"A Loving Tribute"

A glimpse of the little boy within the man; the man behind the face, warm inviting smile and beautiful, kind, blue eyes; and the man behind the name Bill Brooks who was so fondly known to us as "Brooksy" …

The Patriarch of Bill's family as he knew it was his grandfather, Patrick Gorman (1856-1939), born and raised in New England becoming a fisherman by trade as a young man. Eventually, Patrick began working in the steam railroad industry as a bridge builder then a bridge inspector, migrating to the Philadelphia then Wilmington area, where he met and married Roseanna Kelley, Bill's grandmother, together having six children, in particular Mary A. Gorman (1894-1956) and Grace M. Gorman (1896-1932). In 1913, Roseanna died and a year later Patrick married Margaret Ellen Cleary, who was 25 years younger than Patrick and together they had one child a daughter, Kathleen M. Gorman (1915-1944). At childbirth, Margaret Ellen died leaving her new husband as a widower, 59, now having to care for and raise their newborn daughter. Already living in the home with their father, Patrick, were daughters, Mary, 21, and Grace, 19, them all joining together to now raise baby Kathleen. Around 1920, Grace married Harry C. Brooks, who, after his marriage moved into the family home, and with the help of his father-in-law, began working initially in the steam railroad industry. Grace so much wanted a child of her own, particularly a boy. Her wish came true on March 9, 1924 with the birth of who would be her only child, William F. Brooks, a healthy baby boy, with the most beautiful blue eyes. Grace and Harry did not realize at the time their baby would become the man he became - one of the most admired and beloved gentlemen we all have come to know. Patriarch Patrick, Mary and Kathleen thereafter became known to little Billy as Grandpop, Aunt May and Aunt Kitty.

This new family of six lived together on Shallcross Avenue within the Forty Acres community in a very narrow 2-story rowhouse having two tiny bedrooms and one bath so tiny that the door opened outward. Dad, Mom and little Billy slept in one bedroom, Aunt May and Kitty shared the other, while Grandpop's bedroom was a closet at the head of the staircase to the left converted with a mattress, and when he became uncomfortable, he would sleep downstairs in his rocking chair which was positioned in front of the bow window, where Grandpop could capture the sights and sound of the neighborhood. Grandpop did a lot of thinking and reflecting in that rocking chair for they had no radio or television.

As a little boy, Billy was empathetic, knowing his Grandpop was downstairs by himself in silence in a wooden rocking chair while others were comfortable in their beds, prompting Bill to join his Grandpop in the middle of the night climbing up on his lap. Grandpop would sing Billy to sleep or they would just talk, grandfather to grandson, building what was a beautiful, loving bond. It was during those moments that Grandpop became a teacher, instilling upon Billy The Golden Rule, to always help others, to honor thy father and thy mother, always be respectful to your elders, go to school, work hard, the importance of family, etc. The man Bill Brooks became in part was learned in that rocking chair in the middle of the night - teachings and memories Bill never forgot. As dawn would come, Billy would climb up the steep staircase to return to bed before his parents awakened, looking back at Grandpop, who would shoo Billy to keep climbing the stairs.

Fast forward to Bill's 87 th birthday - Maggie's gift to Bill was arranging for him to re-enter his childhood home after decades so he could re-live his memories in 3D. As they entered, tears immediately began to flow from both because the interior was just as Bill had described - the steep staircase, two tiny bedrooms and the door opening outward, the closet to the left where Grandpop slept and the bow window. Even at 87, Bill was determined to climb that staircase, which he did, however, we all learned it was easier and safer to ascend than descend, but he made it. While upstairs and downstairs, Bill would stroke the walls as if to feel the love that was in the home as he remembered. In the kitchen, he showed us where his mother used to dance while she was cooking, and where he folded laundry helping his mother. Prior to leaving, Bill was given moments of silence, him standing in the very spot of his Grandpop's rocking chair, him looking out the bow window, him

ever so slightly moving his body to replicate the rocking. For those moments, Bill and his heart had returned home. After wiping his tears, he turned to Maggie saying, "This is why I love you, thank you for this gift, thank you for loving me." For nearly 24 years, several times a month, Bill and Maggie would drive onto Shallcross Avenue, stopping in front of his home paying their respects, placing flowers on the porch steps, the owner(s) not knowing who dropped off the flowers. As he instructed, Bill's funeral procession will take Bill passed his childhood home for the last time, where Maggie will place flowers on the porch steps.

Even though Aunt Kitty was his aunt, Bill felt she was more like a sister, being they were only nine years apart in age. Being an only child, his only playmate at home was Kitty. She always made time for him. Kitty attended Ursuline Academy and at night she would teach Billy the 3 R's; with him listening, doing, and learning from her. Kitty enjoyed art and teaching Billy how to draw. She was an impeccable dresser, teaching him how to tie his shoelaces, making sure the bow was straight and proper. Like the rest of his elders, Kitty taught Billy how and why to be a good person, the importance of school, and the meaning of family. Kitty had a kind and gentle soul, she was smart and very disciplined, having a bright future ahead of her, however; her life was cut short when she was diagnosed with TB, ultimately having to be relocated to a TB facility in New York state, where visitors were not permitted - her passing at the young age of 29. Bill was 20 and overseas in the U.S. Army, unable to return home to attend her funeral, which bothered him for the balance of his life. Bill and Maggie would visit Kitty's gravesite at least once a month, and each visit Bill would apologize to Kitty for him not being there during her illness, her final days, and for her funeral.

Aunt May lived a tough, tough life to say the least - she was a graduate of Goldey (Beacom) College her excelling in secretarial skills. Her work career began at age 16 working for Goldey; at 17 working for Bancroft Mills; at 19 she begins her career at DuPont working in the explosives division and at 19 her mother passes. At 20, her father remarries to second wife Margaret Ellen who dies at childbirth leaving Aunt May, 21, to raise a newborn Kitty while simultaneously working at DuPont as her income helped support the entire family. At 38, her sister, Grace, (Bill's mother) passes, leaving Aunt May to now raise our Billy, then age 8, and at the same time she is diagnosed with breast cancer, later having a bi-lateral mastectomy. At age 43, she becomes the Guardian for our Bill, Bill's father having relocated to PA where he remarries. At 45, her father Patrick passes, leaving her to be the sole financial supporter of the family, whereas family is defined as May, Kitty and Bill; five years later at 50, Kitty then passes, and as Bill is serving in the Army overseas during World War II. Aunt May worries Bill may not survive her writing letters to him and does not know if he will receive her letters. By age 50, her entire family as she knew it had predeceased her leaving only Bill and herself, as well Bill had not graduated high school Aunt May was very, very concerned he would be unable to support himself. At 60 she is diagnosed with esophageal cancer forcing her retirement from DuPont after giving 41 years of service; she was ill for 2 years passing away at age 62 - leaving Bill sole survivor of the family he knew; he was age 32. Aunt May's life was education, working, financially supporting, raising a newborn, 8-year-old and a teenager, caregiving, managing the household, illnesses and death, and worrying. She had no life of her own separate and apart from family for she never dated, never married, never had children of her own and her workplace was her social life. This woman made TREMENDOUS sacrifices in the name of family and as Bill reflected upon his childhood and early adulthood, he acknowledged that Aunt May was not only the workhorse of the family, she was his heroine - a selfless woman of true courage and perseverance her becoming Bill's role model.

