



Eddie Taylor, formerly of Detroit Lakes, was part of an all-Black team that climbed to the peak of Mount Everest.  
Contributed photos

# MAKING IT TO THE TOP

DL GRAD ON FIRST ALL-BLACK TEAM TO CONQUER MOUNT EVEREST



Eddie Taylor had to cross gaps to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

**By Barbie Porter**  
Detroit Lakes Tribune

Carefully climbing through a snow-filled landscape, Eddie Taylor was cloaked in darkness. The only light emanated from his head lamp and the light carried by the Sherpa leading the way up Mount Everest. When he reached the top, the 2008 Detroit Lakes High School graduate made history by becoming part of the first all Black climbing team to ascend the storied mountain. “We did it ya’ll!” He typed on his Instagram account at 2:40 a.m. on May 12, 2022.

The journey takes climbers 29,032 feet into the sky between the border of China and Nepal. For comparison, commercial aircraft have a cruising altitude of 30,000 to 38,000 feet.

“We left April 2 and got back to the U.S. on May 19,” Taylor said, noting his crew originally planned a 70-day affair, but because of agreeable weather conditions it was cut to about 50 days. “Some may think climbing Mount Everest is reserved for elite mountaineers. I hope we showed it is accessible to everyone.”

**Journey of a lifetime began in Colorado**

The son of Linda Jackson began exploring mountain climbing after moving to Colorado to attend university. As his life shifted from college student to college graduate, Taylor — a high school science teacher and track coach — met mountain climbers.

Among them was a man with a vision — Phil Henderson. Henderson

wanted an all-Black team to summit Mount Everest as a way to encourage other minority youth to get outdoors and try sports that are considered non-traditional for some minorities.

According to the team’s website, Full Circle, Henderson “has worked in the outdoor industry for almost three decades.” He has also been on expeditions to Denali, led an all-Black team ascent to Mount Kilimanjaro in 2018, and tackled Mount Kenya.

To take the journey, the crew of 11 people had to be physically fit and financially solvent. Taylor noted the typical cost for a trip up the mountain can range from \$50,000 to \$150,000. He explained the cost included airfare, equipment, guides and covering bills back home

while out of the country.

When a major newspaper outlet picked up the story, the sponsorships and equipment donations came quickly.

“We put together a presentation, and in the end more than half of the funds came from corporations and outdoor equipment sponsors,” Taylor said. “After about four months we had raised two-thirds of what we needed.”

**Touching down in Nepal**

Once the group arrived in Kathmandu, Nepal, they flew into a nearby valley and began the first part of the hike to the mountain’s base camp. The journey was breathtaking, with jutting peaks as the backdrop.

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## School board, city races hot this year

**By Michael Achterling**  
Detroit Lakes Tribune

A total of 23 school board and 11 municipal seats across the Detroit Lakes, Perham and Wadena area will be on the ballot this November.

Candidate filing for these local offices, included in the 2022 election, will open on Aug. 2 and will close two weeks later, at 5 p.m. on Aug. 16. Prospective candidates will need to provide proof of address, complete the registration materials and pay a filing fee of up to \$5, said one city official. But, these

elected positions may not always be what potential candidates have in mind when they decide to run for office, multiple school board and city officials said.

**School Board openings**

Amy Erickson, a member of the Detroit Lakes School Board, said she initially ran for office because of struggles to pass a bond referendum for school construction projects in the district, and emphasized that members don’t stop

being your neighbors when they are elected to school board or different municipal offices.

“You are the exact same person, you are just privy to a little bit more information than the average person, but also, if anybody asks me about anything regarding the school district, I’ll tell them,” said Erickson.

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Erickson



Rebecca Mitchell / Fuller Center for Housing

Jim Velde, local Fuller Center for Housing chapter president, at left, works with cyclists traveling through Detroit Lakes on June 21 as part of the Fuller Center Bicycle Adventure. The cyclists participated in a build day for the local chapter’s home project on Dean Street.

## Help build a house in DL

**Fuller Center for Housing in need of volunteers to complete local home build**

**By Vicki Gerdes**  
Detroit Lakes Tribune

A local family of four will soon have a new place to call home, thanks to the Detroit Lakes chapter of Fuller Center for Housing... but to finish the project in time for fall, the non-profit is in need of volunteers to help on “build days.”

Every Monday, Thursday and Saturday this summer, until it’s complete, builders will be

hard at work on the new home, which is located on Dean Street.

“It’s a nice three bedroom house,” said Jim Velde, president of the local Fuller Center chapter. “It was donated to us from a family in Detroit Lakes that lived on East Shore Drive.”

