

CONGRATULATIONS TO BILL & CAROLE KINNEY!

Irish Persons of the Year

Bill and Carole Kinney were selected to be Dane County Shamrock Club's Irish Persons of the Year for 2009.



The Kinneys have been members of the Dane County Shamrock Club since 1985. In the 1990's they arranged for Shamrock members to visit two historic homes in Fitchburg that are on the National Registry of Historic Homes - Fox Hall and the McCoy House, both built in the 1850's. The tour included other places of interest like the Stamm House and Quivey's Grove. Also in the past, Bill and Carole represented the Shamrock Club in giving a tour of the historic spots in Fitchburg to a large group of members of the Fitchburg Chamber of Commerce. The Kinneys can be seen volunteering at Fitchburg Days each year. In 2008, they narrated two-hour trolley tours of Fitchburg pointing out landmarks, homesteads, schools, depots, cemeteries and other historic sights.

The Kinneys have been very active in the Fitchburg Historical Society and in preserving the history of the early Irish families that came to the area. Carole was a founding member and first president of the Fitchburg Historical Society in 1987 and is currently an archivist. The Fitchburg Historical Society archives are now in the former Fitchburg City Hall, and Carole says that a place has been promised for the archives in the future Fitchburg Library!

Bill and Carole were married forty-six years ago in St. Raphael Cathedral where Monsignor Kinney was the Rector. They have three sons. Edward is married and built a house in the woods on the farm and is a vice-president of Anchor Bank. He has two daughters. Tom, who authored the book [The Irish Settlers of Fitchburg](#), is a lawyer in Manhattan, New York City. Andrew lives in California and is married with two sons and another on the way. He composes and orchestrates background music for motion pictures, TV, video games, etc.

Bill's ancestors settled on Irish Lane in Fitchburg in 1844, and the original farm remains in the family. Seven generations have lived on the farm. The Kinney's received a certificate in 1994 from the State of Wisconsin for continuous ownership of 150 years. Irish ancestors on the Kinney side are the Kinneys from Co. Mayo, the Lynches from Co. Fermanagh, and the Landers. On Bill's Mother's side, there are the Flemings from Co. Cavan, the Donagheys from Co. Donegal, and the Pattersons. There were picnics every year on the farm around the 4th of July for both sides of the family that brought relatives from all around to share stories and updates on the genealogy records. In 1994 there was a huge 150 year celebration with about 175 people from seven states and even Ireland in attendance. The farm is considered "home base" to all the descendants of the original Irish Lane Kinney pioneer homesteaders.

Bill attended Fitchburg Center School on the corner of Fish Hatchery and Whalen Roads. There were between thirteen and twenty-two students in the school at any one time. The students carried water for the school from the Gorman's across the road. Later on a well was drilled. There was a big pot belly stove in the one-room school before they put in a furnace. According to Bill, the outdoor privies never got updated! Of course, there were always cows to be milked and pigs to be fed before and after school. The Kinney hay barn was the local "gymnasium" for basketball for a lot of kids.

Carole says that her grandparents from Ireland are the Joys from Co. Tipperary, the Alexanders from Co. Down, and the Marbacks from Co. Clare. They all came over in the late 1800's to Aurora, Illinois where she was raised. Carole's grandmothers were very musical. One of them, Katie, loved to sing the old Irish ballads like "A Mother's Love Is A Blessing." The other grandmother, Johanna, was singing and "cutting records" before she came over from the "old country" - as she used to express it. Carole picked up Irish dancing and had fun performing with a friend in college. She and Bill actually did the Irish Jig on the Great Wall of China in 1992! A friend of theirs videotaped it.

Bill retired as Vice-President and Trust Officer from what is now known as J.P. Morgan Chase. He is an usher and a Trustee at St Joseph's Church. Carole is an R.N. and is currently retired from nursing and nursing instruction. She is in charge of Deaf Ministry and interprets for the Deaf at the Sunday morning Mass. The two of them are on the Baptism Prep Team, and Carole leads a Bible Study group, is on the Adult Faith Formation Committee, and is active with the Westside Pastoral Ministers who visit the sick and homebound. Carole also volunteers as one of the Chairs for the Health, Social and Political Sciences Department of the Dane County Fair. Bill is on the Board of Directors of two Charitable Foundations.

Bill and Carole say that they thoroughly enjoy belonging to the Shamrock Club. It offers such a nice variety of speakers, musical performances, celebrations of the holidays, and of course the big "St. Pat's Day" fun at the Capitol and the Parade. And most of all they say it is fun to be with people who take such pride in their Irish heritage! They have been to Ireland three times now, and Carole says it always seems like I am "going home." How much more Irish can you get?