Bill had two loving parents who loved each other providing him the example of a couple being happily married. Father Harry was a shy and humble, hardworking man, who loved his family and was a great father to Billy, him remembering the walks they took around the Forty Acres, his father's calloused hands holding Billy's little hand. It was during those strolls Harry would teach and preach - how and why to be a good person, do for others, stay in school, etc. To earn a better income for his family, Harry became employed as a pipefitter for Delaware Power and Light in the gas division. Then there was mother Grace, who Bill described not only as the woman who provided the happy home, she was the personality of the household - outgoing personality, enjoyed people, loved to laugh, was upbeat and positive, energetic, affectionate, attentive and hardworking - who does that sound like? That is correct, Bill Brooks was definitely his mother's son.

Grace was the stay-at-home Mom whose responsibility it was to raise our little Billy. She managed the entire household doing all of the cooking, cleaning, and laundry. To earn extra income for the family who pooled monies together, she would take in laundry from the neighborhood, teaching Billy how to fold, a skill he still performed up to the age of 97, him enjoying it because folding reminded him of Mom; she would do for others within Forty Acres, always willing to help; she would shower Billy with hugs and kisses; dance in the kitchen, Billy trying to mimic her; she would sing during bath time and at bedtime, her humming and whistling was heard throughout the house. Billy not only loved his mother, he enjoyed her company, always wanting to be with her, him on the receiving end of her positivity. Grace was a pretty woman who had a warm smile and a loving heart. She was Billy's world and the love of his life. Our little Billy Brooks grew up to have the personality of his mother Grace, the humbleness of his father Harry, the wisdom of his Grandpop Patrick, the kind and gentle soul of Aunt Kitty and workhorse ethic of Aunt May - Bill Brooks was the product of The Forty Acres.

At age 8, tragedy struck the Gorman/Brooks household turning Bill's life upside down, impacting his life to the day he passed. His mother had been hospitalized in St. Francis Hospital for about four weeks for different ailments, those four weeks being the longest time for an 8-year-old. Billy, not having his mother at home with him, did not quite understand why she was not there, other than being told she was "sick" but would be home "soon". In those days it was hospital policy to not permit children as visitors without permission, Harry would get permission about twice a week. Each visit included hugs and kisses, Billy climbing aboard her bed, them cuddling, his mother asking him about school, Billy talking a mile a minute so excited to be with Mom. He would always ask when she was coming home, her answer always being "soon". Bill never forgot what would be his final visit with his mother, her saying to him as he walked through the door - "Oh look what a big boy you are wearing your black pants, your white socks, and your black shoes. Don't you look all grown up, you're so handsome, you're my little man." For 90 years Bill recalled that last visit and those words as if spoken yesterday.

Obviously, at the time Billy didn't realize that would be his final visit, he and Harry both believed there would be another visit. Unexpectedly, Grace's condition worsened. Harry drove to a parking lot across from the hospital instructing Billy to remain in the car while obtaining permission for him to enter. Harry pointed out to Billy the window for his mother's room telling him to keep his eyes on that window in the hopes of seeing his mother wave. It was dark outside, Billy, 8 years little, alone in the car waiting and wanting to see his mother, had his beautiful blue eyes focused on that window. Billy then sees a candle in the window, he is confused as to why, he waits for his father to return, who then delivers the news Grace had passed. Billy was devastated, his heart so broken, he carried that heartbreak for 90 years. Bill recounted how he rolled down the window sticking his head outside and when he looked to the dark sky he saw what was a full moon. That night in that car changed Bill's life forever. Bill's memory of his last visit and of that night in the car is what kept Bill Brooks centered throughout his life. The passing of his beloved mother is what determined Bill's path in life.

In adulthood, Bill's memory of his final visit, him not forgetting her words, is why, other than a tuxedo, he did not wear black clothing or black shoes or socks; he didn't celebrate the 4 th of July, because his mother died July 4 th . Full moons became significant to Bill where full moons represented that candle in the window, him gazing at the moon, talking to Mom under his breath, his eyes tearing; our pet named Little Brooksy Brooks, a male King Charles Cavalier, was chosen mainly because he was born on July 4 th, and if a girl was to be named Gracie May after mother Grace and Aunt May.

Before she passed, Bill's mother called him her "little man" and after she passed, Grandpop said something Bill never forgot which was "You have to become a man now" - whether he was to be a little man or a man, Bill knew it was time for him to grow up and stop being a little boy. He had to now pull his weight around the house, he needed to contribute - Aunt May was recovering from breast cancer, Grandpop was getting older physically unable to do certain chores, father Harry was working outside the home earning the living and most of house duties were falling on Kitty.

Grandpop taught Bill "manly" duties - stoking the furnace, located in the "scary" basement, how to climb a ladder properly, use a hammer, drive a nail. Kitty taught Bill how to make the beds properly using hospital corners and how to sweep floors. Whereas some kids aged 9 wouldn't want to grow up, our Bill loved it - he liked working, he liked helping out, he felt a sense of independence him wanting to make his own decisions and to that end at age 9 he wanted to ride the trolley by himself without adult supervision to which his elders agreed. The trolley driver's name was Mr. Babby who knew Billy, also knowing his mother had passed, so when Billy would jump aboard the trolley Mr. Babby would place his hand over the coinbox, Billy not having to pay fare. Over time the two became buddies with Billy sitting up front so he and Mr. Babby could talk man-to-man - Billy never did pay fare but in exchange Mr. Babby would ask Billy to run to the corner store to buy a single cigarette. Mr. Babby lived at the corner of Delaware Ave and Union St and when Bill was an adult, he would take his car rides around the Forty Acres, driving by Mr. Babby's house saying aloud "Hey, Mr. Babby" - Bill not forgetting the man who helped him become a "man" at age 9. By age 10, our Billy felt so much the man, he no longer wanted to be called Billy - he became Bill Brooks.

Bill's father made the decision to relocate to PA taking Bill with him to start a new life for themselves; however, Bill was not happy being separated from the family he knew, his home, his friends, his sports and from the Forty Acres community as a whole who had wrapped their arms around him after Grace passed - our Bill was homesick. In true Bill Brooks fashion, he negotiated a deal with his father which was he could return to the Forty Acres under the conditions that Aunt May become his guardian and he had to go to school, however the word "go" wasn't clearly defined. Aunt May didn't foresee she was about to have her hands full with our Bill Brooks.

Initially Bill did "go" to school meaning he walked thru the school doors, sat in the classroom, opened his textbook, stayed the entire day and did his homework at night. All was good until he decided he was bored, Bill recounting, he would sit in the classroom looking out the window wondering what was going on in "the real world". Over time, he would enter the building and classroom spending maybe half a day then leave the premises, undetected, teachers asking WHERE IS BILL BROOKS? The fallout was - notes sent home to Aunt May tattle telling on him her thinking he was "in" school. Aunt May was not pleased at all for she was a staunch believer in education.

Next phase - he would not go to school at all, never entering the building not even a toe on school property but Aunt May didn't know that, her believing he had gone "to" school that morning - more notes sent home to Aunt May. Bill's absences became a concern for all elders to include the principal who suggested that an adult physically drive Bill "to" school dropping him off "at" school watching him walk "in" school so Bill could "go" to school getting an education, the principal believing that would solve the Bill Brooks problem - well that didn't work because as soon as he walked "in" school it was only a matter of time before he walked "out" of school, undetected, escaping thru another door - again the inquiries WHERE IS BILL BROOKS ? and again, more notes sent home to Aunt May.

