

## *In Memoriam*

### **Marianne Taylor**

August 18, 2008

*Our thanks to Dick Oates for information for this article*

Marianne Taylor was a master folk dance teacher, teaching folk dance as a profession from 1955 to 2008. Her warmth and enthusiasm had inspired several generations of dancers. With “clarity and charity,” she taught hundreds of school programs and residencies, Scottish and English country dance classes and international folk dance workshops. She was featured at Stockton Folk Dance Camp, Mendocino Folklore Camp, Pinewoods Camp and workshops in Alaska, Australia, Hawaii, Switzerland, and from British Columbia to Newfoundland in Canada.



Marianne graduated from Sargent College, Boston University, in 1951 with a B.S. in Physical Education and a minor in Dance. In 1957 she received her teacher’s certification in Scottish Country Dance from the Royal Scottish Dance Society (RSCDS) and in 2005, she received Scroll of Honour from the RSCDS.

With her then-husband Conny Taylor, she started running weekly international folk dance classes in the Boston area. She co-founded the Folk Arts Center of New England with Conny Taylor in 1975 and served as its Program Director through 2004.

Marianne said that major influences in her dance career were Ralph Page, Dick Crum and Andor Czompo—not just dances, but teaching and dancing techniques.

She played piano for contra, Scottish and other kinds of dance since the early 1950s and was a regular member of Tullochgorum. She played monthly with the Lamprey River Band at a contra dance in in Dover, New Hampshire and was sometimes a musician and sometimes the caller at the Deerfield Town Hall Contra Dances, which organized since 1991.

In 2008, the National Folk Organization honored her with its Preserving Our Heritage Award. An avid traveler in later years, she co-led a small group tour in Portugal, helped organize two concert tours in Scotland with the Strathspey and Reel Society of New Hampshire and played piano for a Scottish dance tour on a schooner in the Greek Islands.

She appeared as backup on several Scottish/Celtic music compact discs available from the Little Shop of Horas.

Marianne died on August 18, 2008, after months of battling cancer. She encouraged all to “take hands four from the top” and was always one to say “you don’t have to go home, but you can’t stay here.”

She leaves her partner and common-law-husband, Don Gorman, of Deerfield, NH, and is survived by her children and their spouses: Micky Taylor-Pinney and Marcus Pinney, Tina and Bryant McBride, all of Lexington, MA; Andy Taylor-Blenis and John Blenis of Newton, MA; and Mark and Judy Taylor of Southampton MA. She was predeceased by one daughter, Joanna Taylor. She also leaves eight grandchildren and her devoted brother, Michel Patterson, Jr., and eight nieces and nephews. Tributes and information can be made and found at [www.caringbridge.org/visit/mariannetaylor1](http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/mariannetaylor1)