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The Halls of Ivy

Pasted from <<http://www.retrogalaxy.com/radio/halls-of-ivy.asp>>

Ronald Colman and his wife Benita Hume starred in the **Halls of Ivy**, a very well-written, superbly acted radio program that was full of warmth and wit. The show aired from 1950 to 1952 on NBC and is not often mentioned when old-time radio programs are the topic of conversation, but it is one of my favorites. The combination of Mr. & Mrs. Colman's acting and Don Quinn's writing made for an enjoyable half-hour's worth of entertainment.

The show was created by Don Quinn who for many, many years put words in the mouths of Fibber McGee and Molly. Quinn wrote jokes that made you think. On the McGee program there was a fast and furious onslaught of crazy puns, mangled cliches, and double-meanings. Sometimes all at once -- when delivered by the superb timing of the talented Jim Jordan as Fibber.

The pace was brought down a notch or two for the Halls of Ivy, but not the wit. Guaranteed to put a smile on your face -- and keep it there for 30 minutes -- the dialogue between the Colmans was, and still is today, fresh and humorous. They worked well together, and one needs only to listen to the program for 5 minutes to know they were obviously enjoying themselves.

They played delightfully contrasting characters. Ronald, as Dr. William Todhunter Hall, the scholarly President of Ivy College. And Benita, as Victoria, veteran of the British stage, thoughtful, energetic, and always amusing. They were surrounded by a talented cast of radio veterans including Willard Waterman, Herb Butterfield, and Gale Gordon.

There are approximately 50 shows that are available today on cassette or cd. I am the happy owner of most of them. It's a light-hearted feel-good comedy that never fails to lift my spirits.

Below is an excerpt from a script of a 1951 program. It presents a typical slice-of-life scene in the lives of the Halls that opened each show....before the REAL action begins.

Announcer:	The Halls of Ivy starring Mr. And Mrs. Ronald Colman.
MUSIC:	Theme up and play brief intro and then singers do the first two lines of theme song -- then hum under:
Announcer:	Welcome again to Ivy. Ivy College that is. In the little town of Ivy, USA. For many families breakfast is a small pandemonium filled with the clatter of cups, the confusion of tongues, desperate last gulps of scorching coffee and the mad dash to the bus station. But for Doctor William Todhunter Hall, president of Ivy, and his wife, Victoria, it's usually an unruffled few moments put aside for their private lives. This morning, for instance, Victoria is arranging a bowl of flowers on the table while Doctor Hall is thoughtfully staring at a highly polished spoon.
MUSIC:	Theme fades as lines begin
Victoria:	There, now. Nothing like a few well-raised ranuncu – ranun. Hmm, what's the plural of ranunculus, Toddy?

Hall:	Oh, you could express it in three different ways. One, Latin: ranunculae. Two, English: ranunculuses. Three, idiomatic: ah, some of these pretty whatch-ma-callits.
Victoria:	Oh, yeah. I'll take the idiotic way. But they do make a pretty centerpiece, don't they?
Hall:	Ah, ha, they do indeed. Yes, they start the morning off very well. But it is the picture of Victoria, well and beautifully arranged in the opposite chair, which sustains me for the rest of the day.
Victoria:	Oh, darling. I do feel lovely and conceited. At breakfast, too.
Hall:	Where my emotions for you are concerned the time of day is unimportant. My heart ticks away but it strikes no hours. Besides, I've never subscribed to the popular belief, originated by some sour cynic and perpetuated by comic strip artists, that the breakfast table is necessarily a battle ground, strewn with bad manners and resounding with the clash of personalities.
Victoria:	That's because you are a dear love.
Hall:	As my father used to say, the world would be a happier place if people would start the day by drinking a toast to someone rather than just eating it with someone.
Victoria:	Ah--that's a wonderful idea. A toast--
< Glasses clink >	
Victoria:	Here's to William, the light of my life, from a woman who is extremely happy that I happen to be his wife. Well, the meter may be a little bit ragged but the sentiment is sincere.
Hall:	Well, the meter doesn't matter as long as I did.
Victoria:	Did what?
Hall:	Meet her.
Victoria:	I'm glad you did, too. And not to interrupt a nice sentimental conversation, but may I ask why you keep staring into that teaspoon? Hmm? What's the matter with it? Do you want a clean one?
Hall:	No. No. No No. Its quite clean and handsomely polished. No, I was merely fascinated by the optical illusion caused by the reflections in a concave surface. In it I am upside down. It's very refreshing.
Victoria:	Refreshing?
Hall:	Yes. It's a matter of perspective, of course. But any device which can show things in a new light is both stimulating and therapeutic.
Victoria:	Ah. You mean if the world could see itself reflected in a teaspoon it might stop waving its knives.
Hall:	Something like that, yes. And then, too, there's the school of thought which believes that standing on one's head early in the morning is stimulating to the brain. It's seems good for-
< Doorbell >	
Victoria:	I'll toss you to see who walks to front door on his hands. Have you got a quarter?
Hall:	Ha, ha. No. So I'll volunteer.

Pasted from <<http://www.retrogalaxy.com/radio/halls-of-ivy.asp>>

TV.COM review by Sam Frank

Ivy College president Dr. William Todhunter Hall (Ronald Colman) and his charming wife Victoria (Benita Hume Colman) -- known as Toddy and Vicky to each other -- use intelligence, humanity, and wit to deal with and solve the various problems brought to them by ...