The land did not come with the home donation, however, so the chapter secured a new location at 396 Dean Street; the building was moved to its permanent location in early June.

“We made it into a rambler,” Velde said. “The new family’s just tickled to death to be able to move in as soon as we get it finished. We hope to get them in there by

Labor Day.

“We’re tweaking it up quite a bit on the outside, with new siding and new shingles on the roof; on the inside, we’re fixing up some cosmetic things. We’ll fix up the yard and get it back to growing some grass again; it’s all ripped up now.”

Build sessions will take place from 5 to 7:30 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays, and 8:30 a.m. to noon on Saturdays. Volunteers are also needed to bring snacks, though all slots for this service are filled for the month of July, according to a Wednesday, June 29 post on the Fuller Center’s Facebook page.

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TAYLOR

From Page 1

“That first part was awesome and amazing,” Taylor said, noting the hike to base camp took about 10 days. “We all brought a spouse or family member (for that section). I brought my sister Rose.”

The 10-day journey included six days of hiking and four days of rest to allow their bodies to acclimate to the higher altitudes.

“If you go up too fast you can get sick,” he said. “The maximum elevation increase per day was about 2,000 feet.”

The group stayed at tea houses along the way. There, they enjoyed home-cooked meals and time with Sherpas, or Nepali guides. By watching their way of life, Taylor witnessed the efficiency and strength of a team mentality.

“One Sherpa would tie the other’s shoes, so that the one carrying a heavy pack wouldn’t have to bend over,” he said. “I think, in the U.S., our mentality is to be self-sufficient.”

**Climbing the mountain**

After reaching base camp, the group began days of ascending and descending the mountain. Taylor explained that the practice prevents health calamities,



Contributed photos / Eddie Taylor  
Eddie Taylor was a member of an all Black team that reached the summit of the tallest mountain on earth.

because higher elevations make recovery times longer and more difficult. By descending, the body is able to rejuvenate for another strenuous hike up the mountain. If one were to hike straight up without descending, the likelihood of an untimely demise increases.

“Everything is hard that high up, even walking,” he said.

Taylor said the first ascent ended at the first camp. When they reached the camp, they returned down the mountain to the base camp. The second trip up the mountain they reached the second camp, but again returned to base camp at the end of the day. They even climbed to the third camp on

the mountain and returned to the base camp before taking a five day recovery period. After which, the group climbed the mountain with the peak in mind.

“The most challenging part was navigating the heat,” he said. “In the lower part you hike through a valley with snow and ice to your left, to your right and under you. The air is cold but when the sun is shining you feel like you are walking in an oven. Then, when you go to bed it’s negative 30 or 40 degrees.”

The crew reached the peak on their own terms, with only one member having to end the journey early due to elevation sickness.

“The higher we went up the sicker he felt,” Taylor



During daylight hours, climbing Mount Everest was like walking in an oven for Eddie Taylor

said. “He tried to recover but that high up the body doesn’t recover. By the time we got to the third camp it hit him hard and he had to go back down.”

**More than 5,000 have reached the top**

Being the earth’s highest mountain above sea level draws thousands to attempt to summit Mount Everest. But, not all are able to survive the elevation increases, temperature shifts and natural hazards, like avalanches.

According to National Geographic magazine, as of the end of the 2018 season, the Himalayan Database reports that 295 people are known to have died climbing Everest, while there have been 9,159 successful

summit climbs by 5,294 people.

Now that Taylor is one of the few who have reached the summit of Mount Everest, he has received a bit of fan mail.

“I have received a few emails since I got back,” he said. “One was from a guy who said he wanted to climb Kilimanjaro in Africa, but his wife said he couldn’t do it — that we don’t do stuff like that. After seeing us climb, he decided he could do it.”

Taylor is happy their story inspired a stranger in Africa. He hopes the story of his team’s accomplishment encourages people of all ages and races to set down technological devices and step into nature to explore new peaks, valleys and cultures.

HOMES

From Page 1

**Fuller Center Bicycle Adventure makes stop in Detroit Lakes**

Recently, the Fuller Center’s annual Bicycle Adventure fundraiser made an overnight stop in Detroit Lakes.

Fuller Center volunteers are in the midst of a 10-week trip cross country, traveling 3,900 miles from Oregon to Maine to raise money and awareness for the fight against poverty housing.

A group of 17 cyclists arrived in Detroit Lakes on Monday, June 20, after a 61-mile ride from Fargo. After an overnight stay hosted by First Baptist Church, they spent a full day working on the local Fuller Center home on Tuesday, June 21.