As an adult, Bill kept a box of memorabilia where the box is his old Army box from World War II and contained within are items which pertain to his junior high and high school years, items which verify his recollection of those years - he disliked schoolwork but he loved sports. There are notes dating back to 1938 where the notes are called "Special Report to Parents" sent home to Aunt May reading: "Bill is not applying himself", "Lack of application and effort", "his work is unsatisfactory" "Bill was absent from class", "Bill is not attending school"- his disinterest in "schoolwork" had created a paper trail. There is another item where the school announces Bill Brooks will graduate from 8th grade and proceed to 9th grade and in parentheses it says "(Good Luck)".

Also in the box is a paper trail of Bill's love of sports: "star athlete", "captain" "winning championships years in a row", him as a "leader", him "earning respect", "holding records", "breaking records", his "love of the sport", his "strength, agility and endurance", his "dedication to the sport" - there are numerous athletic awards, letters, ribbons and photos. Bill was quite the athlete, highly respected and highly praised. The contents of his memorabilia box reflect what were his strengths and weaknesses during his teenage years.

One of his favorite stories involved his best friend Ross Dempsey who was a very smart and studious young man - Bill had to take a test he had not studied for so prior to test day he asked Ross if he could take the test for Bill - the two conspired - after the test was handed out and the teacher left the room, Bill opened the window where Ross was standing outside with a pencil, Bill handed Ross the test, reminding him "Don't make me look too smart". Bill says he would be happy with a "C". Ross fills out the answers then whistles which was their signal the test was completed; however, Bill cannot retrieve the test paper until the teacher leaves the room again, so a distraction is created, the teacher leaves the room, Bill retrieves the test and takes his seat, the teacher returns and the tests are collected. Next class, as the teacher is handing out the graded tests the teacher announced "some of you did better than expected, and some of you did not do well, but the student who was consistent was Bill Brooks," he "earned" a "C" - the class broke out in laughter them knowing Bill and Ross had been in cahoots, the teacher unaware.

Reflecting on his teenage years - Bill said he wasn't a bad teenager but rather he was a "different" teenager in that he had lost his mother, and that loss prompted his desire to grow up at a faster pace than his classmates. Other than to socialize and play sports, he was bored in the classroom which was too confining, too structured with too many rules - he wanted his freedom and independence; he wanted to explore "the real world" which sat outside the four walls; he wanted to be out and about the community amongst the adults taking with him his personality and his open mind to learn how the real world works; he was curious, his mind like a sponge just absorbing as much as he could so in that sense Bill was an excellent student - having the willingness and the appetite to learn, it just didn't come from a book.

Another strength Bill had as a teenager was his willingness - actually his eagerness - to work outside the home; when not in school or playing sports he was helping others or working. One day after dodging, he came upon a man who had a flat tire and although Bill as a teenager had never changed a tire, he offered to help. The man asked "Aren't you supposed to be in school" to which Bill sheepishly said "yes"; the man then offered to "teach" Bill about tires, engines and cars in general. In the end, Bill "learned" something new and the man was appreciative for the help - from Bill's perspective it was a win-win. Bill's rationale was while he wasn't learning from textbooks, he was learning about real life. Bill was the first to admit he was not a good student of book learning, however, he was an excellent student of LIFE. He didn't have book knowledge, he had "street smarts".

Bill became a fixture at Cappeau's drugstore where there was a luncheon counter; he worked behind the counter learning how to make what was his favorite, a root beer float; he made deliveries riding his bike and on weekends he would bring his dates them sitting at the counter. He took on odd jobs - cutting grass, shoveling snow, helping the elderly with their packages, neighbors with their chickens and fresh eggs, helping the milkman make deliveries - whoever needed help, our Bill was there to assist and in the process of assisting he learned he could earn a nickel or a dime or if lucky a quarter and over time his "change" was adding up, his piggybank an 'ol can he kept under his bed.

As that teenager, he was observant, recalling seeing men - "businessmen" - wearing what he described as "crisp white shirts" and he dreamed that someday he, too, would wear a crisp white shirt that he viewed as badge of honor. As that teenager he was earning "change" with little to no effort because helping people and working was effortless to him; he saved his money and when enough was saved, the very first item he bought for himself was that crisp white shirt purchased at Wannamaker's. Bill recalled how proud he was to have walked through their door with "change" in his pocket. Through his lens and in his mind, he was a teenage businessman.

Around the community he was known as the teenager who would dodge school but was also known as the teenager who was willing and able to work, proving himself to be reliable, trustworthy, efficient and productive, as well as extremely likeable, having the personality of his mother - the same qualities he carried forward into adulthood and his business career. Even at age 98, Bill would save his "change" every day making a deposit into his piggybanks, which were empty cigar

boxes.

Other than not having a high school diploma, by age 18 Bill was already molded and shaped as a quality person. He needed to be rounded, he needed to be complete: he needed the military.

As a teenager, Bill enlisted in the United States Army, wanting to serve and defend his country during World War II, entering active service in August 1943 at age 19. He served as a Paratrooper in the 513 th and was also an engineer and driver of light trucks which would prove to serve Bill well in later years when he founded his companies, as he initially drove his own truck. He earned and was awarded two Bronze Service Stars, EAMET Ribbon, American Theater Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, Occupational Ribbon and World War II Victory Medal. While serving and unable to return home, Kitty had died from TB at the age of 29. After receiving an honorable discharge in 1946, he accepted civilian employment overseas eventually returning home to the States to reunite with Aunt May who was by this time living alone in the Shallcross Avenue home. Mother Grace, Grandpop and Kitty had all passed up to Bill being age 20, and father Harry had remarried to second wife, Agnes, them relocating to Kennett Square, PA, where he passed in 1974 at the age of 76.

Bill attended West Nottingham Academy in Maryland, which accepted veterans returning home to complete their education, but again he didn't like the schoolwork, instead enjoying the socialization and sports, excelling in football and basketball. Having not graduated, Bill returned home to Aunt May, working for his uncle Jim Gorman who owned a roofing company, Gorman & Murphy, working for AJAX Distributors and at Bancroft Mills working the night shift, walking, not owning a car, carrying his dinner with him in a brown bag. Aunt May was still working for DuPont, she, too, growing older, and worried about what Bill would make of himself not having a high school diploma. She begged him to please work for DuPont, where he could receive steady pay and benefits.

Being the visionary man he was, Bill had a vision - to compete with Brinks. Bill recounted that when he told that to Aunt May she had to sit down, literally take a seat her being caught off guard, her saying, "How can you possibly do that when you've never graduated from high school?" He recalled his answer being "I think I can do it." After much discussion, he asked Aunt May to co-sign a $1,000 note borrowing from Wilmington Trust, which she did reluctantly, her still concerned about his future. That $1,000 ultimately gave rise to Brooks Armored Car Service and Brooks Courier Service and the balance of Bill's business and philanthropic accomplishments over the course of 72 years. As he learned about trucks while serving in the Army, Bill's first armored-plated truck was purchased in 1951, a brand new ½ ton panel Chevrolet costing $1,588.44 and to bullet-proof, add gun ports, etc. cost another $1,532.99, finance charge on the truck was $1.32.

During the initial stage of founding, Aunt May using her secretarial and organizational skills would type the invoices, make deposits, organize paperwork, etc., her doing whatever she could to help. She never once doubted Bill's work ethic or his ability to get along with others, her having witnessed both since Bill was that 8-year-old little boy - her concern was could the man Bill Brooks, now 26, earn a steady pay living doing so without a complete education. Her concerns eased when she saw the invoices being paid one by one, and the deposits increase. She was pleasantly surprised, Bill recounted, her giving him a huge hug saying how proud she was of him for his vision, risk taking, perseverance and determination not to fail. Then she said the magic words - "Your mother would be proud of you."

Bill recounted - hearing those magic words were like music to his ears, his emotional floodgates opened, he and Aunt May had what was the best conversation they had ever had bringing them closer together strengthening their bond. Bill said his experience in the military made him realize - that although he deeply loved his mom and so greatly missed her, he didn't want to use his loss as a crutch in life preventing him "from doing", instead he wanted to use his loss as motivation "to do". The loss of his mom became his momentum, the driving force behind him wanting to be successful however he defined it. His belief was the harder he worked, the more he was honoring her, celebrating her life versus mourning her death. He believed that no matter what he did in life, as long as he kept his mom in the back of his mind and within his heart he could never fail - at anything. His mother became his angel on his shoulder her with him for every step of his business

and philanthropic careers. The loss of his mother gave him confidence and courage and more importantly, a purpose - a solid reason to persevere which is why Bill worked so very hard - it wasn't "work" for him, it was LOVE, Bill Brooks was driven by LOVE. You cannot be a better MAN than that.

Bill then addressed Aunt May personally - he apologized for all the grief and worry him not going to school had caused her; he thanked her for all the sacrifices she had made for him and the entire family; he assured her she did a good job as being his guardian him not wanting her to feel she had somehow failed him because he failed to take school seriously; because it was only he and Aunt May and because he was about to start his own business which would involve his time, he assured her promising her that as she grew older he would take care of HER - a promise he kept; he told her she was his role model, he wanted to work just as hard as she had worked her entire life; and finally and most importantly, Bill told Aunt May he loved her, she was more than a guardian, she was a mother to him. Bill recalled that Aunt May gave him the biggest, tightest and longest hug her crying saying "Thank you, Billy".

Aunt May lived to see only a mere fraction of Bill's accomplishments, him finding comfort she passed no longer worried about his future. Aunt May had retired in 1954, after giving 41 years of service to DuPont, earning her treasured DuPont ring which Bill used as his wedding ring during his marriage ceremony with Maggie, him wanting Aunt May to be present, and in his pocket were photos of his mother and his father, Grandpop and Kitty. In her pocket, Maggie had photos of her mother and father; they were surrounded, in spirit, by family.

Aunt May had been diagnosed with cancer. She passed away in 1956 at age 62. She would have been ecstatic when at age 90 - yes 90 - Bill finally graduated from high school, where West Nottingham Academy bestowed upon him an honorary diploma.

Over the years, Bill truly appreciated and valued all he had attained, in part, because nothing was ever handed to him; he had to work, and work hard for everything, which made him a quality person keeping him humble and grounded throughout his life - there was no sense of entitlement whatsoever about Bill, and in fact, from Aunt May, his inheritance was a marble top table and the Shallcross home which he sold, giving the monies to the neighbors and friends of Aunt May, who watched over her while Bill was in the Army, and who took care of her during her final years of illness. He could have very easily said thank you to those and pocketed the monies, instead, he did what was the right thing to do, which is what his elders taught him to do.

Bill's work ethic was extraordinary, tireless and much to be admired; he loved to work just loved it; work wasn't work for him; it was a passion. He drove his own truck day and night, hustling, soliciting business in the Wilmington area and lower Delaware which was virgin territory, him sleeping in the truck in the wee hours parked in State Police Barrack parking lots where he knew he'd be safe the police agreeing to wake him so he could continue his journey. Bill earned the reputation of being trustworthy doing business with a handshake, a man of his word. He always acknowledged the business contracts which helped Brooks Armored become a success, particularly during the early stage - Wilmington Trust Co, Delaware Park, Delaware Trust, Delaware Memorial Bridge and the Delaware Turnpike. Brooks Armored earned the reputation of being reliable and efficient where the man behind the business, the face of the business and the personality of the business was Bill "Brooksy" Brooks, whose name was on the trucks. Customers wanted to speak only to Brooksy and make deals only with Brooksy. Bill was a visionary knowing the goals he wanted to reach, however he needed to figure out the path to reach his goal. If one path didn't work, he found another path and wasn't intimidated by roadblocks for he either went around them or over them - he was a man on a mission not to fail - he persevered for decades.

Looking back at his life during his moments of reflection one conversation stands out - during high school Bill was taunted by a group of bullies who were good students them knowing Bill was not. The bullies presumed they were going to be successful one day because of their education and Bill was not to be successful because of his lack of education. Bill said yes, his feelings were hurt them always putting him down, however, the bullying caused him to work even harder made him more

determined to succeed. When he bought his first truck driving around town making his rounds Bill said he saw the worst of the bullies standing on the street corner as an adult. Bill rolled down the window shouting "Hey Petey, what do you think of me now?". Petey partially hung his head but did say "You did good Bill, go get 'em". Sometime later Petey came to Bill asking for a job both finding humor in the fact Bill was behind the desk, Petey on the other side.

With the founding of Brooks Armored, Bill said he had found his niche in life - his three passions were people, working, and doing for others where there was a connection. Him explaining the more he socialized, the more people he met; the more people he met, the better chance of attaining business contracts; the more business contracts, the more profitable the business; the more profitable, the more he could help people and charities; the more people and charities, the more he was giving back to society and his community; the more he was able to give back, the better he felt about himself and the more he was honoring his childhood elders who instilled in him to do for others but more importantly - the more proud he felt his mother would be of him. The height of Bill's success equaled the depth of his gratitude for receiving the upbringing that was bestowed upon him as a youngster.

In junior high, high school and at West Nottingham Academy Bill excelled in sports - football, basketball and badminton - dozens of newspaper articles praising his athleticism, his leadership role as Captain winning consecutive championships and his skill setting records in basketball. Two men became very important to Bill during junior high and high school - football Coach Jim "Monk" Dillon and basketball Coach Eddie Cantwell - Bill never forgetting the positive influence both men had on him during what were very tough and emotional teenage years. Both coaches knew that Bill's mother had passed and his father had relocated to PA leaving Aunt May to raise Bill. He often recounted how his coaches took a genuine interest in his well-being not only them as teachers but as mentors, advisors and father figures, them teaching Bill how to shave properly, tie a tie, shine his shoes and date ladies properly. Over the years a true friendship developed with both men and when Brooks Armored came to be, he offered jobs to their family members. As the coaches grew older and/or became ill, Bill did whatever he could to help them and their families. Coach Dillon and Coach Cantwell were fine men with big hearts both having a very special place within Bill's heart and memory. Both men deserve praise and our deep gratitude for guiding our Bill.

