

associate professor of music at Worcester Polytechnic Institute and founder and director of the Salisbury Singers; a son and two daughters by his first wife; and one stepdaughter.

Wallace Robbins was a man of great intelligence, high principles, courage, and good humor. He would have been amused to hear his friend Clyde Cox confess to the congregation at the funeral that his greatest disappointment was his inability, despite many efforts, to convert Wallace to the Episcopal order.

Henry Bowen Dewey

WILLIAM VINCENT SHANNON

Bill Shannon was a man of many talents and experiences—reporter, editorial writer, historian, editor, columnist, diplomat, speaker, biographer, and teacher. He was, above all, a gentleman of wit and acuity. He became a member of the American Antiquarian Society in 1980, while he was serving as United States ambassador to Ireland. He died of cancer on September 27, 1988, at the age of sixty-one.

His parents, Patrick Joseph and Nora Agnes (McNamara) Shannon came to Worcester from Ireland, and his father worked as a carpenter. Bill was a graduate of Worcester's South High School and attended Clark University, only a few blocks from the family home. He graduated in three years, magna cum laude. He was only nineteen. The next year, 1948, he earned a master's degree in American history from Harvard University. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., called him 'the most brilliant student I ever had.'

After editing the Theodore Roosevelt papers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Bill moved to Washington and immersed himself in writing about political affairs. In 1950, with an old Washington hand, Robert S. Allen, he produced a best seller, 'The Truman Merry-Go-Round.'

As bureau chief and columnist in Washington for the *New York*

Post for thirteen years, Bill brought distinction to a news bureau not previously regarded as front rank. From there, he moved to the most prestigious of Washington news bureaus—that of the *New York Times*—and contributed editorials to the *Times* for another thirteen years.

President Jimmy Carter selected him to become ambassador to Ireland in 1977. Bill was praised for the skill with which he adapted to his new, diplomatic role. With the arrival of the Reagan administration, in Washington, Bill returned to Massachusetts, contributed columns and editorials to the *Boston Globe*, and joined the faculty of Boston University. There he taught a popular course in the American presidency and seminars in journalism.

Two of his principal interests were the Irish experience in America and the role of liberalism in American society. These were reflected in many of his writings. In 1964, he published *The American Irish*, a history of immigration from Ireland to the United States. His 1967 book, *The Heir Apparent: Robert Kennedy and the Struggle for Power*, was issued less than a year before Senator Kennedy was assassinated.

As a journalist, Bill Shannon followed closely the Army-McCarthy hearings and the Watergate hearings, the latter leading to his 1974 book *They Could Not Trust the King*. He contributed frequently to current-affairs magazines and received numerous awards recognizing his work.

Bill often returned to Worcester, where he was a trustee of Clark and where his brother John and two sisters, Mary Willett and Clare Graham, lived. Early in his career, he spent a year in Santa Barbara at Robert Hutchins's Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. While he was writing for the *New York Times*, Bill spent a year in London on an Alicia Paterson fellowship, observing the British Parliament.

Among the clubs that Bill held membership in were the Cosmos in Washington, the Century in New York, and the Tavern in Boston. He was also a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the American Historical Association, and the Massachusetts Historical Society.

While his direct contacts with the American Antiquarian Society were limited, a number of members knew Bill through other associations and regarded him highly. His wife, Elizabeth, spoke to the Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves at Antiquarian Hall in 1985, on the Shannons' experiences at the embassy in Dublin.

Though much of Bill Shannon's work was done against the broad canvas of Washington, New York, and Dublin, he spoke often and warmly of his formative years at South High and at Clark. He stood by his liberal views when they were fashionable and, later, when they were not. As a historian of his times, he provided a keen, valuable record of the world and its players.

He is survived by his wife and their three sons, Liam, Christopher, and David.

Robert Comey Achorn

ROBERT ERNEST SPILLER

Robert Ernest Spiller was born in Philadelphia on November 13, 1896, and died there August 24, 1988. He was the second child and eldest son of Dr. William Gibson Spiller and Helen Constance Newbold. Both families were closely tied to the University of Pennsylvania. His father was the first head of the Department of Neurology in the medical school and his mother's brother, William Romaine Newbold, was a distinguished professor of philosophy. Brought up in West Philadelphia, which was then on the outskirts of the city, he attended Episcopal Academy and the University of Pennsylvania, from which he received his bachelor's degree in 1917. He enlisted as a private in Base Hospital 20, a unit formed by the university's medical school, where he joined his brother-in-law Randolph G. Adams (AAS, 1924-51). The commencement of 1919 was a family affair. Spiller and his sister Helen received master's degrees and Adams a doctorate.

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