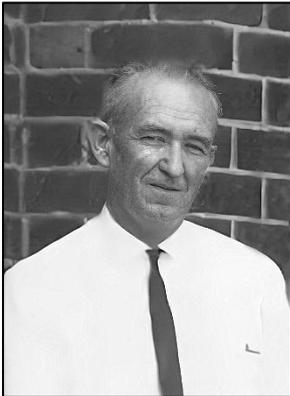


Brendan Joseph McAllen



Mr McAllen was a senior teacher at St Albans East State School in the late 1950s. Brendan Joseph McAllen was born in Clifton Hill, Victoria, in 1912 to Thomas Anthony McAllen and Helen Catherine McDonough. The McAllen heritage goes back to 1805 in County Clare, Ireland. The McDonough ancestry goes back to 1815 in Ireland. Helen McDonough was born in 1882 in Lydnhurst, Victoria, to John McDonough and Mary Anne Wade, who had five sons and one daughter.

In 1925 Brendan was living with his family in Caroline Street, Clifton Hill. He must have been somewhat precocious as a young teenager because he was submitting riddles and getting them published in the Sun News-Pictorial. In 1929 he was attending St Kevin's Catholic School and won a scholarship awarded by the Education Department to attend the University.¹ Presumably this was at Melbourne University.

In 1934 and 1939 McAllen was teaching in Omeo. He was single and staying at the Benambra Hotel.

Brendan Joseph McAllen married Alfra Kathleen Matthews in 1939. She was born in Benambra, Gippsland, Victoria, and the wedding was held in the Benambra Anglican Church:

St. Paul's Church, Benambra, was the setting for a very pretty wedding on Saturday; December 30, the celebrant being the Rev. R. M. Southey, and the contracting parties, Alfra, youngest daughter of Mrs. R. Matthews, and the late Mr. A. Matthews, of Benambra, and Brendon, second son of Mr. and Mrs. McAllen, of Caroline street, Clifton Hill. The church was very prettily decorated with Christmas lilies, white Canterbury bells and phlox, by friends of the bride. Mrs. Ken Reid, sister of the bride, presided at the organ, and the wedding party entered the church to the strains of "The Voice That Breathes O'er Eden."

The tall, titan haired bride looked charming as she entered the church on the arm of her uncle, Cr. J. E. Matthews, by whom she was given away. She chose a frock of ivory satin, fashioned on latest slim fitting lines, with long sleeves and a Peter Pan collar, from which descended a row of tiny buttons to the hem, forming the trimmings, and the skirt lengthening at the back to form a long train. Her tulle veil, loaned by Mrs. Alan McKenzie, was caught in place by a halo of orange blossom, and she carried a sheaf of Christmas lilies, with long white streamers. The only bridesmaid, Miss Ethel Matthews, sister of the bride, wore a beautiful frock of pink ripple georgette, fashioned with a collar, puffed sleeves and ornamented with tiny buttons. She wore also a large crinoline hat of the same shade, and carried a bouquet ... Two charming little trainbearers were Misses Joan Hodgson and Betty Cook, cousins of the bride, and they wore dainty pink net frocks with shoes and socks to match. In their hair they wore pink roses made of narrow ribbon, and carried little gold baskets of pink roses, sweet peas, phlox and maidenhead fern. Mr. H Betts ably carried out the duties best man.²

Alfra Matthews was born in 1917 in Benambra, Gippsland, Victoria, to Albert Alfred Matthews and Ruby Hodgson, who were from the pioneer grazing families in the district. The Matthews ancestry goes back to 1591 in St Just, Cornwall, England. The Hodgson ancestry is traced to Ruby's parents George Hodson and Annie Elizabeth Lindsay in 1879 Omeo, Victoria.

¹ Advocate 21 February 1929 p32

² Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle 31 January 1940 p2

In 1941-43 Brendan and Alfra were at the Bush Lodge in Buxton, a small town in north-east Victoria. In 1949 they were in Nowa Nowa in Gippsland. In 1951 Brendan McAllen was promoted to Bairnsdale, East Gippsland³, and they stayed there until at 1954. They moved to Melbourne and their new home in Sandringham in the 1950s and were still there in the late 1960s.

Brendan McAllen was teaching at St Albans East State School in the mid to late 1950s. He may have been the assistant principal at St Albans East during the late 1950s and taught some of the senior classes, Grade 5 and Grade 6. People thought he was an inspirational teacher. He later bought a Ford Zephyr and would collect several teachers on the journey to St Albans. A few of his former students remember him.



Nick Szwed ... Mr McAllen was a big Collingwood supporter. He would come on a Monday morning and talk about how Collingwood trashed Essendon or some other team they were playing. I became a staunch follower of the Collingwood football team in these years and think I might have been inspired by McAllen's enthusiasm. McAllen also promoted athletics and physical training for boys on monkey bars that were installed at the school. I flourished in training and even got my father to improvise some practice bars in the back yard. McAllen was so impressed with my progress that he asked me to give a display to the senior boys' class.

Nick Szwed ... Mr McAllen drove a Zephyr Falcon all the way from Cheltenham. He was one of my favourite teachers. He had a good rapport with the boys and gave them nicknames; e.g. Neil Yeomans became "Yo Yo" and Richard Bilyj became "Sarge".

Richard Bilyj ... The nickname "Sarge" was given to me by Mr McAllen. This was because during our morning assembly and march into class to the beat of the student band (John Cebula was base drummer), I was seen by Mr McAllen to be organizing some of the students in preparation for the march.

³ Argus 4 July 1951 p11

Alla (Harbatowski) Anderson ... We had a most dedicated teacher in both 1958 and 1959 Mr Brendan McAllen. He taught us to read, write, Shakespeare and everything in between. I personally was very motivated to learn for the rest of my life. A great teacher brings out the very best in students.

Mr McAllen transferred to Murrumbreena Primary School by 1964 and in the 1970s the family were living in Cheltenham West.

Brendan Joseph McAllen passed away at Prahran in 2001 aged 89:

McAllen - Brendan. Born Nov. 16, 1912 Died Dec. 29, 2001 Beloved husband of Alfra. Loved and loving father of Valma (dec.), Myrna, Elwyn, Daryl, Neville and Kairen. Respected father-in-law of Ian, Terry and Pam. Much loved Pop of Peter, Andrew, John, Kate, Lauren, Cherie, Brendan, Damien, Jenny, Susie and Robert. Pop-in- law of Kent. Great grandfather of Thomas. Requiescat in pace.

His remains were buried at Springvale Botanical Cemetery.

Alfra Kathleen McAllen nee Matthews died at Sandringham in 2010 at age 93 and was buried at Springvale Botanical Cemetery.



Brendan McAllen at Murrumbreena State School 1964