Both coaches taught Bill to be selfless and do for others, so in adulthood he combined that teaching with his love of sports the result being Bill becoming a sponsor of all sports which was his way of giving back. He sponsored Brooks Armored Car teams in Delaware Semi-Pro baseball (1963 Champions), Industrial League Basketball Champs in 1963 and 1964, Wilmington Touch Football (1963 Champions), Little Leagues, and Men's and Women's Bowling Leagues. He was part owner of the Wilmington Blue Bombers basketball team; was a sponsor of softball, golf and tennis as well as sponsor of The Special Olympics and the Veterans Wheelchair Games. He was active on St. Helena's Church Athletic Council and was a horseracing enthusiast owning winning (and losing) and champion standardbred horses Bill thoroughly enjoying all tracks up and down the East Coast as well as Canada, however, his favorite track was Brandywine here locally in Wilmington. Bill's legacy is that of being a great local sportsman. As well, he put to good use his skyboxes at Vet Stadium, the Spectrum, Dover Downs and Baltimore, raising funds for multiple charities annually.

Bill married Bette in 1951, and they divorced approximately 30 years later. Per Bill's account, the understanding is he did not want the divorce nor did he initiate a divorce. He wanted unity, he wanted a family. The divorce resulted in destabilization and division. Having no option, Bill accepted the divorce thereafter living his life as a single man which included dating. He was a very handsome, healthy, kind, 58ish gentleman and prominent businessman who enjoyed people and enjoyed socializing. His nature and charismatic personality did not allow for him to live in isolation detached from society. There was a big world out there he wanted to be a part of, he had a life to live and by damn he was going to live it. Bill dated many women for nearly 16 years treating each respectfully keeping good relations with all which speaks volumes of his character and integrity. Bill having moved on from the divorce, having a dating life and ultimately remarrying in 2005 was unaccepted. Unconditional love is accepting a person for who they are and not for who you want them to be. Conditional love is not love at all, it is selfish and does not end well.

While some may believe that Bette was the stabilizing influence that kept Bill centered throughout his life, there is another viewpoint. Any man having maybe a 10th grade education who turns $1,000 into over $40 million certainly does not need to be stabilized. What Bill did do thru his work ethic, vision and risk-taking was to stabilize the lives of others. Who and what influenced him and kept him centered throughout his life is two-fold - the passing of his mother and all the elders surrounding him from birth to age 19. From age 19 to 26 the military and World War II taught him maturity, discipline, resilience, courage, fear, trust in your fellow soldier, appreciation for your freedoms, and love for your country and her citizens. The first 26 years of Bill's life kept him centered and grounded for the balance of his life. By 1950 prior to any marriage, Bill had experienced more and learned more than any textbook could have provided. He was already molded and shaped into the man we admire and love, he just had not yet applied it to his business career which was the next stage of his life from 1950 forward and thru his business career, which afforded him resources, he began his philanthropic career fulfilling the teachings of his elders. It took a village of people to produce the man Bill became and not just one individual and if there is to be one specific individual, that person, unequivocally, is the beloved Grace M. Gorman Brooks.

For over 40 years Bill was so accustomed to taking care of others, what was missing in his life was somebody to take care of him. After dating for nearly 16 years, he wanted to settle down, he was 74. Thanks to Frank Hanna who thought Bill and Maggie would be perfect for each other, they met on a blind date on a Monday, their second date 5 days later, them inseparable thereafter, together for 24 years. To love Bill was to accept him for who he was, not trying to change him into who or what you wanted him to be; was to focus on and appreciate his good qualities which far outweighed any negative; was to allow him to be happy however he defined happiness for himself; was to trust him having faith in him rather than being dictatorial or judgmental; was to listen, not just hear, but listen to what he had to say the end result would've been you would've learned something. Bill needed to be respected, honored, cherished and treasured, appreciated and spoiled rotten which he loved to be and most of all, he wanted to be loved for who he was and not for what he had. He was a human being no different than any other human being. Maggie is who filled that void which is why Bill fell in love asking her to be his wife, them together for 24 years. She had the loving heart of his mother, Grace, and the workhorse ethic of Aunt May, as well as her own mother her being the perfect person to journey with Bill side-by-side, hand-in-hand through his sunset years and for his final years her loving him unconditionally while taking care of him selflessly and tirelessly. Maggie honored her marriage vows; she walked the walk. Their marriage cost Bill a hefty price, their marriage unaccepted.

In 2011 Bill and Maggie's family of two became the family of three when a King Charles Cavalier puppy with beautiful brown eyes that would melt your heart became their son, naming him Little Brooksy Brooks. Little Brooksy was born on the 4th of July same date as mother Grace's passing, he was meant to be with Bill and was for eleven years. It is immeasurable what Little Brooksy gave to Bill - pure unconditional love, loyalty, faithful companionship, enjoyment and attention - especially as Bill grew older. Just as little Billy laid upon the lap of Grandpop, Little Brooksy laid upon the lap of Bill, and as Bill used his walker, there was Little Brooksy by his Daddy's side walking the pace of the walker. The family of three called themselves The Three Musketeers them inseparable, Little Brooksy having a dog pillow in the car between the seats of Dad and Mom up front and at bedtime the three all cuddled together. Their family was small in number but the love was abundant - they were family in the true sense of the word. With the combination of Maggie and Little Brooksy, there was no doubt whatsoever in Bill's mind and within his heart he was deeply loved and very well taken care of. Bill passed just as he had hoped - The Three Musketeers all cuddled together at bedtime, him passing in his sleep, God sparing him any suffering.

Bill's elders experienced World War I, The Great Depression, and World War II and/or the effects of where those three events alone molded and shaped the country where the country and her citizens united. It wasn't about YOU, there was no selfishness; it was all about your country, community, neighbors and your family and what you as one person could do to contribute. Being raised in that environment with those teachings practiced and instilled, bearing witness to people's hardships had a tremendous impact on Bill and were in part the sources of his lifelong journey of selflessness and

generosity.

It was 7 am Sunday morning, day of NASCAR races, Bill eating his peanut butter by the tablespoons was watching on local news an interview where a man stated he and his wife who were devoted NASCAR fans could no longer afford tickets for the bleacher seats because the economy was in a deep recession. As Bill was listening, Maggie could see the gears turning in his head, her knowing that look on his face, her knowing he was about "to do something". What was taking place at that kitchen island was a good deed about to happen, Bill coming up with an idea him thinking of how to implement the idea. He calls Terry Spence at 7:30 asking if he could find a way to track down this man so Bill could offer them tickets for his luxury skybox at Dover Downs for that day's race which was hours away from commencing. By 10 am Terry calls back with the couple's name, Bill arranges for 2 tickets to be at will-call, Bill and Maggie entered the box at 1 pm and there was the couple sitting down front them thoroughly enjoying themselves. Introductions were made, the couple giving Bill a huge hug thanking him for his kindness and generosity, Bill simply and humbly responding he was glad to help.

Bill felt personal satisfaction he had done his good deed for THAT day and that is precisely how he lived his life in that every day he awoke his objective was "to do something" for somebody else even if that somebody was a complete stranger. Thank you, Terry Spence, for all you did to make the wheels turn and to bring a smile on someone's face. Bill had won $20,000 in a football pool him giving the funds to the bartender who was newly married them expecting their first newborn. He wanted to ensure the couple had a good financial footing when their baby arrived. Frank Talmo recalled that many years ago when hospital TVs were not "free" so to speak, Bill very quietly behind the scenes made arrangements for all TV's to be activated for an entire hospital floor. An employee was inundated with work stressing out he couldn't find time to rake his leaves which were accumulating. Bill asked Maggie "to get it done", phone calls were made and one morning the employee was surprised to hear the sounds of leaf blowers and seeing workers all over his property getting the job done. A couple's child was ill needing medical attention in New York City, Bill told them to pack their bags he was sending his limo to drive them into New York City. Bill's armored trucks would pick up New York City cheesecakes for Mrs. Carpenter Bill telling the driver the cheesecake was the most valuable cargo on board.

