



Billy is a Schuylkill man, born and bred, fiercely loyal and proud of it. He is the son of William and Sarah Bingham Brennan. Due to the early death of his Dad and need for his Mom to work, he spend most of his time with his beloved grandmother, Mary Agnes O'Neil. She was a pivotal part of the shaping of his character. Billy tells a story of him and his friends laughing at a Pat and Mike joke book. He shared the tale with his Grandmother and she said, "No, Billy, they're laughing at us." This was a big awakening to him.

Billy is accomplished in many fields; Lecturer, Writer, Historian, Genealogist, Librarian and Contributor. He is thought of in the same vein as Dennis Clarke, as one who has preserved the history of the Irish in Philadelphia.

He is the Keeper of the Commodore Barry Library He maintains that its construction was due mainly by volunteers and individuals, financially and physically, but the glue is Billy Brennan.. When I interviewed him, he shared with me, proudly, his treasures, tributes and triumphs gathered from years of dedication.

Billy met his wife, Mary (nee Hughes) right here at the Irish Center. He had spent 81 straight days at the hospital bed of his dying grandmother. When she passed away and his spirits were so low, he decided to go to a gathering. Lo and Behold, there was a beautiful Tipperary lass, sent from Heaven by Mary Agnes. The Brennan's have been married for 47 years. Sadly, in 2006, they had the task of burying their only child, Neil.

Billy Brennan is appreciated and respected by many people. Here's what they say about him:

"He is our own history detective. He has unearthed, donated, and documented an eclectic tribute to the Irish and their contributions to the world".

"He evokes a vision of Ireland that is comprehensive, not prejudiced to one view. Billy presents the truth no matter where it falls."

"He is the Bard....no, not a poet, but a keeper and teller of the History. And while he's telling the story, you can almost reach into those eyes and see a Druid priest or a tartaned-shawled warrior". (Kathy McGee Burns)