's the point?

**Favorite Memory:** When Dan and Tim Morrison (who were unknown at that time, coming from the NAIA) beat two multi-time All-Americans from Penn State and Clarion at the Penn State Tourney. Dan told the story at Gary's funeral about Gary's quick wit, from that tourney. Gary was wearing a 3-piece suit and the Clarion coach (who Gary wrestled for when he was a student at Clarion) tried to get into Gary's head, saying Gary you look like you're going to a funeral. Gary, without missing a beat replied. "I am, we're going to bury 2 All-Americans tonight."

Dan and Tim both won that night. Tim had suffered 2 broken ribs in his quarterfinals match and still won the tournament.

**Funniest Memory:** Gary was so young when he started coaching that he looked like one of his wrestlers. After a match at Bucknell, the Bucknell wrestlers were kind enough to invite us to their fraternity party, which we snuck out of the hotel and went to. Later that year at the conference tournament at Drexel, the Bucknell team manager sat next to me and Gary after weigh-ins and asked if our coach ever found out about sneaking out of the hotel to go to the frat party. Gary just said, "he has now." She was like "Whoops, sorry guys."

**Favorite Gary-ism:** Gary was always pushing the envelope, sometimes getting in trouble for his uncompromising commitment to excellence. I remember him saying onetime "I don't care, they can fire me if they want. . . I was looking for a job when I found this one." I always tried to live up to that philosophy.

Coach Taylor with Tim Morrison and his three sons

## **Tim Morrison**

**What did Gary Taylor mean to you as a coach?** Gary Taylor was always a thoughtful listener, there aren't that many true listeners that still exist in today's society. In addition, Gary was a straight shooter, telling you how things were in a way that you couldn't even question his message. I can't remember him ever complaining about anything going on in his personal or professional life, never wanting to burden anyone else with his challenges. He was probably the most selfless person I've ever known. This man was loyal, truly loyal, wrestling was his life and even after retirement, he bled Rider wrestling.

**What did Gary Taylor mean to you in your personal life?** I will miss his random calls just to check in with me and my family. He truly cared even after 40 years had passed.

**Throughout the decades in which you were close, what were some of the most influential experiences in which you shared?** Well, it is pretty unique that all three of my sons were wrestlers and also all wrestled for Gary so we had 12 straight years of cheering them all on at Rider!

### **What were some of the early years like for Gary as a coach (first 1-2 years)?**

Well, I didn't have issues with Gary as he knew how to inspire and get the best out of everyone. Also, it didn't hurt that I didn't lose many matches in my 3 years at Rider, just 9! Actually, I think that is my only record left that still stands, after Chad Walsh, just a few years ago, broke my pin record (of course he had 4 years to do it!!)

**The story of how you and Gary met is quite unique; some may even say it happened by chance. Can you please share the way in which you met?** After wrestling my freshman year at Messiah College, I had transferred to Penn State, because I wanted to wrestle Division 1. Since I had already transferred to Penn State without being recruited, they weren't really interested in providing me with any scholarship or financial aid assistance. So while I was back home for Christmas 1979, I had gone up to my Reynolds High School wrestling room to workout with their upperweights. It just so happened that Gary Taylor was also at the Reynolds practice with a couple of his Rider Wrestlers getting in a workout on their way to the Wilkes Open tournament. The more we talked about my situation, Gary seemed more and more interested



and told me to meet him early the next morning and fill out some paperwork and that he would call me in three days. As promised he called me and made me an offer that I couldn't refuse and I told him I would come to wrestle at Rider. Keep in mind this was 1979, with no internet, no iPhones, or MapQuest, in fact, I wasn't even sure how to spell Rider and only that it was in NJ. So I announced to my parents that I was going to go wrestle at Rider when I got off the phone. The next day I drove to PSU, withdrew from my classes and then got a map and drove to Rider and signed up for the Spring semester, the rest is history.

**What did/does it mean to you to become the 2nd All-American for Gary Taylor?** It was definitely an honor, but not a surprise to Gary, he knew I was capable and instilled the confidence and mental preparation necessary for anyone to achieve the podium of the top 8 wrestlers in the nation.

**Favorite Memory:** His demeanor and quirkiness, he was full of one-liners.

**Funniest Memory:** He dropped me off at the Penn State hospital after winning in the semifinals to get my ribs x-rayed, then took the rest of the team to go eat and never came back to pick me up. So, I ended up hitchhiking a ride in the back of a Super Beetle to Rec Hall for the finals in which I wrestled with 2 broken ribs and beat an NCAA runner-up. Gary asked me how I got back to the gym, to which I replied, I have one more match to win today.

