

A. Miller Hillhouse

December 8, 1902 — December 2, 1986

A. Miller Hillhouse earned an undergraduate degree at Davidson College, a law degree at New York University, and an M. A. in economics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He was the director of research for the Municipal Finance Officers' Association in Chicago. There he met municipal bond authority Carl Chatters, the executive director of that organization, and established a friendship with him that was to last a lifetime. Chatters encouraged him to write his first book, *Municipal Bonds: A Century of Experience*. Published in 1938, when many local governments were experiencing financial distress as a result of the depression, the book continues to serve as a resource for practitioners in the field of municipal finance.

During World War II Hillhouse was budget officer of the National Housing Agency in Washington, D.C. Following that he was involved in military government. He served as chairman of a four-power finance committee in Austria under United States general Mark Clark and helped get the Salzburg Festival going again after the war. He also served with the United States military government in Germany under General Lucius Clay and with the United States High Commission under John J. McCloy. His reputation for fairness in those posts was acknowledged by German and American officials. In Germany he became acquainted with Ed Litchfield, who enticed him, in 1952, to join the faculty of what was then the Graduate School of Business and Public Administration (B & PA) at Cornell (now the Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management).

At Cornell Hillhouse taught courses in municipal finance, municipal administration, and municipal capital budgeting to students in business and public administration. He also taught municipal finance to city-planning students in the College of Architecture, Art, and Planning.

He was active in several roles among public finance professionals. He served as an adviser to New York State controller Arthur Levitt. As a result of his presence at Cornell, the *Federal Accountant* was edited here for a time. One of his best-known works is *Public Finance: Concepts and Practices*, published in 1968, the year he officially retired.

Jerry Hass recalls that Miller had “a twinkle in his eye and a wry sense of humor.” He wrote humorous verse to mark special occasions as an antidote to frustration and as a means of comment on private or public affairs. Those efforts, he wrote,

Serve for the writer
A psychological escape
Perhaps better than a binge
Or getting into a scrape.

The objects of his humor included a newly revised curriculum for the school (“It’s enough to cause the students, if not the professors, to riot”); Joe McCarthy (Senator Josie Joe / Disguised Don Quixote); and above all, himself (Trousers baggier / Eyebrows shaggier / Shoulders saggier). Miller’s verse was a regular feature of many B&PA ceremonies. One especially notable effort was “The Tribe of B&PA,” a spoof of Longfellow’s “Hiawatha” in which each verse was a portrait of a faculty colleague. Miller assembled his collected verse in a privately printed volume in 1975 entitled *Just for Fun—Nothing More*.

Miller’s retirement from Cornell marked the end of one career and the beginning of another. He moved to Georgia, where he researched, wrote, and published two books, *Gravemarkers in Burke County, Georgia* and *Pierre Gibert, French Huguenot: His Background and Descendants*, an undertaking that he conceived as a tribute to the area in Georgia where he grew up and for which he had great affection.

He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Cheek Hillhouse, now of Danville, Kentucky; two daughters, Helen and Margaret; and five grandchildren.

Alan McAdams, John McClain, Seymour Smidt