When a couple couldn't afford to pay for their children's education, Bill did. Initially when an adult nursing facility couldn't afford to pay their monthly bills, Bill did. When little league teams needed new equipment or uniforms, all it took was a simple phone call Bill stepping up to the plate to provide, no questions asked. At restaurants, when Bill saw a table of dining law enforcement officers, he quietly picked up their tab. Whenever he saw the elderly struggle in whatever way even trying to step up a curb, Bill would run over assisting them to avoid them falling. He would open doors and pull-out chairs; he would tell the elderly or a mother holding a child to go ahead of him in line; at a function he would give up his seat for the elderly or a woman - the list goes on and on and on. Bill wasn't just kind and generous, he was observant him seeing what others did not. He had insight to recognize that somebody might need some help even when they don't ask for help. We all know he was generous but at times too generous for his own good which opened the door for some people to take advantage of Bill them seeing an opportunity to benefit. Those of us who respected him saw his generosity as a strength, those who took advantage saw it as a sign of weakness. Those who took advantage or tried to were the same people who would complain that Bill had protectors or handlers who's self-appointed duty it was to protect him from such people. Much credit goes to Reds, Talmo, Pickles, Tippy and Maggie for looking out for Bill's best interest

The founding of Brooks Armored resulted in resources affording Bill the means and opportunity to help others financially to whatever degree and when combined with his Heart of Gold, it was only a matter of time before his legacy was created. A legacy is not created by a name alone or how much money you have, it's what you do with your money which helps to create the legacy. Over the course of seven decades Bill shared, gave, donated, loaned, co-signed, supported, sponsored, educated and financed - individuals, families, clubs and organizations, churches, businesses, athletics, charities, blood, other's blood, friends, acquaintances and strangers. Bill making a positive difference in people's lives is what defines him, making a positive difference that people remember

is Bill's legacy.

Bill was the Empathizer-in-Chief in that he wasn't generous because he felt sorry for, having pity for a person but rather he came from the direction of "understanding" a person's situation him having the ability, the insight to imagine what it would be to step into that person's shoes - he was empathetic. His perspective was there is a time and place for being sympathetic but being empathetic can be every day - a way of life. While he knew he couldn't solve all problems of a person, he might be able to solve just one which was one less for the person to contend with. His generosity was meant to be a hand-up in life and not a handout. Having the keen ability to understand people opened his mind and his heart him wanting to help people; his ability to understand is what then triggered him to ACT. Along those same lines, he would not want for you to pity him he lost his mother when he was age 8, instead he would want you to "understand" what it was like for him to have lost her at age 8 asking yourself how you would feel if you lost your mother at that tender age. By understanding who that little boy was it should become clearer as to who the "man" was, the man Bill became, your having a clearer understanding as to WHY he was so generous and thoughtful. Once you grasp the entire picture of Bill's life do you then realize that every single good deed, everything good he did in his life and over the course of his 70-year business career, to include all businesses and all dollars, came about genuinely from his heart, the memory of his mother the driving force.

The author is not professing Brooksy was an angel or some sort of saint because we all know he was not and he too knew it. He enjoyed partying to the wee hour of the morning drinking his Moet champagne or Bud Lite even going over state lines because the bars closed later. He enjoyed music, loved it - Joe Stefferi at Sam's and Mickey and Joey at Catherine's and other clubs as well as concerts at the Vet and the Spectrum where "whatever" happens in the skyboxes stays in the skyboxes not suitable for print. If there was a bar/restaurant, Brooksy had been in it the patrons shouting "Hey Brooksy" when he entered. At times he would do "things" which were embarrassing or inappropriate, however all was done in the name of fun no intention to hurt anybody. If he did hurt anybody, he hurt himself. Some of his antics were just downright funny. Bill once got his car stuck in a Smyrna car wash at night, unable to get out so he stayed overnight drinking his Moet, smoking his cigar, and listening to music until help arrived the next morning. He was as happy as a clam. Bill and his party guests got locked inside the Vet Stadium him recounting he had to call Ruly Carpenter to unlock the doors. Bill took Maggie to her first Eagles game at the Vet and before they left the house and while driving to the game she kept asking if he had "the tickets" to which he said "Don't worry about it". They get to the gate Bill telling her to stay close to him, he hands the elderly gentleman his "tickets" the gentleman "pretending" to tear the tickets then returns the tickets back to Bill, they enter and proceed to Bill's skybox. Turns out, Bill was using old hockey tickets to gain entrance to a football game and the gentleman pretended to tear the tickets because the security cameras were filming. At home Bill showed her his cigar box full of "tickets" - hockey, baseball, concert tickets even parking garage tickets. The men working at the Vet were the old timers all-knowing Bill for years, he always "took care of them" and they always let him slide by. Tippy worked for Bill also driving for Bill nights around Wilmington and into Philly. Tippy learned one important lesson when driving "the boss" around from nightspot to nightspot - never allow Bill Brooks to sleep not even 10 minutes because 10 minutes was all he needed to get his second wind and when he got second wind it meant Tippy wouldn't be returning to his own home before 3 or 4 am, Tippy having to go to work.

Bill would routinely say to Maggie and I quote "I KNOW I CAN BE A PAIN IN THE ASS" to which she routinely responded "YA THINK?" She would call him "left of normal" meaning he didn't follow rules, he was a rebel of sorts who wanted to break the rules whereas she was a rule-follower. If there was a sign which CLEARLY said DO NOT ENTER, he would want to enter in part to see what would happen if he did enter - that sign is near DuPont Country Club. If a sign CLEARLY said ONE WAY, he wanted to drive the opposite way and when she would say "We can't go that way because the sign says one-way", his answer was he was only going one way. When the National Weather Service broadcasted that you should stay home not driving in the wicked snowstorm, Bill and Maggie were of course on the roads in their big SUV or doing donuts in Brandywine High School parking lot Bill loving every minute him shouting "go faster". One day Maggie had a doctor' appt at

Christiana Medical MAP 2 building her asking Bill if he was to be OK by himself sitting on his scooter IN THE WAITING ROOM for about 15 minutes - his answer "of course, I'll be right here when you get out" - well that was a lie - Maggie returns and there is no Bill ANYWHERE! After walking and searching for literally 30 minutes to and from Map 2 to the main entrance area and asking anybody and everybody "Have you seen a man on a scooter?", she had to call security them announcing an A.P.B. for a man on a scooter. Twenty minutes later here comes Bill scooting alongside the security guard them acting like two 'ole buddies Bill honking his scooter horn asking her "What took you so long?" Bill had scooted from MAP 2 clear to the Emergency Room area making friends along his way. He was such the rascal you couldn't help but love him.