The group then attended the Fuller Center’s Tuesdays in the Park picnic fundraiser at the Detroit Lakes City Park.

Four members of the group — Tom Thibreau of Bangor, Maine, Daryl Olson of Centralia, Washington, and Ron and Pam VanHoose of Nashville, Tennessee — sat down for an interview with the Detroit Lakes Tribune during the picnic, then spent another night in town before heading back out

IF YOU GO

**What:** Tuesdays in the Park, with picnic provided by Fuller Center for Housing and music provided by the Historic Holmes Theatre

**When:** Every Tuesday in July and August, with picnics starting at 5:30 p.m. and music at 7 p.m.

**Where:** Detroit Lakes City Park (artists will be performing at the bandshell)

**How:** Free will offerings taken for both the picnic (\$5 suggested donation per plate) and the concert, with proceeds to support the Fuller Center for Housing and the participating artists.

on the next leg of their journey on Wednesday, June 22.

“We started at Seaside, Oregon, on May 21, and we’re going all the way to Portland, Maine, arriving on July 31,” said Thibreau. “By the time we’re done we’ll have biked a little less than 4,000 miles.”

Thibreau, Olson and the Van Hoosees all planned to be with the group for the entire cross-country trip, though some joined the bikers later in the journey, and others would leave before reaching the end.

“We’ll put our back tires in the Pacific and the front tires in the Atlantic,” Olson said.

“We’re traveling through all the states that border Canada and the Great Lakes,” Thibreau added, noting that they would also be making a stop in Niagara Falls.

“We’ll get a half day to explore in Niagara,” Pam VanHoose said, “though most days we get up early and move to the next city, unless there’s a build day

scheduled.”

Van Hoose is a member of the group that follows behind the bikers in a support vehicle equipped with bike repair equipment, spare tires, first aid kits and other supplies.

“We make sure they get food and water every 20 miles or so, and help them out if their bike breaks down,” she said, adding, “So far, the weather’s been pretty good, and no one’s been injured.”

If a cyclist needs a short rest, they can also ride in the support vehicle for a little while, until they’ve recovered their energy to continue, Van Hoose said, noting that the participants ride between 50-100 miles each day of the trip.

Tuesday’s build day in Detroit Lakes was pretty productive, Olson said, noting that they’d managed to strip off the house’s old siding (the original structure was donated by an anonymous contributor and moved to the Dean Street location)



Vicki Gerdes / Detroit Lakes Tribune  
Musician Eric Reitan performs during a recent Tuesdays in the Park concert at the Detroit Lakes City Park Bandshell, June 14.



Rebecca Mitchell / Fuller Center for Housing  
Tom Thibreau, of Bangor, Maine, removes siding from the Detroit Lakes Fuller Center house project on Dean Street on June 21.

and added new siding on three sides of the structure before calling it quits and heading over to the picnic.

“This (the Detroit Lakes house) was No. 3 of 7 total builds we’ll be doing for the trip,” Van Hoose added, noting that while some planned to stay and listen to the free Tuesdays in the Park concert hosted by the His-

toric Holmes Theatre at 7 p.m., the four of them would probably be heading back to their host homes pretty early, as they would be starting off again at 8:30 the next morning.

In order to participate in the Bicycle Adventure, each of the cyclists was responsible for raising a minimum of \$4,900, Thibreau said, with Olson adding that

about 97% of the funds raised go directly into Fuller Center housing projects, as their food and shelter along the way is provided by local churches in each community.

For more information, visit FullerCenter.org and FullerCenter-BikeAdventure.org.

The local Fuller Center chapter’s picnic fundraiser will be held every Tuesday through Aug. 30 at the Detroit Lakes City Park, in conjunction with the Holmes Theatre’s Tuesdays in the Park summer concert series. Freshly grilled hot dogs and hamburgers with all the fixings will be served up from 5:30 until 7 p.m., when the music starts.

The suggested donation is \$5 per plate, with the proceeds going to support local Fuller Center projects like the current home build.

Remaining concerts in the Tuesdays in the Park series include Mike Hokanson, July 5; Doc & the Scrubs, July 12 (part of the Northwest Water Carnival festivities) and again on Aug. 9; Generation Gap 2.0, July 19; Tim Eggebraaten, July 26; Ulen Centennial Band, Aug. 2; DeMasi Brothers, Aug. 16; Larry Swenson, Aug. 23; Lakes Area Community Concert Band, Aug. 30. There is no cost to attend, though a free will offering will be taken.

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