



New AAP president

Hot button issues helped Dr. Tayloe find his voice

by **Stacy St. Clair** • *Correspondent*

Months before David T. Tayloe Jr., M.D., FAAP, assumed the AAP presidency, his leadership already had been tested and, many believe, defined.

It was April 2, 2008, and Dr. Tayloe had agreed to appear on “Larry King Live” with actress Jenny McCarthy to discuss autism and vaccines. The hour-long program spiraled into an emotional, venomous debate in which McCarthy accused the Academy of endangering children by advocating immunizations.

Dr. Tayloe, however, maintained his composure throughout. He used his camera time to debunk myths and remind viewers that vaccinations save lives and help eradicate childhood diseases.

His grace under heavy fire became a call to action for pediatricians across America. Like Dr. Tayloe, they could not allow misinformation and half-truths to dominate this important national discussion.

“My whole career has revolved around this issue,” Dr. Tayloe says. “I’m very comfortable taking it on.”

But more than serving as a rallying cry, many viewed Dr. Tayloe’s equanimity on “Larry King” as a prelude to his presidency. If the show was any indication, he would combine compassion, knowledge and professionalism during his tenure to advocate for both pediatricians and their patients.

“He will be poised because he understands the advocacy process,” says Ellen Buerk, M.D., FAAP, a community pediatrician from Oxford, Ohio, who has worked with Dr. Tayloe on the AAP Board of Directors. “He has his head and his heart together. He will be very effective.”

Following his father’s footsteps

Dr. Tayloe comes by his passion for pediatrics honestly. His father, David Tayloe Sr., M.D., FAAP, is a nationally known pediatrician, and it seemed only natural that his namesake would follow in his footsteps.

Soon after graduating from the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill School of Medicine and completing his residency, Dr. Tayloe founded Goldsboro Pediatrics in 1978. The practice has seen tremendous growth over the past three decades. It now has four offices in eastern North Carolina and employs 11 pediatricians, six nurse practitioners, a lactation consultant, a physician assistant and a child psychologist.



David T. Tayloe Jr., M.D., FAAP, talks with a former legislative aide for Rep. Gene Green (D-Texas), following a congressional briefing to address the need for immunization funding. At the briefing, Dr. Tayloe provided information about ways federal funding affects practicing physicians.

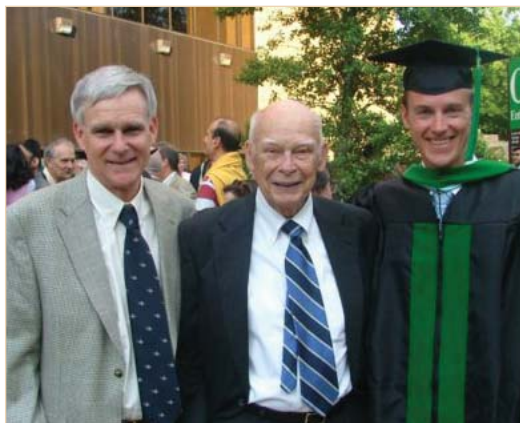
A turning point

In his practice’s early years, few expected the soft-spoken Dr. Tayloe to advocate for pediatric issues. But when his father was sued in 1985 after administering a diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis vaccine, Dr. Tayloe Jr. found his voice.

Outraged by the lawsuit’s claims, North Carolina pediatricians banded together and threatened to stop administering vaccines in their private offices. The protest led to a state law that prohibited lawsuits against pediatricians who administer immunizations.

In 1988, the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program was created to ensure an adequate supply of vaccines, stabilize vaccine costs, and establish and maintain an accessible and efficient forum for injured individuals. The program serves as a no-fault alternative to the traditional tort system for resolving claims of people found to be injured by certain vaccines.

“Dave was a legislative chair (on the issue)” says Robert P. Schwartz, M.D., FAAP, a professor of pediatrics at Wake Forest University School of Medicine. “He was a quiet person, while his dad was not quiet. He championed this. It really was an awakening for him.”



In 2007, three Dr. David Tayloes celebrate another physician in the family (from left): AAP President David T. Tayloe Jr., M.D., FAAP, with his father and son.

Dr. Tayloe's agenda

The political baptism led to an entire career spent championing solutions to issues that threaten pediatric care. As AAP president, he intends to call attention to the 9 million U.S. children without health insurance and find ways to provide them with quality care.

"The most important thing we can bring to everyone's attention in Congress is that just because a child is eligible to receive Medicaid doesn't necessarily mean that he/she is receiving services," Dr. Tayloe says.

Dr. Tayloe has lobbied Congress to establish a Child Health Advisory Committee to evaluate the state Medicaid, Vaccines for Children and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), to ensure all children have access to necessary services and to ensure that providers within these programs are paid at least the Medicare rate.

He lobbied the Bush administration to support his plan, but the White House feared the proposal would be the first steps toward socialism. Dr. Tayloe plans to reach out to the new president's staff and convince them that children's health care should be a priority.

It won't be easy, but it won't be a completely partisan effort either, Dr. Tayloe says. He successfully worked both sides of the aisle when he convinced the North Carolina Legislature to fund Medicaid and SCHIP.

"I've spent a lot of time and have a great working relationship with Republicans and Democrats," Dr. Tayloe says.

Though he is an important participant in national conversations, Dr. Tayloe never forgets his role as a community pediatrician. Unlike the most recent AAP presidents, he does not come from academia. He's on the front lines every day, witnessing the physical, emotional and financial challenges faced by both doctors and patients.

At his practice, Dr. Tayloe is known as an exceptional clinician who



Denise Tayloe, Dr. Tayloe's wife, enjoys time with granddaughter Zoe, one of four grandchildren.

inspires his partners and employees with his enthusiasm. His organizational skills allow him to juggle several projects and give them all the attention they need, says Joseph Ponzi, M.D., FAAP, partner at Goldsboro Pediatrics.

"Dave is one of the most energetic, compassionate and committed pediatricians I know," Dr. Ponzi says. "He has an endless source of energy and a desire to do what's right for kids."

When not practicing medicine or advocating for children, Dr. Tayloe enjoys spending time with his wife, Denise, and their four children and four grandchildren.

Any family gathering, however, seems like a medical convention. One of Dr. Tayloe's daughters is a hospitalist in the practice, another is a pharmacist and the third is a registered nurse. His son, David Tayloe III, M.D., AAP resident Fellow, is a second-year pediatric resident at Denver's Children's Hospital.

"His family is everything to him," Dr. Buerk says. "He's not only an inspiration and advocate for kids in North Carolina, but he's an advocate and

inspiration for his own family."

In the summertime, the entire family gathers for weekend retreats along the Pamlico River near Wilmington, N.C. Dr. Tayloe grew up in the area and his father still lives there.

"I go to the river to regain my sanity when I have no other weekend plans," Dr. Tayloe says.

Not that he regrets the twists and turns his high-profile career has taken over the past 30 years.

"I really don't have any regrets," Dr. Tayloe says. "I have a great community where no one has ever turned me down. I can't imagine a better profession."