In Memoriam: Jimmye S. Hillman

University Relations - Communications
June 2015

Jimmye S. Hillman, professor emeritus in the UA College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, died from complications of a stroke on June 4.

Hillman was born in 1923 and grew up in Greene County, Mississippi. After graduating from Mississippi State University in 1942, he served in the U.S. Army. Following three years of service, he earned his master's degree from Texas A&M University and his doctorate in agricultural economics from the University of California, Berkeley.

Hillman joined the UA faculty in 1950, and became head of the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics in 1961. He served as department head until the time of his retirement in 1990.

While at the UA, Hillman trained multiple generations of agricultural economists and helped make the University a leader in the field. His research interests included agricultural and trade policies, and some of his most significant work centered on the study of nontariff trade barriers. He also authored two books and numerous articles examining the globalization of food production and consumption, the proliferation of new food technologies, and the effects of agribusiness and technology on the environment, human health and social justice.

"Jimmye was a good man, with an eternal devotion to his wife, Helen, and his children," said Paul Wilson, University Distinguished Professor in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. "During his long tenure as department head, Jimmye's enthusiastic and at times courageous promotion of our department, college and the University of Arizona was his global calling card. His abiding passion for clear thinking, social justice and historical traditions are sorely missed in our world today."

In addition to being on the UA faculty, Hillman served as an economist for the U.S. Agency for International Development in Brazil; developed U.S. Agency for International Development Green Revolution projects in the Cape Verde Islands; and served as an adviser on agricultural policy to the government of Portugal when that country was preparing to enter the European Union.

Hillman served as president of the American Agricultural Economics Association in 1970 and received an honorary doctorate from the University of Ceará in Brazil in 1999. He was also executive director of the President's National Advisory Commission on Food and Fiber, appointed by President Lyndon Johnson, and in 1983 he chaired the agricultural study group assisting the President's Commission on United States-Japanese Relations, under President Ronald Reagan.

In his retirement, Hillman penned creative nonfiction works and a memoir. His account of his childhood ? good times and hard times in the Depression years, when his family bartered with
the town store for groceries by raising semi-feral hogs in the pinewoods of rural Mississippi? is titled "Hogs, Mules and Yellow Dogs [3]" and was published by UA Press [4] in 2012.

Hillman established a graduate fellowship program for foreign students in the UA Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, a collection and research fellowships in the Texas Collection at Baylor University, and was a member of the board and benefactor of the UA Poetry Center [5]. He also established the Agnes Butler Endowment at Saint Mary’s College in California.

George Frisvold, a professor of agricultural and resource economics at the UA, said he first met Hillman in 1997.

"When I arrived (at the UA), he frequently encouraged me to pursue research in the economics of agricultural biotechnology, which has become a major part of my research program," Frisvold said. "His was certainly a life lived well. He had the rare ability to draw lessons from history, but could appreciate and welcome 'the new.' I miss him."

Hillman is survived by his wife, Helen; his sister; three children; three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. A funeral service was held Monday at the Episcopal Church of St. Michael and All Angels.

In lieu of flowers, Hillman's family requests that donations be made in his name to either the Episcopal Church of St. Michael and All Angels [6] or the UA Poetry Center [7].

Source URL: https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/memoriam-jimmye-s-hillman

Links: