

# Arthur Edward Nilsson

*July 22, 1900 — September 20, 1985*

Arthur Nilsson, professor of finance emeritus in the Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management (formerly the Graduate School of Business and Public Administration), died on September 20, 1985, at the age of eighty-five. He was born in Boston. He earned the bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Tufts University, the M.B.A. degree from the Harvard Business School, and the Ph.D. degree in economics from Yale University (studying under Irving Fisher).

Professor Nilsson came to Cornell in 1948. When he retired, in June 1970, he had served on the University Faculty for twenty-two years. Prior to 1948 he taught at the College of William and Mary, Yale University, Oberlin College, and the Harvard Business School. He also worked while on leave from Oberlin as the head security analyst for the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Nilsson was a friendly, kind human being with a great knack for story telling. He was a real gentleman with a hearty laugh and a warm smile. In addition to his academic interests in finance and economics, he was devoted to the game of football and was an intense Civil War buff. He was also an artist with wood, having remodeled his two homes, the Mill in Ithaca and his manor house in Cohasset. He loved both of them. As an undergraduate he played end on the Tufts varsity football team. At William and Mary and Oberlin, in addition to teaching economics, he was the assistant football coach. As a result of his attending football coaching schools, he became acquainted with Knute Rockne. At age sixty-five he played third base in a student-faculty baseball game (he did well).

He became interested in the Civil War while at William and Mary. As a consulting civil engineer, he surveyed large segments of Virginia and began uncovering Civil War markers that had been lost. He walked most of the Civil War battlefields and read all the accounts of the war in *Harper's Weekly*.

As a teacher at Cornell's business school, he offered course work in financial management, investment management, and other aspects of corporation finance. He was an extraordinarily good teacher, and students frequently followed him from the classroom in order to continue discussions. His one fault as a teacher was in failing to adhere to the limitations of the assigned class time. He was too enthusiastic a teacher to stop in the middle of an important point.

He was one of the first employees of the Securities and Exchange Commission, serving there from 1934 to 1937. Many of the analytic procedures still in use at the SEC are those that Arthur developed. His Washington experience enabled him to bring a great deal of realism into the classroom.

In addition, he served either as an economist, consultant, or staff member for a number of employers, including the state of Ohio, the Office of Price Administration, and the War Assets Administration. Later in his career he served on a continuing basis as a financial consultant for Agway and Mohawk Airlines (now USAir).

For fifteen years he was the coordinator of the finance week session of the school's Executive Development Program. He was one of the few people conducting sessions for that program who always received standing ovations from the businessmen attending.

Arthur Nilsson's wife, Una Nilsson, and a daughter died at an earlier time. A son, six grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren are still living.

*Harold Bierman, Jr., Frank F. Gilmore, David A. Thomas*