

The following was presented by a Board Member at the Hall of Distinction Induction Ceremony of the Dover Historical Society, April 2014.

## Elliott Nugent

Elliott Nugent was born September 20, 1896 in Dover. According to Nugent in his biography *Events Leading up to the Comedy*, his exact birthplace was in the library of the home. This is a fitting beginning for a man who would go on to pen several plays, screenplays, novels, and his own autobiography.

Nugent's acting career began early. His father, J.C. Nugent, was a stage and screen actor that appeared in multiple movies and on Broadway. As a group, the family toured as a Vaudeville act when Nugent was a boy.

After graduating Dover High School, Elliott Nugent attended The Ohio State University where he roomed with and quickly befriended a talented young writer named James Thurber. Thurber would go on to become one of the best-known humorists of his era. His short stories and cartoons appeared regularly in *The New Yorker* magazine and in collected volumes. It was this friendship that produced Nugent's best-known work, the play *The Male Animal*. *The Male Animal* appeared regularly on Broadway and was made into a 1942 movie starring Henry Fonda and Olivia de Havilland. The movie was directed by Nugent.

In addition to *The Male Animal*, Nugent directed over thirty other films. Among these are three, *The Cat and the Canary* (1939), *Never Say Die* (1939), and *My Favorite Brunette* (1947) in which Nugent worked with fellow Ohioan, Bob Hope. Nugent retired from show business in 1957, and died in New York, New York in 1980.