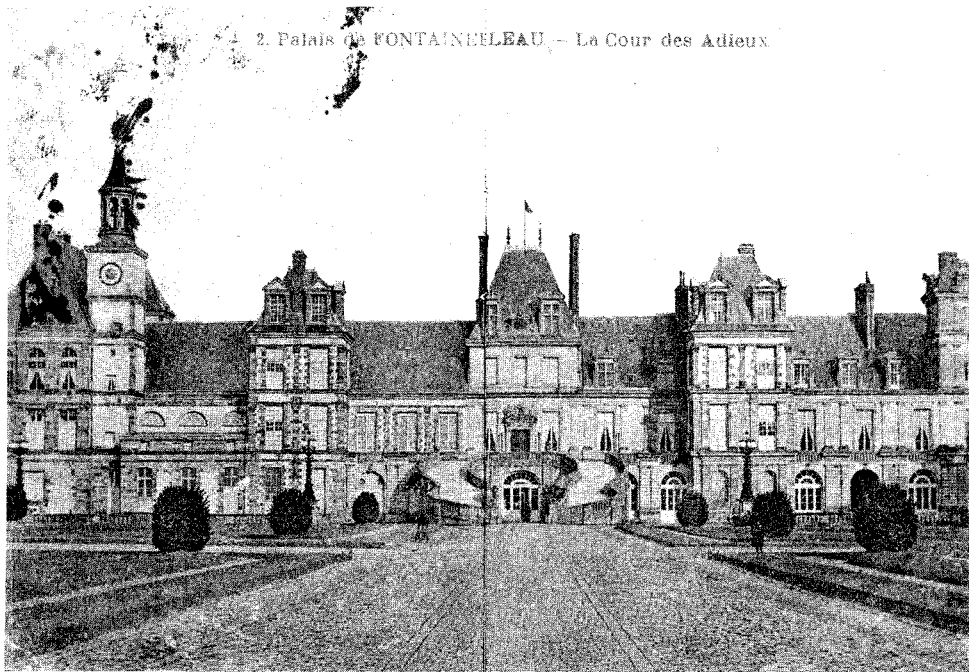


Edward Maverick
1901–1979

Founder of the
Edward Maverick Fund in
The New York Community Trust
909 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022



Dear Emily, Your cousin Edward is having the very time of his life. This is the most wonderful place and I want to stay here forever, so tell your Papa to bring you on over—My love to you and all your dolls—write to me some times and you'll know I think of you lots.

Edward House Sammons (who later changed his name to Edward Maverick) was 21 years old in 1923 when he sent this postcard to his cousin in Austin, Texas.

Emily Miller was only about three years old when she received the postcard from her cousin Edward. So she could scarcely share his appreciation for the splendid architectural achievements of Eighteenth Century Europe he

was learning about while enrolled in a special course at the Fontainebleau Palace.

However, his European studies made such a lasting impression on Edward Maverick that more than fifty years later, in his Will, he established a scholarship fund to make similar experiences possible for less affluent students of architecture, design and fine arts.

Although he later assumed his mother's maiden name, he was born Edward House Sammons on October 31, 1901, in Austin, Texas. A brother, John, was born three years later.

Their father, Edward Sammons, was a native of New York who had settled in Texas. He was employed as secretary to "Colonel" Edward Mandell House, a Texas politician who was campaign manager and adviser to a succession of Texas governors. "Colonel" House, who became President Woodrow Wilson's adviser and chief deputy, was Edward's godfather and took a life-long interest in him. When Edward moved to New York as a young man in the 1920s, "Colonel" and Mrs. House introduced him to friends and acquaintances, helping ease the adjustment.

Edward's mother, a devout Christian Scientist, was a member of one of the most famous and influential families of Texas. Known by everyone as "Lillie," she was born Mary Agatha Maverick. Her Maverick ancestors had sailed from England to America in 1630, settling near what is now Chelsea, Massachusetts. Samuel Maverick, her grandfather, a Yale-educated South Carolinian, settled in San Antonio, Texas, in the 1830s. He was a lawyer, businessman, landowner and, for nearly thirty years, a public official. He battled Mexicans and Indians, negotiated with the Mexicans for Independence, signed the Texas Declaration of Independence and helped write the Lone Star Republic's Constitution. He was a mayor of San Antonio and a congressman of the Republic. After Texas joined the Union, he served as a state legislator. His biographers wrote that Samuel Maverick, Sr. . . .

. . . was called one of the "empire builders of Texas" and at his death was said to be one of the largest landholders in the United States. . . . He gave of his money and possessions to the city he loved and its citizens.

Among his many contributions to San Antonio were an orchard for a city park, several

blocks of property to a church and other property to encourage the growth of business. His children, too, made names for themselves in Texas politics and business. Edward's grandfather, Sam, became a prominent businessman in San Antonio.

There was one other legacy from Samuel Maverick, Sr. This one, however, was unwitting. The story goes that during one of his many trips away from San Antonio, Samuel Maverick left his cattle in the care of a slave named Jack. Though Jack was well intentioned, he was not much of a manager. The cattle strayed and new-born calves were never branded. Soon local cattle herders came to recognize the unmarked cows; they were "Maverick's." Later, Texan cowboys driving cattle north to Montana helped popularize the term throughout the West. A "maverick" referred to "an unbranded calf, cow, or steer, especially an unbranded calf that is separated from its mother." It also came to mean "a dissenter, as an intellectual, an artist, or a politician, who takes an independent stand apart from his associates" (*Random House Dictionary*). As it turned out, there was a great deal of the maverick in Samuel's great-grandson Edward House Sammons.

As a young boy, Edward stayed close to home, attending public schools in Austin and vacationing in San Antonio with his aunts and cousins at their homes near Maverick Park or at a family house called Sunshine Ranch. If the Sammons family travelled, it was usually only as far as to the Gulf Coast of Texas for holidays.

But not long after his graduation from the University of Texas, Edward began "to test the waters" outside the Lone Star State. His parents drove him to New Orleans and put him on a French boat sailing for Le Havre. It was his intention to spend a summer in France, enrolled in a course at the School of Fine Arts at Fontainebleau Palace, but when at summer's end an opportunity arose to study at the French Academy in Rome at the Villa Medici, he seized it, went to Rome and remained there for the entire year.



Edward, at about 17.

That year cemented Edward's professional interest in Eighteenth Century interior design. The buildings he studied—and in which he studied—during his year abroad, jewels of European period architecture, had enchanted him.

When he returned to the United States, Edward, the family maverick, did not head for Texas but settled instead in New York City, where he became affiliated with a number of architectural firms as a special consultant in period design. He was never, according to one friend, involved "in things like air conditioning systems." His interest focused on rooms: space in rooms, the detail in rooms, the formality of rooms. The appeal for him in Eighteenth Century design was the Neoclassic sense of proportion.

During the 1920s, a number of wealthy Americans returned from trips abroad with furniture and furnishings to re-create Eighteenth Century libraries and drawing rooms in their

Nineteenth and Twentieth Century mansions. It was this kind of project that appealed to Edward, and he was hired to work on several. The Cape Cod home of the Paul Mellons, the Long Island house of Paul D. Cravath and the Texas home of Robert Welch, Jr., all reflected his special touch. Perhaps the most interesting assignment of his career was "Hillwood," the Washington, D.C., home of Marjorie Merriweather Post. She acquired the house in 1955 and then set out to remodel it. Edward worked on two of its rooms, a Louis XVI paneled living room, and a library with English paneling and Seventeenth Century carving attributed to Grinling Gibbons. "Hillwood" today is a museum of decorative arts.

To learn even more about period design, Edward enrolled in courses at two British institutions, the Summer School of the Courtauld Institute of Art and the Attingham Park Summer School.

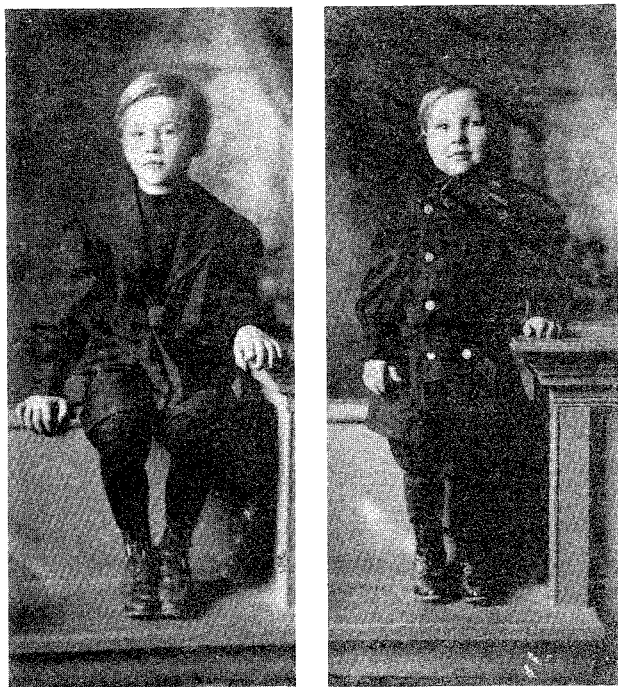
Founded in 1931, the Courtauld Institute of Art is located in a London town house, designed and built by the Eighteenth Century Scot Robert Adam for the Dowager Countess of Home. Attingham is a country house, built by Neoclassic architect George Steuart between 1783–1785. In 1952 it was leased by the British National Trust as a county college, and not long after, a summer program was established for the study of British history, architecture and landscape. These studies Edward augmented with travel.

