
Nicholas Basbanes tells us that with this volume he has completed a trilogy that he began in 1995 with A Gentle Madness; Bibliophiles, Bibliomaniacs, and the Eternal Passion for Books and continued in 2001 with Patience & Fortitude; A Roving Chronicle of Book People, Book Places, and Book Culture. With 80,000 copies in print, A Gentle Madness must be the most popular book about books ever written, and its popularity is deserved, for Basbanes is a gifted story teller and prose stylist possessed of an unflagging curiosity and comprehensive knowledge of books, booksellers, collectors, and libraries. Readers even mildly afflicted with bibliomania have found his books irresistible.

A Splendor of Letters departs from the formula of its two predecessors, which were constructed around tales of legendary collectors, collections, and libraries. The central concern of this latest book is the survival of print itself. The subtitle, The Permanence of Books in an Impermanent World, has an optimistic ring to it, and Basbanes does indeed believe that the book...
Nicholas A. Basbanes had been working as a reporter for many years when the management at the Worcester Sunday Telegram decided to cut costs by eliminating the newspaper's book section, costing Basbanes his long-standing job as book review editor. He was forty-seven years old at the time, married, and had two children.