**Adam Derengowski**

**What did Gary Taylor mean to you as a coach?** Coach Taylor was always a sincere and authentic leader, so it was easy to build trust in him and the expectations he had for you. He was easy to laugh with the guys and I know he appreciated all the personalities we had on the team during my time. From a wrestling mindset perspective, Coach Taylor worked very hard to build my confidence over the five years I wrestled for him. It was the superpower I needed to be the best I could be, on my own, it was lacking. I appreciate that mental training investment more than any technique he shared.

**Throughout the decades in which you were close, what were some of the most influential experiences in which you shared?** I know Coach Taylor felt the excitement of big wins and the pain of tough losses for all his guys over 39 years. There were two moments of big wins and the post-match hugs that I know he was just as pumped as I was during my time. The first was the NWCA All-Star match win and the second was after the 3rd place match at the NCAA's both during my senior year. There were many more post-match tough loss moments where he had to build me up again that led to those embraces and all were worth it.

**You and Gary shared a love of music, can you please explain what role he played in that particular aspect of your life?** Three years after I graduated and moved back to New Jersey, Gary and I would find time to play music together. During that time, he would share songs that he wrote and I admired his ability to create original music. Our little jam sessions grew into a larger group and then a band. He was an awesome lead guitarist and could always drop an attention-getting solo in the cover songs that we played. During this time, I was inspired to write my first song and Gary set me up with a friend of his to record the song in a home studio. He also sang the harmony on that recording. Since that first original song, I've been able to create a few more for my wife and family over the years. He has always provided positive feedback on the music and I know he was proud.

**Gary taught you to have a mantra in your life, and you've continued that tradition within**

**your own family. Can you share the mantra your family currently lives by, and what it means to you?** "Best is yet to come", my wife and 4 kids all know it well. There is plenty of coaching that goes on as a parent and I think this phrase for our family is foundationally important. My wife Debbie and I have always coached our kids to have a base of hard work, dedication and persistence as a winning formula—you won't always get the best grade, get the top award or promotion, but if you live with those guiding principles you will eventually find success. The best is yet to come is about always having hope for the future and I think all of this started with what I learned from my coaches and especially Gary Taylor.

**Favorite Memory:** I'm so grateful for my time at Rider University and especially with the wrestling team and Gary Taylor. My favorite moment was that special embrace after my last NCAA match in my senior year. I know he was happy for me, my family, the program and the school.

**Funniest Memory:** I remember being packed in a rental car in a snowy Iowa City at the NCAA's in 1991 with Coach Taylor driving, John Hangey, Mike Bartholomew, our assistant coach, our trainer and all of the bags. I was complaining and asking if we could just rent a second car as I was covered with a bag in the back seat. At the time he was slightly irritated by me. This experience became funny after the fact and we have told the story many times and it always brings about a good belly laugh when discussed.

**Favorite Gary-ism:** "Get in, get out, or get run over"...this was such an important phrase that he repeated with me. I Googled it and it seems to be an original Gary-ism. To me, it meant that I had to work hard and get better every day or else you will see your competitors race by you.

## **Rob Morrison**

**What did Gary Taylor mean to you as a coach?** Besides the amount of knowledge, he was very good at telling you what you wanted to hear and what you needed to hear. Too many coaches are focused on constantly trying to make people feel good and not addressing how to make them better. He could walk that line like it was like second nature to him. Division 1 wrestling is tough and very transparent, you need to be lifted up and brought down at the right times.

**What did Gary Taylor mean to you in your personal life?** In a lot of ways, he was like a grandfather. Coincidentally, I lost a huge role model my freshman year (my Pap) and he kind of filled that void for me. Mostly, it was because he was a really good listener and was always willing to share advice when he could. He wouldn't impose or plant the idea, he would lead you to it. It's all the stuff that you don't really learn to fully appreciate until you grow up a bit, but I couldn't have been luckier. He was a great man.

**Throughout the decades in which you were close, what were some of the most influential experiences in which you shared?** I've known him for as long as I can remember. Growing up we always made it out for a couple Rider matches every year, he used to stay at our house when he was in the area, would take time to watch our matches and give feedback (which is hilarious looking back, because it'd be some random JH or Elem. matches, but he'd watch just as intently as if it was a college match), and of course, he recruited and coached our entire family. It would've been easier for him to not care and just expect to get another Morrison on the team, but he did care and it never stopped at any point (while being recruited, while a competitor, and now as a coach too).