Bill smoked big long cigars, ate peanut butter by the quart and loved blueberries; he so enjoyed music frequenting nightspots which had live bands, had XM radio pumped throughout the house, his favorite song was the Hucklebuck, his favorite instrument to listen to was the clarinet; he only watched movies which were comedies because he so loved to laugh, he watched cartoons, Benny Hill and Mrs. Bucket. He was a night owl - when he couldn't sleep, he would say "road trip" which meant Bill, Maggie and Little Brooksy all piled in the car even at 11 pm, driving around for hours listening to music, him smoking his cigar wearing his pajamas and when he fell asleep, Maggie knew it was time to return home. He enjoyed driving and wasn't happy at all when he could no longer drive. Some of his best thinking and decision making was done while he was driving alone listening to music. Unable to drive but wanting to be alone especially during a full moon, he would sit in the car on the driveway drinking his Bud Lite gazing at the moon thinking of Mom and when he needed a refill, he would blink the headlights Maggie delivering a cold beer, giving him a kiss telling him to take as much time as he needed, Bill saying "I love you, thanks for understanding." Bill was the prankster playing jokes on Charlie Shaw initiated by Frank Hanna, Reds and Ballsie. Bill liked Chick-fil-A and Dairy Queen "Blizzards" with peanut butter cups. They knew every location within the tri-state area within a 40-minute drive - no kidding - they would drive to Elkton or south to Dover just to get Bill a sandwich, they didn't care, The Three Musketeers were all together and that's all that mattered. The workhorse she was, when Maggie snowblowed the driveway at midnight and wee hours, Bill would sit at the kitchen island drinking his Moet smoking his cigar listening to XM radio him observing through the kitchen window and when he wanted to say "I love you", he would blink the spotlights her waving back, him waving back to her - like it or not, they were two people in love. Bill never bought her a diamond ring because she didn't want one, she said she already had her diamond - HIM. Maggie called Bill her diamond in the sand, a rare and once-in-a-lifetime love.

Bill lived his life his way and along the way he didn't hurt a soul. If you got hurt, the fault rests with you. If you were not in his life, the fault rests with you. Bill used to say you can't make someone respect you, they either do or they don't and they either show it or not and you can't force someone to be in your life, they either want to be or they don't. It is whole cloth fiction that anybody was kept from Bill. Anyone who professes such kept themself from him by way of their own actions, behaviors and non-acceptance for which neither Bill or Maggie is responsible. In every category, Bill reached his peak, he could not have been a better man or a better human being. When you set your expectations so high, unrealistic, unfairly and selfishly, when all is said and done in the end, you are the one disappointed. Bill passed with a crystal-clear conscience knowing in his mind and in his heart, he did everything humanly possible to make people happy. He was only one man capable of doing only so much.

As was his style, Bill wanted others to be mentioned for their maintaining contact with him as he grew older - the late Charlie Shaw; Frank and Nancy Hanna, Bill calling Nancy his favorite gal and his Nancy; Pat and Joe Quinlan and their children, Jerri and Chris, who regularly invited Bill/Maggie for holidays; John Hynansky, who would offer help no matter what country he was in; Dave "Wink" Perry; Blaine Griffith; Lucy Stone; Terry and Nancy Spence; Ruthie Joseph; Billy Bane; Lou Capano; Joe Cadillac; Tom Mancini; Micky and Bill Bergey; Ken and Candice Kochenour; Joe Grace; Church and Mary Franklin; the late Dallas Green and wife, Sylvia; Chan and Karen Dellose Cathcart; Joe Adams; Jon Berger; Jim and Georgia Mazarakis; Frank and Lorraine Talmo; Jim "Pickles" Syzmanski; Tippy and Mrs. Tippy; Bill and Chris Bradley; "Tommy Gun"; Gail Anderson and her sons, Chris and Todd; Micki and Pat; the late Joanne "Sparkle" Ryan; Ellis and Gigi Ramsey; neighbors, Judy and Joe DeStefano, who looked out for Maggie, making sure she was

doing OK as sole caregiver and always offering their help; neighbors, Joe and Charlotte Iorii, who brought peaches to Bill which he enjoyed over vanilla ice cream; and then there are The Conatys - who he called The Conaty Clan. Some of his fondest memories in later years were of the Conatys, who through their entertaining ways and sense of humor would make Bill laugh. None of the Conatys or their spouses were ever shy showing their emotions - plenty of hugs and kisses and never ever departing without saying "I love you Uncle Bill'. He loved you, too- more than you may realize.

Bill and Maggie use the services of Republic Disposal Service their driver's name is Denaren who has a fabulous personality. He knew that Bill was to become a 98-year-old WWII veteran so to celebrate Bill's 98th birthday he took it upon himself to arrange for him and men from management to arrive at the house delivering balloons, cards, a huge birthday cake, other foods and a bag of gifts at 7:30 am where Bill met them on the driveway. Photos were taken, handshakes and hugs exchanged and "thank you for your service" was extended. A wonderful and heartfelt moment of human kindness, respect for elders and for a veteran. Thereafter Maggie wrote a thank you card to Denaren's mother thanking her for raising such a wonderful son. She also called corporate headquarters to relay Denaren's selfless act of kindness. Those photos are some of the last taken of Bill where you can see his beautiful big smile. Maggie is forever grateful for those photos; they will be treasured. Thank you, Denaren; your wife, Tishunda; your mother, Glenda; and Republic Services for bestowing such a priceless gift.

Bill was very fortunate to have had the finest most capable team of medical professionals who genuinely cared about him as not only a patient but as a friend. Bill and Maggie wanted to extend their heartfelt and immeasurable gratitude for the care and attention Bill received over the years affording him not only longevity but also a quality of life. Leading the medical team was Dr. John F. Reinhardt, primary care physician, who with the help of his extraordinary staff Jenny and Debbie took excellent, excellent care of Bill and who made himself available 24-7-365 which Maggie found comforting and took advantage of when she called Doc at 4 am because Bill had somehow swallowed a stink bug. Whenever Bill was hospitalized arrangements were always made for her to sleep overnight in his room on a recliner Bill not wanting to be left alone at night bringing back the memories of his mother, Grace. Dr. Piamsook Angkeow was Bill's cardiologist for 18 years whose "huge" responsibility it was to care for our Bill's "Heart of Gold". Dr. Angkeow would call Bill for his birthdays and had a photo of Bill and himself on his refrigerator. The late Dr. Joseph D'Amico was responsible for saving Bill's life years ago for which Bill and Maggie will forever be grateful. Dr. D'Amico will always be remembered as a kind and gentle soul who enjoyed his patients taking genuine interest in their lives and who had the best bedside manner. One year Bill had a colonoscopy on his birthday and because the procedure was "between friends" who both had a sense of humor Maggie wrote "Happy Birthday to me" on Bill's buttocks, taping a birthday card for D'Amico to sign. Bill wanted to thank Terry Spence, former Speaker of the House and the longest serving Speaker of the House in the United States, for referring us to Drs. Reinhardt and D'Amico. Terry and Bill had a beautiful longstanding relationship and friendship each helping one another throughout the years for which neither ever forgot.

A special thank you to Drs. Edward Chan; Leonard Dzubow; Leo Rasis; Dorothy Moore; Michael Henry; Nick Russo; Joan Coker; Peter Townsend; David Sowa; Andrew Glick; Tony Cucuzzella; Andrew Himelstein; Guy Nardella; Ryan Hoffman; and David Narzarian and all their staff - excellent care and always with a smile. An extra special thank you to Bridget, her husband, Ron and their 3 children, Chloe, Selena and Daniel; Edward and Jaclyn and Naomi; Nicole and Jennifer; all the gals at Christiana Care Imaging Dept Foulkstone Medical; Bill's dear friend and stylist, Lucy Stone; his barbers, John and Beau; his physical therapists at University of Delaware and at ATI in Branmar Plaza; and former trainers, Mark and Matt. They all adored Bill and he them, making each other laugh.

