

Remembering Bill

by Paul Halac



Last winter the FFS lost one of its most influential members, Bill Martin from Ashland, KY. Please allow me to say a few words to reflect and remember my dear friend.

I have known Bill for perhaps 30 years but it seems like he has been a friend all my life. I can't say exactly which FFS convention it was where we met but it was likely in the mid 90s and probably it was around a piano with Bill playing and a group of FF members singing Freshmen songs. He was soft spoken, but so enthusiastic about the music, it rubbed off on every participant.



Over the years, Bill and I became closely associated with a special group of FFS folks. We only saw each other for a week or less at each Reunion but it was like a family to us. We sat together at FF performances and spent time together dining and exploring the current convention city. It seemed like time stood still between conventions. We even had a saying when we parted, "We'll see each other again next year, . . . in two weeks."

Bill and Yas Ichiura were the driving force behind the "Wannabees" sessions at each Reunion. Bill labored for weeks over the Songbooks that were distributed at each Wannabees meeting, by now an integral part of every

convention. It was most important to him to make that sing-along meaningful to those who were there. Needless to say, his efforts were fully justified.

Bill made the tape recording which ultimately became the FFS exclusive CD called *Road to Portsmouth*. It was my honor to collaborate with him and Ross Barbour on that project. Bill's contributions to our Society were many.

I could write much more about this remarkable man but I will close by saying he was one of the kindest, most gentle men I have ever known and I never heard him utter a negative word about anyone. He was a true gentleman in every sense of the word. I will always treasure his friendship and remember all the stories and laughs we shared together. Bill, I hope and expect you and Ross will be smiling down on us in Fort Wayne next September. I'll really miss you at our table but, as the song says, *We'll be Together Again*.

