



# Paul William Brennan

NOV 6, 1938 - SEP 26, 2023



Scan to Visit



HAWAIIAN  
MEMORIAL PARK MORTUARY  
AT VALLEY OF THE TEMPLES

# Table of Contents

<b>Obituary</b> .....	Page 3
<b>Tribute Wall</b> .....	Page 5



# Paul William Brennan

NOV 6, 1938 - SEP 26, 2023

**O**n Tuesday, September 26, Paul William Brennan (84) passed away peacefully at home on O’ahu. He was born November 6, 1938 in Leipsic, Ohio, but his adventurous spirit led him to live most of his life in the Pacific islands. This began in 1968 with his work in linguistics (the focus of his PhD), and anthropology among the Enga people of Papua New Guinea (PNG) for the Lutheran Church, followed by several years with the PNG government. Some of his most notable accomplishments in PNG were serving as the lead translator for the Enga New Testament, founding the Enga Cultural Center (Enga Takyanda), and being advisor for the country’s first Prime Minister, Sir Michael Somare.

In 1981 he moved his family to Hawai’i and settled in Maunawili Valley, a place he came to cherish, ‘knew like the back of his hand’, and where he took his final breath. During his 42 years in Hawai’i he had many positions including at the East West Center (Researcher), Bishop Museum (archeologist), and the United Church of Christ (pastor on Moloka’i and O’ahu). For more than 25 years he marched as President Lincoln in Kailua’s 4th of July parade. Based on his deep personal connections, respect for and knowledge of the history of Kailua and Maunawili, he was a lead author on the award-winning book ‘Kailua’, and a founding member and president of the Kailua Historical Society. He devoted countless hours to sharing his knowledge and vision to mālama (care for and protect) culturally and ecologically important places along the watershed flowing into Kawainui marsh, and around Queen Lili’uokalani’s retreat. This involved working to inspire younger generations to restore Hawaiian agricultural traditions in Maunawili.

Paul’s warm smile, outstanding communication and listening skills, open-mindedness, generous, humble, and gentle spirit made him a friend to many wherever he lived. His deep Christian faith reached back to his ancestor’s Amish and Mennonite roots and evolved over time, allowing him to see that his way of connecting to the sacred was not the only meaningful way. Paul’s lifelong love of music and harmonizing first brought him to Hawai’i in a traveling college quartet where he sang tenor. His creativity and love of natural beauty shined through his woodwork, photography,



## Obituary

**Paul William Brennan**

NOV 6, 1938 - SEP 26, 2023

flower arrangements, poems, sermons, and affirming cards he made for loved ones. He was a meticulous documenter of oral histories, cultural traditions, and his own life in his daily diaries. An early riser, Paul embraced physical activity in construction and landscaping projects, and by playing basketball, running three marathons, and hiking to collect flowers and bananas to share. Paul was resourceful with an eye for repurposing things that others discarded.

He was a loving, patient, and helpful father to his four sons and the many foster children that he and his beloved wife 'Dottie' cared for. He is survived by his loving wife of 63 years, Dorothy Nesseth Brennan and four sons, Dr. Eric Brennan (Ana Sandoval) of Salinas, CA, Dr. Nathan Brennan (Christina Caldwell) of Sarasota, FL, Lars Brennan (Yanah Brennan) of Vancouver, WA, Jason Brennan (Dr. Julie Motosue-Brennan) of Elk Grove, CA, and 16 grandchildren and one great grandchild. He was one of three children, and he is survived by his siblings Joanne Franklin (Carmel, Indiana) and David Brennan (Huber Heights, Ohio). His grandchildren include Milan Brennan, Paolo Brennan, Sydney Brennan, Andrew Brennan, Jack Brennan, Brianna Brennan, Madison Cantrell (Dylan Cantrell), Lucas Brennan, Aliyah Brennan, Hannah Brennan, Jedidiah Brennan, Benjamin Brennan, Emi Brennan, Logan Brennan, Koa Brennan, Kenzie Brennan. His great grandchild is Maverick Cantrell. A celebration of life will be held at 4 p.m. on Saturday, October 7 at the Kailua United Methodist Church (1110 Kailua Rd), followed by a reception; visitation will be at 3 p.m. The service will be live streamed at this link (<https://shorturl.at/BFMR6>) for those not able to attend in person



## Tribute Wall

**Paul William Brennan**

NOV 6, 1938 - SEP 26, 2023

SN

**Sylvia Joy Niswander** posted:

My memories go back to our childhood days as Paul was my first cousin. Back then we didn't live too far apart. But my parents moved to Hawaii as missionaries in 1948, and after that we lived in different states, so we would get together when we could on special occasions or when a loved one passed away. My Aunt Mardy was a remarkable women. I always admired her. She worked so hard all her life and we loved her. We always loved to be entertained in her home. She would make black walnut cookies and the walnuts came from trees in her yard. One of the great memories was when my Aunt Mary, Grandpa, ,Joanne, Paul, and David visited us in Elbing KS. It was hot, but my brothers and Paul and David played a lot of baseball, and one day challenged the high school kids, and won! That has been a story we always have fun remembering. Paul was the most gentle man, always treating everyone kindly. Paul made special cards for his family and relatives, and I was privileged to receive them through the years. I cherish each one, Paul has left a wonderful legacy to all of us in the family and I look forward to seeing him again in heaven. Praying for Dottie and the family that God will comfort them during this time of sadness. Love, Joy

October 8 at 11:54 PM

AV

**Ani Van Eps** posted:

When my daughter Robin needed to move from Molokai to Oahu with her 2-1/2 year old daughter 8 years ago, Uncle Paul and Aunty Dottie allowed her to stay with them until she found a place. They became family to us and we love them with all our hearts. Godspeed Uncle Paul, I know you will be welcomed in heaven! Ani Van Eps

October 7 at 12:28 PM



**Lorrie Barker** posted:

Our friendship with Paul began twenty years ago when we lived on Lopaka Place. We always felt very welcome in their home. When asked to care for their dog and cat while they were vacationing was always something we enjoyed. We were so fortunate to be included is so many family gatherings. When we moved to Kaneohe in 2010 Paul graciously blessed our townhome and he also blessed our current townhome in 2018. He will be remembered as the most accomplished man we've had the pleasure of knowing and we cherish our memories of him with much Aloha. Cy and Lorrie Barker

October 1 at 9:32 AM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Paul by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



Scan to Visit



HAWAIIAN  
MEMORIAL PARK MORTUARY  
AT VALLEY OF THE TEMPLES