The stamps of Hungary, Austria, Germany and France filled an early passport. He returned frequently to Europe, toured the Soviet Union twice, travelled throughout Central and South-east Asia, to Indonesia and Japan.

He also loved music and had a fine tenor voice. He joined choirs, and in his early years in New York—during the Depression when design jobs were difficult to come by—Edward supplemented his income by singing on the radio.

One family story has it that radio was what led him to change his name: The "S's" in "Sammons" hissed. It's hard to know whether

that was the reason or whether, as another story goes, Edward felt very attached to the Maverick side of his family and was concerned that the name be perpetuated. (His Maverick cousins were all female, acquiring different names as they married.) The fact is that in 1945, when he was forty-four years old, Edward House Sammons legally changed his name to Edward Maverick.



The Sammons brothers posed for portraits in 1909. Edward (left) was eight years old and John was five.

Although he never married, he was interested in young people and was devoted to the younger members of the family. For example, when a young cousin passed through New York

enroute to Europe, Edward took the time to give her a definitive tour of the City. He also returned to Texas every few years to visit his family: His brother, John, had married, and Edward was very attached to John's sons; also there were cousins still living in San Antonio.

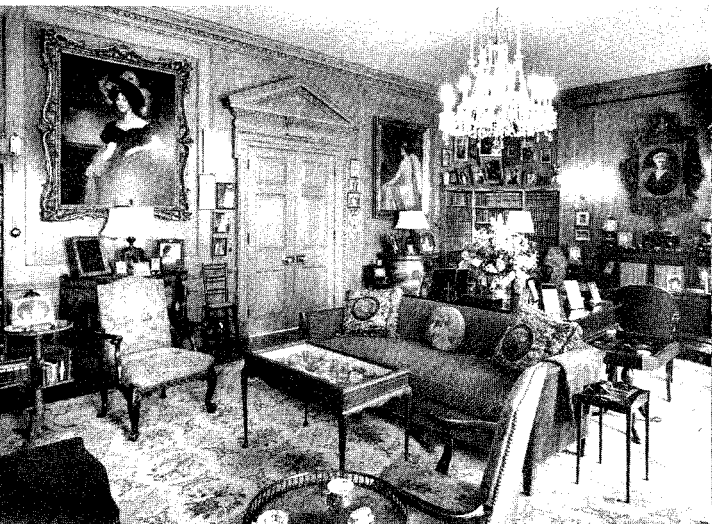
But the heat of Texas and the sweltering summers of New York were unappealing to him, so he spent much of the summer abroad. In town, he kept busy "eight nights out of seven," according to one friend. He was a party-goer, donning tails or tuxedo often and attending the theatre and opera frequently. He was also an inveterate walker of the streets of Manhattan.

In New York, Edward's first apartment was in the historic Colonnade Row on Lafayette Street between Astor Place and East Fourth. Later he moved to a walk-up building farther uptown on the East Side. His last years were spent in an apartment he owned near the United Nations Plaza, a place filled with porcelains, paintings and furniture collected on trips abroad. Books, many of them rare, on fine arts, art history and architecture filled the shelves that lined the walls of his living room.

His politics were always Democrat—a Texas family inheritance. Also, according to his sister-in-law, it was the Democrats' New Deal—specifically the WPA—that put Edward to work singing on the radio during the Depression, and Edward never forgot that. (The songs he sang on the radio were of the operetta-style, and he mainly performed in French and Italian. Though his sister-in-law did not know specific titles, she did recall the name of an amusing American ditty he once sang to her in Texas: It was called "Peekin' Through The Knotholes on Grandpa's Wooden Leg." Edward, she recollected, had a good sense of humor.)

In his later years Edward wrote to his cousin Emily—now a middle-aged woman—that he wondered "where all the good theatre has gone." He attended fewer plays and more films, especially matinees. He watched public television and contributed to Channel Thirteen in New York. He had, as well, made contributions

When Marjorie Merriweather Post began remodeling "Hillwood," her Washington, D.C., home, in the 1950s, she hired Edward Maverick as a design consultant. Shown here is the Library. The mansion is now a museum.



for years to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and was a member of the American Friends of Attingham School and of the Society of Architectural Historians.

In about 1972, Edward's health began to fail. Cancer was diagnosed and he underwent surgery. He concealed the true nature of his illness from family and friends until it advanced so far it could no longer be kept a secret. Even then, although he suffered much pain, he rarely complained. Before he died in 1979, he gave his architecture books to the Architectural Library of the University of Texas. His collection of more than 8,700 slides, entrusted to a friend, were eventually donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In 1963, he had established in Community Funds, Inc., the Edward Maverick Fund for charitable, educational and scientific purposes. In his Will he expanded the Fund to make possible annual scholarships to help students of architecture and design pursue advanced studies abroad.



The New York Community Trust is a publicly supported community foundation that provides centralized management for many charitable funds. Its corporate affiliate is Community Funds, Inc.