For the past 5 years Bill's personal trainer was Sean Heller employed at Main Line Health Center in PA. His knowledge, expertise, personality and genuine admiration and respect for Bill afforded Bill not only an extended life but a quality of life. Sean's and Maggie's goal was to never allow Bill to become weak or frail. Sean was dedicated to ensuring that Bill maintained his muscle tone affording

him the ability to be self-sufficient and later that toning greatly assisted Maggie her not needing help from others. Other patrons would comment on how Sean and Bill worked together as a team, them laughing and enjoying each other's company. They had a special bond; they were friends to the end. When Maggie called Sean the morning of Bill's passing he was so upset he cancelled appointments for that day going home to grieve. In honor of the relationship they had together, and for all the good Sean did for Bill physically and emotionally, the decision was made for Bill to be cremated with his bathing suit. Some of the last photos taken of Bill were of him and Sean in the pool smiling and laughing. Main Line Center was a source of enjoyment and socialization for Bill him receiving a lot of attention being the eldest patron at 98 and for his 98th birthday they all celebrated as though he was a rock star which he was to all of us. Maggie wishes to thank all Main Line staff for their genuine respect and kindness toward Bill, they all served a good purpose in a good man's life never to be forgotten.

Maggie would like to extend her personal heartfelt gratitude and love to her late father Dr. Robert A. Abraham who Bill called Dr. Bob and who was the Chief of Obstetrical Anesthesia at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD and to her eldest brother. Dr. John David Abraham (Meghan, Ava and Jack) an orthopedic surgeon practicing in upstate New York for their availability 24-7-365 Maggie's medical "hotline" providing medical advice, instruction and education greatly assisting her in her care of Bill, David specializes in knees and hips Bill actually becoming a patient and while visiting, Bill was introduced to Lake George and The Sagamore which Bill and Maggie visited often.

Although the public gives Maggie credit for Bill's longevity, she knows it took a village of people to care for Bill combined with the genes he was so fortunate to have had. She could have never done what she did do without "the team" and for that she is forever indebted. We all worked toward the same goal which was to do whatever it took to ensure that Bill was the healthiest and happiest he could be for as long as he could be - our goal was 100 - we all thought for sure that goal was attainable however God had other plans calling Bill Home at 98 years and 3 months. The entire Team gave to everybody what was a wonderful gift, Bill's longevity, it was up to everybody to make good use of that gift.

Bill Brooks was not only an institution - through his own genius having a brilliant strategic business mind, Bill created his own industry where the industry is Bill Brooks himself - he was the product of his upbringing; he sold himself by simply being his natural self; he distributed himself by interacting and socializing with people; his advertising was his name on his trucks and the name of his businesses; his branding was his natural personality, his kindness and generosity, integrity, trustworthiness and loyalty; his logos were his warm inviting smile, his beautiful blue eyes which were kind eyes, and him not wearing socks - Bill was his own best asset. While the name Bill Brooks is not trademarked, the industry of Bill "Brooksy" Brooks certainly is. Bill was accomplished in his own right through his own tireless efforts, sweat and tears. Unlike so many who are insecure or inadequate, he didn't need to hitch a ride on another person's STAR for he had and will always have what is his own STAR bearing what is his name and what will forever be his legacy. Bill's STAR will forever shine brightly in his State, in his community and in our hearts. Nobody can ever fill Bill Brooks's priceless shoes no matter how hard they try and no pair can ever be bought for it would be just a cheap imitation. They don't make his shoes anymore; they are not out of stock, they have been out of production since March 9, 1924

Bill will be remembered as an extraordinary human being so full of energy having a zest for life; his personality reflected his love for people; he shared with all of us his passion for life and showed us the sweetness of life. He was a humble man, a gentle Giant who had a quiet strength about him. He was a simple man yet in ways complex; he was kind and gentle yet tough as nails. He had a sense of confidence, not arrogance, him being quite comfortable within his skin. He didn't feel the need to be relevant, he knew who he was as a person and he knew all he had done for others. He was a teacher, a mentor and to some a father figure just as his coaches were to him. He was understanding, empathetic and patient; was lovable and wanted to be loved. It is an understatement to say he was generous, too generous at times, he was the symbol of generosity. He was known for his two-dollar bills and him not wearing socks. He was not an angel and didn't profess to be; he got himself in trouble, did things in an unorthodox manner or was embarrassing,

he was "colorful" but that was the beauty of Bill, he was being his natural self not one to be pretentious - to accept Bill was to accept all of him not just the parts you liked or benefitted from. His heart was always in the right spot pointing in the right direction. Bill was able to think and see outside the box; he didn't shy away from anything him facing challenges head on almost as if he was having a contest with himself; he made decisions others wouldn't or didn't have the courage to make; he wasn't afraid of failure for he viewed failure as a lesson learned; he chased his goals and dreams, achieving; he persevered the word "no" not in his vocabulary. He did everything he could using the powers he had - he couldn't have done any more. He didn't just talk the talk; Bill Brooks walked the walk.

He was grounded, never forgetting from whom and from where he came. Grace, Harry, Grandpop, Aunts May and Kitty, and the entire Forty Acres community raised a good boy who became a good man who did good things with his life and did good things during his time on Earth. While his mother Grace was in his life physically for only eight short years he took the memory of her, honoring her, to do good things for the balance of his life - he was a good son, he was his mother's son and yes, she would have been so very proud of him just as we all are proud of him. Bill is our Idol, our Hero, our Rock Star - indeed he is a Legend. Thank you, Bill for everything, everything you so kindly did for all of us, we love you Brooksy, God bless you my friend, till we meet again.

Isn't it ironic that the teenager who disliked schoolwork, who "didn't apply himself", who was taunted and bullied, and who didn't formally receive a high school diploma grew up to be the Man who will always be remembered as one of the greatest teachers, Bill teaching all of us that with a little bit of effort and with a lot of selflessness you can make a positive difference in someone's life and bring a smile to their face. He used to say "It doesn't take much to be kind". He lived by the motto when you help someone else you are really helping yourself you receiving personal satisfaction. He held the belief that we all were put on this good Earth to do good things during our lifetime, to be the best of humanity, to think beyond one's self with the reward being you are a better person for doing such. Bill Brooks was a man who walked the walk. That little boy with the broken heart grew into the Man who had a Heart of Gold. That is the story and legacy of William Francis Brooks (1924 - 2022). Bill will be laid to Rest above his dear beloved mother Grace - after 90 years, Mother and Son have been reunited and once again they will dance together, not in the kitchen, but in Heaven.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Ann's School, 2006 Shallcross Avenue Wilmington, Delaware 19806, www.thesaintannschool.org in honor of Bill and his mother, Grace, made in the name of his mother, GRACE M. GORMAN BROOKS. Both Bill and his mother attended St. Ann's School which is located within the Forty Acres one block from Bill's childhood home on Shallcross Avenue and is the site of Bill's first legendary escape from school where he climbed out the second story window sliding down the gutter spout.

Due to unauthorized third-party involvement which caused interference and delay of Bill's funeral arrangements to include his official obituary, funeral services for Bill will be private by invitation only extended by the Executor.