

Rogers State Library given name of alumnus, senator

By Mick Hinton, Staff Writer

CLAREMORE — A \$4.4 million library on the Rogers State University campus was christened the Stratton Taylor Library on Monday in honor of the longtime state senator who fought to make the school a four-year university.

The name had been kept secret, and Taylor had wondered why he was not asked to speak at the event, his wife, Carolyn, said.

But Taylor said he grew suspicious when all of his state Capitol colleagues and friends gathered at the campus Monday morning. Taylor's children, Abbey and Carson, unveiled the marquee across the front of the building.

The three-story library will be completed in January, Rogers State President Joe Wiley said.

University of Oklahoma President David Boren described Taylor, 47, as a "powerful individual."

"Taylor has had the courage to say on oc-



Sen. Stratton Taylor

He fought to make Rogers State a four-year university.

Added Boren, "No two partners in marriage have done

more for higher education."

Taylor served as president pro tempore of the Senate, and his wife was a state representative from Norman who sponsored House Bill 1017, the education and reform bill passed by the Legislature.

casion that one should tax ourselves," Boren said. "I salute that."

He quipped that Taylor "has not been afraid to take hostages for worthy causes," such as getting the Legislature to come up with money to establish Rogers State as a four-year school in 1999.

Added Boren, "No two partners in marriage have done

more for higher education."

Taylor's former professor at Rogers State, Eldon Hallum, said he remembered Taylor when he wore checkered bell-bottom pants and had long black curly hair.

Taylor was elected president of the student Senate at Rogers, and worked as a clerk at a local grocery store when he was first elected to the Legislature at age 22.

Taylor said his clerking helped him get acquainted with his future constituents. He said he won their support, "if you didn't smash the bread or break the eggs."

Wiley said the new library is double the size of the current one.

Its collection includes publications that date to the 1890s, including materials from the institution's beginnings as Eastern Oklahoma Preparatory Academy, which was founded in 1909.

The school was later converted to the Oklahoma Military Academy, which continued to operate until 1971.