

Local Branch Library Guard Kency Kennedy Retires after 36 Years of Service

By Erin Hoopes

Kency Kennedy, Municipal Guard at the Philadelphia City Institute (PCI) branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia on Rittenhouse Square, is retiring after 36 years of service. After starting at PCI in 1981, Kennedy spent his career working at our neighborhood library branch, providing a security presence and caring for the building.

After studying graphic arts in school, Kennedy took the Municipal Guard position at the library with the intention of transferring to the city's graphic arts department. Then his plans changed. "After a while at the library," he says, "I began to like it, so I stayed. There aren't many places any more where you can go and see the same people. People don't stay in one job. Now I'm working with people who are the same age as my kids... This place is special—being in Rittenhouse Square every day, seeing the trees, the park."

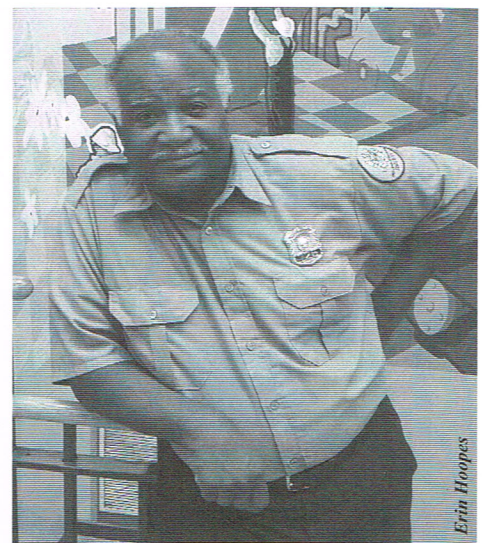
Over 36 years, there have also been many changes in the neighborhood and the library. The arrival of computers was a huge change, Kennedy reports. He also says that he's seen many coworkers come and go. "I can't imagine how many people I've worked with over the years. There was no way I could have done this job by myself. I'm just glad that a lot of people I worked with over the years had a

lot of respect for me and I was more than just a guard."

Kennedy says that he is most proud of "the fact that we were able to establish a library that people were proud to come in, where people wanted to bring their kids and feel like it's safe." That safe, warm atmosphere extended to his coworkers as well. After School Leader Jill Baglieri has worked in the Children's Room at PCI for nine years, and considers Kennedy family. "He's always gone above and beyond, making sure the whole staff is taken care of."

Neighborhood resident and former Branch Manager of PCI Joseph Paradin says "Kency is a man of good counsel and I cherish knowing him and having worked with him." Library patrons feel the same. Local resident Walter Campbell says, "I've known Kency for a while and he does his job extremely well, and not only that, he's a likeable guy."

What's next for Kency Kennedy? "The biggest thing for me is I will have more time for my wife and grandkids. I've always been busy as a Jehovah's Witness, and I'll still be in the Rittenhouse Square area. It's going to be different having time because I've always worked. That will be an ongoing challenge for



Library guard Kency Kennedy at his post at top of library stairs.

me. I don't know how to sit still!"

Kennedy also says he looks forward to seeing where PCI goes in the future. "I think something very exciting is going to happen here at the library. And I'd like to be here to see the elevator go in! This place has always been an exciting place to work. I never expected to be here 36 years. But it turned out that I liked it, and that the people liked me and respected me."

Countless people—current and former coworkers, neighborhood residents and library patrons—will miss Kennedy's presence at PCI when he retires at the end of December. Be sure to stop by to thank him for his service and to wish him well before he goes!

Shop Talk

Fashion Designer Gail Gaines Adds Allure to Second Friday on 22nd Street

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Gail Gaines and her *haute couture* designs for women were featured at Second Friday on the evening of September 8 on 22nd Street, along with exhibitions at Twenty-Two Gallery, 236 S. 22nd Street, and Niederkorn Silver, now at 244 S. 22nd Street. Salon Porquoi, 248 S. 22nd Street, participated by doing the hair styling and makeup for the fashion models.

Gaines has taught fashion illustration at Moore College of Art & Design for eight years and has been designing couture clothing, home accessories and jewelry for clients in Philadelphia, New York, and Washington, DC, for over 20 years.

Since she was 14 years old, Gaines studied dressmaking, tailoring, and French couture with a mentor. Then she attended Moore, at 20th and the Parkway, where she was later named 1989 Fashion Design Alumna and 2013 Distinguished Alumna. She serves on the Alumnae Council, spearheading community service projects such as sew-ins and workshops for children in local hospitals. She was one of 14 alumnae who decorated a giant boot for Moore's 160th anniversary celebration. For many years she has also taught a course in creative and practical sewing at Temple University Center City.



Models wearing a selection of looks by designer Gail Gaines, center, at her Second Friday fashion show.