



Making Time for the
IMPORTANT THINGS
with residents Cindy and Larry Taylor

By Cheryl Van Tuyl Jividen :: Photography by Mark Humphries



Larry and Cindy Taylor grew up in the Lone Star state; he in Southeast Texas; wife Cindy in Liberty, the third oldest city in Texas, located between Houston and Beaumont. While their fathers were friends, the two didn't meet until working on committees for the Trinity Valley Exposition Rodeo. It was a fast love story — they were married just two months later when Larry's job with Mississippi Chemical Company relocated him to Arkansas.

Texas quickly came calling to return with a job opportunity for Larry in the petroleum industry in Houston. "I made the move from the 'fertilizer' business to the 'oil' business in 1977 when my best friend and former college roommate asked if I would be interested in moving back to Texas. I found out quickly that the marketing and logistics of petroleum products was very similar to selling and moving fertilizer. Back in the late 70's and early/

mid 80's, the business was 'booming' in Houston. Petroleum trading companies, as well as those on the refining side of the business, were looking for people. I went to work for Coastal States Refining & Marketing in 1980," says Larry. "At the time, Coastal was in a big lawsuit involving one of their subsidiaries that marketed natural gas to many Texas municipalities. Coastal ended up losing the litigation, and the other parties in the suit were awarded the gas company for their damages. The company was renamed 'Valero,' and a former Coastal employee — Bill Greehey — was named CEO. Valero exited the natural gas business after a while and got into oil refining."

"We were ready to return to Texas!" Cindy remembers. The move provided career opportunities and the proximity to family. Cindy worked until they moved to Atascocita, when she became a full-time homemaker.

"I grew up in a home that instilled community service and volunteering at a young age," says Cindy. Her parents were very involved in church and community activities. "I remember Daddy

put a sticker on the phone for Mother, "'JUST SAY NO.' He didn't abide by it either. Their calendar by the phone was always full!" Her parent's example shaped Cindy's penchant for service and volunteerism. "I honestly don't remember a time that I wasn't organizing or helping with something." After daughter Katie was born, Cindy's volunteerism grew. "I was a room mom forever," she says. One of the best things to come from volunteering she says are the friendships she's made, "In Atascocita and Humble, I had a great group of friends. Most all had daughters the same age, so we did lots of activities together. One for all and all for one helping with whatever another needed help doing." Over the years Cindy would be the PTO President, and log more than a decade of various school volunteer service. She was also President of the local chapter of Zeta Tau Alpha Alumnae and co-chair of recruitment for the Humble Panhellenic. Cindy is a former member of the Junior League of North Harris County. She was a member, along with Katie, of the Lake Houston Chapter of the National Charity League, donating many hours of community service, serv-





ing as an officer and even chairing NCL's Senior Presentation held in the Junior League Tea Room in Houston.

The Taylors are proud multi-generational Texans. Larry's ancestry is five generations deep with ancestors settling in Liberty and Hardin counties of Southeast Texas as part of the great Irish immigration movements in the 1800's. A trio of relatives served with William Travis at the Alamo. Cindy's lineage had an ancestor leave Tennessee with Davy Crockett to Texas. Though too young to fight at the Alamo, he was assigned to the quartermaster to hunt for food for the Army, serving in the Republic of Texas Army 1838 to the early 1840s. Cindy's ancestry provided membership and the opportunity to serve with the Daughters of the American Revolution in various capacities and fundraising activities.

Networking led Larry to the start of his Valero career. "I had made some very close friends with some of the people who worked there. So, after a couple of stints with a couple other trading and marketing firms in Houston, including Enron Oil Trading & Transportation, I was approached by Valero in late 2001 and offered a job in San Antonio." The timing and location were ideal, says Larry. "Our daughter had just started school at UT Austin, and Cindy and I both thought that moving to the Hill Country would be a dream come true. I worked for Valero Marketing & Supply until early 2007 when Valero Energy spun their MLP off. Mr. Greehey became Chairman of NuStar Energy, and although I was not part of the MLP group, he 'invited' me to move over to NuStar. It was very difficult to turn that 'invitation' down. I worked at NuStar until my retirement in January 2017. I cannot think of another industry that I would have rather made a career of than the oil businesses. The friends made and the many truly great experiences I've been afforded are priceless."