**Favorite Memory:** You always knew what kind of food you were getting after a competition by how well we did. If it was bad, we got Subway, if it was good, he'd take us somewhere legit (restaurant, hidden gems, etc.). It was after the Keystone Tournament and we did pretty well, so we ended up going somewhere good. I was scrambling to find my stuff to get off the bus and eat as much as I could for the next hour. I had these holey, torn jeans on and as I'm walking up to the place to go in he says "Hey Morrison, you have all them holes in your jeans. Next thing you know, you're going to lose your wallet and someone's going to have a new stereo!" Fast forward a couple months later, we're leaving Clarion and he takes us to a Steakhouse and when we get the check, he can't find his wallet (it was on the bus). So naturally, there were a lot of "Uh oh, looks like someone's getting a new stereo!"

Also, there was my first college match and it was against a tough Lehigh team. The place was packed with Lehigh people, they packed the arena and were rowdy, and both TJ and I pinned our guys, which helped put the nail in the coffin for the match. It was just really cool to be able to start as a freshman, with my older brother on the same team, both of us pinning, with the coach that took a chance on our Dad over 25 years ago, and experiencing it again with us. Just a very cool moment.

**Funniest Memory:** Basically, we didn't have a good weekend and he was wound up about it that following Monday. We're all in the room getting ready for practice and he storms in and yells "I'm taking over practice and we're doing it like the old days!"; someone replied, "Ahh, so like how the Dinosaurs did it?". The entire room erupts into laughter (including him) and then he proceeded to put us through about 2.5 hours of hell. There were some other things said that day, but it was just funny how he could laugh at the nonsense and then immediately get back to work. I'll never forget that smirk he had the whole time.

**Favorite Gary-ism:** "What the hell is this music??" (this was frequent and valid), "You have to use your feet like another set of hands. Back in the day, they used to call me Terrible Toes!"

## **TJ Morrison**

**What did Gary Taylor mean to you as a coach?** Gary Taylor taught me a lot about humility in how he dealt with athletes. He was very talented at seeing a wrestler from a bigger-picture situation, not reacting to mistakes or personal flaws in the moment. He handled situations with class and always gave his wrestlers an opportunity to improve their situations, whether it be personal or just going through a losing streak where they are not performing to their best. I think this was one of his top talents as a coach that allowed him to truly invest in his wrestlers.

**What did Gary Taylor mean to you in your personal life?** This may be a little different, being from the Morrison family, but Gary Taylor was always an extension of our family. It felt like he was always personally part of our family. With that also came the responsibility to hold myself to a higher standard and deliver on the qualities and leadership that he expected from me over the 5 years I spent wrestling for him.

**Throughout the decades in which you were close, what were some of the most influential experiences in which you shared?** I think the biggest influential experience that transcends into professional life for me is the mentality of losing is never fatal and winning is never final. He was extremely influential in making me understand to appreciate the process, when you lose - learn from it, when you win - continue getting better, there's more to accomplish.

**Favorite Memory:** Team meetings were always the best, and you can only be a Rider Wrestler

to truly know what I mean by this. You never knew what to expect when coming into those meetings.

**Funniest Memory:** The time at VA Duals when we had one of our wrestlers who was being a little too soft in nursing an injury and he randomly fell down in the middle of a match. When he fell down, Gary was staring up into the stands. Hangey asked him what he was looking at, he simply replied: "I'm looking for the sniper, where is he?" It was a comical way to deal with a situation where a wrestler was being soft. He was always very good at having quippy one-liners and short sayings.

**Favorite Gary-ism:** "The move works, you don't work."

It's quite clear to see the immense impact, and overall legacy, that Gary Taylor left behind on those he had the opportunity to surround himself with throughout 39 incredible years at Rider University. His accomplishments and life experiences will forever be a part of the Broncs program, continuing to shape future generations of wrestlers.

In remembering Gary, those he loved always recalled his quick wit and impeccable one-liners. Here are a few Gary-isms that will never be forgotten:

- "Get this one guy."
- "Spread out! If a bomb goes off, it will get all of you."
- "Cool, clear water."
- "They put a man on the moon AND they brought him back."
- "Train your brain for pain."
- "Now get on the bus! We're going to Pizza Hut."
- "Get in, Get out, or Get run over."
- "You're either getting better or you're getting worse, you do not stay the same."
- "My boy beat him."
- "Keep your head up!"
- "My boy will take him."
- "Age and experience: can't replace it."
- "The move works, you don't work."
- "I've forgotten more wrestling than you guys have ever known."

- "Terrible toes."
- "If you put the cart before the horse, it doesn't go anywhere."

In loving memory of Gary Taylor; a true wrestling underdog, and real-life hero.