

Promises made

Hills couple reaches for the stars – and some relaxation

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

When Farmington Hills residents Carolyn Clifford and Frank Taylor first got together, she promised to join him for a jazz concert and he promised to move with her to her beloved hometown.

Taylor, food and beverage director at the Troy Marriott, and Clifford, healthy living reporter and weekend anchor at WXYZ-TV, have kept those promises.

When the couple met three years ago in Cary, N.C., Taylor was running his own restaurant and was already a veteran of the food and beverage industry. So it seemed natural that he would try winning Clifford's heart through wining and dining – and jazz concert tickets.

"He had a nice set-up there for me," Clifford said, recalling the elegant table setting complete with candles and a gourmet dinner.

Now Clifford and Taylor are married, and living in a city she has always considered home – Farmington Hills. They have lived here eight months since moving from Pittsburgh.

"I told him he couldn't marry me unless we came back (to Farmington Hills)," Clifford said.

"I can really adjust easily. Over the years he has become accustomed to moving. The biggest adjustment was when he moved from balmy North Carolina to chilly Pittsburgh."

Frank Taylor
—Resident

Both are in their second marriages and live with three children.

Luckily, Taylor, a Texas native, didn't mind making that promise.

"I can really adjust easily," he said. Over the years he has become accustomed to moving. The biggest adjustment was when he moved from balmy North Carolina to chilly Pittsburgh.

"It was somewhat of a shock," he said.

But living in Pittsburgh helped prepare him for the cooler Michigan weather.

"I have found that when you compare Michigan to Pittsburgh, there are a lot of things to do here," Taylor said. "There's great

entertainment here."

Like many other modern couples trying to "have it all," they are each working 40 to 60 hours weekly, raising children and treasuring any precious time they have together. Even if it's only a weekend trip to the grocery store.

"It's pretty tough trying to juggle everything," Taylor said. "Carolyn's schedule is hectic some days."

Children living with them include daughter Arielle, 9, and son, James, 6. A nephew, Kenny, also lives with the couple. Taylor's daughter, Courtney, from his first marriage lives in Texas. Another family member living with them is their chihuahua, Pepper.

Carolyn works weekends anchoring the news and Taylor tries to keep his weekends flexible. Sunday is a designated "family day."

When they manage to capture more than a couple minutes together, they enjoy just sitting back and relaxing.

"We're pretty much homebodies," Clifford said. "We like to just kick back and watch TV."

Clifford said her daughter, Arielle, likes to boast about her mother being on television, but her son, James, is more cavalier.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BEEBE

Committed: Frank Taylor and Carolyn Clifford say that despite their busy schedules, including raising children and a dog, they have designated Sunday as a family day.

"He doesn't care one way or another," she said. Now that Clifford is back in

Michigan, her big goal is to make a linksman out of Taylor, who has never golfed. She bought

him golf clubs three years ago. "They're still collecting dust," Clifford said.

FARMINGTON NOTABLES

Hills resident joins United Way

Ebony Howard of Farmington Hills recently became a new staffer at the United Way of Oakland County. As campaign coordinator, she will be responsible for planning and managing many of the employee United Way campaigns during the fall fund drive. Howard completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Michigan and recently earned her master's

degree in nonprofit management from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. Since graduation, she worked for the Michigan State University extension as a 4-H learning coordinator.

Service excellence award

Marilyn Stein, a house person at the Best Western Executive Hotel & Suites in Farmington Hills, won the hotel category of the 1999 Recognition of Service Excellence awards. The

ROSE awards are sponsored annually by the Metropolitan Detroit Convention & Visitors Bureau in an effort to raise the level of service delivered throughout the Detroit area.

She was nominated for the award by Ernie Beckler, general manager of the of the Best Western. Other area winners included Jetson Trotty, a utility worker at Burton Manor in Livonia, and Mike Brown of Redford, a chauffeur with All Star Limou-

sine of Royal Oak.

Winners received Southwest Airlines Tickets, DoubleTree Hotel certificates and cash. All nominees received a rose lapel pin and certificate of appreciation.

Student wins award

Kobey Ergas Shwayder of Farmington Hills was named a United States National Award Winner in science. Less than 10 percent of all students are recog-

nized by this award.

Shwayder, who attends East Middle School, was nominated for the national award by Darlene Egbert-Oliver, a teacher at the school. Shwayder will appear in the United States Achievement Academy Official Yearbook, which is published nationally.

Shwayder is the son of Aimee Ergas and Tor Shwayder of Farmington Hills.

Nursing grads named

Joy Hendren of Farmington Hills was among Oakwood Healthcare System's first group of parish nursing graduates. The nurses completed the program at the University of Detroit-Mercy. The parish nursing program, the first of its kind involving Oakwood Healthcare System nurses, is a 10-week course designed to help nurses work with members of their own faith communities to improve the health of the community.

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