A year into working at Valero the Taylors got their first Labrador Retriever — a black lab female they named Pearl — from a



co-worker. A second yellow female, Gracie, was purchased from Pastor Matt Hagee. "Gracie became the matriarch of our lab family and lived a long life, as did Pearl. She had two litters of puppies and we kept two males from the first and named them Boone and Gus," says Larry, who explains how their pack came to be. Gus, who was trained locally, went on to sire several litters and of one of those litters they kept two females, Stella and Weezy. Their trainer was located in Katy, Texas, now relocated to Hearne, Texas, and he would also train two of Stella's puppies, Gracie Pearl and Woodrow. Gracie Pearl has become an outstanding retriever and unfortunately, Woodrow was sadly lost to cancer as a yearling. Recently Stella birthed another litter, "Our latest and her last," Larry says.

"I have always been an avid outdoorsman. While living in the Houston area, we maintained a second home on the west end of Galveston Island. At that time, I primarily concentrated on inshore and offshore fishing," says Larry. "After moving to the Hill Country, I've become more of an avid hunter — primarily upland birds." Larry has the joy of seeing his dogs in action on hunts. "I have been blessed to have had and still have some great ones." And it's a hobby he nurtures. "Aside from being able to spend a lot of time chasing birds all over Texas, I do manage to travel to Central and South America at least once a year to hunt with a group of guys. When it's not bird season, I am avid about shooting sporting clays, a sport that the whole family enjoys," says Larry, a lifetime Member of the National Sporting Clay Association,

Moving to Cordillera Ranch in 2002, the couple relishes the opportunity to share their home. "We enjoy casual entertaining.



Whether it's Larry's hunting friends, work friends or just those who come for a weekend in the Hill Country, we love to relax, enjoy food with friends and laugh," says Cindy, a passionate devotee of Southern food. Her specialties include deviled eggs, pimento cheese finger sandwiches, chicken spaghetti, Texas Trash and seasoned oyster crackers. "I love to can and share the bounty as gifts." At the First Methodist Church Fall Festival in Liberty, she was known for her Fredericksburg peach preserves.

Cindy explains their early days at Cordillera Ranch, "We moved to Cordillera Ranch not knowing anyone in Boerne or even San Antonio — unlike some who move here now because they have friends here or knew people that they'd worked with overseas that lived here or know people in the area. It was also different for those of us who no longer had children at home. We had lost that contact with others because of school activities." She recalls the beginning of the social clubs, "There were four monthly activity groups: Bunco, Book Club, Men's Group and a Women's Fellowship Group." She's been a part of the Cordillera Ranch Ladies Social Club since, being the Bunco Leader "back in the day" to currently serving as the Ladies Social Club President for the past 13 years. She's organized Ladies Socials, Cordillera Ranch Holiday Markets, Parties in the Park, Memorial Day and Fourth of July Pool Parties, Care Packages for the Troops and a number of other neighborhood activities. She's also co-chaired the Cordillera Ranch Shindig.

Cindy's local contributions also include serving as President of the Boerne Area Alumnae and several years as the Recruitment Chair. She volunteers at events for the Bergheim Volunteer Fire



Department and provides lunch to the Christian Women's Job Corp. Larry's include serving on the Advisory Board of the San Antonio Salvation Army for a decade and the fundraising committee and sporting clay tournaments for the Alamo Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

Their daughter, Katie, is the Mansion Administrator of the Texas Governor's Mansion, where Cindy is honored to be able to help decorate the Mansion for Christmas each year. She and Larry, along with a few friends, volunteered to prepare and serve the very first crawfish boil held there when Governor and Mrs. Abbott hosted a staff appreciation event following the close of the first legislative session of his administration.

The last two years have been a welcome next chapter, says Larry, "Being retired is pretty cool! I am fortunate to have many of the friends that I made in the industry retired as well and we're able to get together often to hunt, fish, shoot clays, play golf, or whatever suits our fancy at the time. We usually schedule a lunch at least once a month to visit and catch up. I also join in on golf outings around the area with some of the guys as well as shoot clays in various charity events."

Cindy loves taking road trips with Katie and serving as tour guide when guests visit. Her philanthropic work hasn't waned. "I have been very blessed in my life and want to pay it forward and give of my time and talents to help others. Knowing that I've helped someone or a charitable cause in some small way is rewarding." Once the co-owner of a needlework shop, decades ago, Cindy cross-stitched a quote that aptly fits the Taylors, "You always have time for the things you put first." 🐾