Broadcast History: CBS premiere: October 19, 1954 for a one-season run of 39 episodes, 20 of them without a laugh track as a commercial compromise. The final episode, a rerun, aired October 13, 1955. The series was briefly syndicated in the late 1950s and late 1960s. In Los Angeles, it aired on KWHY Channel 22 from 1966-67. 37 episodes were rewrites of episodes of the radio series, 2 episodes were original scripts.

First season: Friday at 8 EST, 8:30 PST till May 5, 1950. Then Wednesday at 8 EST, 6 PST starting May 10, 1950.

Second season: Wednesday at 8 EST, 6:30 PST.

Third season: Wednesday at 8 EST, 7 PST. Time change to 6:30 PST starting February 6, 1952.

Syndication source: ITC, Domestic Sales Dept., 12711 Ventura Blvd., Studio City, CA 91604. 818-760-2110.

[As of 1997] Because no TV station in the U.S. has asked to lease this series since 1967, the prints on hand have not been transferred to tape. They are strewn over several ITC warehouses in London, according to Valerie Bisson-Goldberg of ITC.

The rating of 10 is based on listening to the soundtracks of ten of the television episodes and to 81 existing episodes of the radio series.

This series should be recovered from those scattered warehouses in London and made available on DVD, before the existing prints are irretrievably lost or damaged.

Posted Aug 24, 2005 2:45 pm PST

Tuesday, September 27, 2005

On This Day in 1950: Ronald Colman Lectures on Bigotry and Schlitz Vows to Ship 600,000 Cans of Beer to Korea

I started writing this during a power outage; so, in commemoration of this event, I'll try [and promptly failed] not to be quite so long-winded this time. I didn't relish the experience of sitting alone in the dark without the comfort and convenience of electricity, especially since darkness is the very stuff of radio drama, the sound pictures that are stored on my computer or waiting to be snatched out of the world wide web. For a while I tried to fill the void with my own voice, reading out loud by candlelight, enacting the parts in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, the book at hand. The flicker illuminating the pages began to irritate me; and when I caught a glimpse of the shiny surface of my laptop, I couldn't resist to drain its precious battery power by popping in a CD and listening to one of my favorite situation comedies of old-time radio, Don Quinn's witty and endearing *Halls of Ivy*. Besides, I had already decided to write about the 27 September 1950 broadcast of that show—an episode OTR enthusiast Jerry Haendiges argues to be "probably the best of the series."



Among the smartest comedies of its day, the series had long escaped my notice, since "its day" was the early 1950s, a time when radio was already experiencing a decline in talent, audiences, and sponsorship. When setting up the research boundaries for my dissertation, I initially dismissed such late-comers, sound unheard, assuming them to be lacking in literary merit and production values, deficiencies owing to conservative—that is, money-starved—programming as a result of dwindling advertising accounts. The Peabody Award winning *Halls of Ivy* (1950-52) sure proved me wrong.

The program was greeted as a sign of radio's maturity, not its senility and obsolescence. In the May 1952 issue of *Theatre Arts* critic Harriet Van



Horne, who had previously lamented radio's adolescent fare, recommended *Halls of Ivy* as a "literate" treat, arguing its writing to be "often much better than the dialogue you encounter in some Broadway shows." Set in a liberal college, the series delicately addressed and eloquently expressed a number of social concerns, the fictional campus being a playground on which to act out matters of race, class, and gender. Sentimental without being saccharine, it was edifying without getting snooty about it. I mean, come on, the show was sponsored by the makers of Schlitz—the "beer that made Milwaukee famous."

On this day in 1950, *Halls of Ivy* presented a study in prejudice. Penned by Don Quinn and Cameron Blake, the story for the evening involved a high-toned mother of a dead soldier who vows to make a \$500,000 donation to Ivy College after finding a picture of her son in a newspaper announcing the award given to the student who painted his portrait. When college president Dr. Hall (Ronald Colman) hears about this proposed endowment, a "girdle" to bring the institution back into shape, he fears that "this girdle is the old-fashioned kind. You know, the kind with strings." Sure enough, the benefactress stipulates that the money "must absolutely not be used to provide scholarships for . . . well, for certain races and creeds."

The donation is refused. Adding to the irritation of the narrow-minded society lady who offered it, the Halls receive a visit from the student artist who captured the likeness of the son from whom she had been estranged. As it turns out, the painter is of a "certain race" himself. After this exposure—a confrontation with and a laying bare of her bigotry—the strings are removed and the money can change hands, a moral lesson delivered with such skill and grace that even the contrived ending does not come across as awkward or trite. Summing up the dramatized lecture, Dr. Hall remarks that "life itself is a little like a college. You don't learn much by attending only one class."

Not to be outdone by the fictional donation, Schlitz announced at the close of the program that, having been given the okay from the Eisenhower administration, it would ship 600,000 cans of beer to the American soldiers then fighting in Korea. It's a rather tacky coda—but sponsors aren't exactly classy when it comes to touting their wares.

Once the power was restored in my abode, I set out for another trip to Ivy College—because "you don't learn much by attending only one class"—and watched a 1955 episode of the TV adaptation of *Halls of Ivy*, also starring Colman and his wife, Benita Hume (along with the wonderful Mary Wickes as their maid). Well, sometimes it is nice to let someone else do the picturing for you, particularly after having been *forced* to spend two hours in near darkness.

By Harry Heuser

1 broadcasting thought:

[Zorka](#) said...

Harry, one disagreement. You say "a time when radio was already experiencing a decline in talent, audiences, and sponsorship."

While technically true, some of radio dramas best happened during this time. Series such as *Gunsmoke*, *Ft. Laramie*, *Yours Truly*, *Johnny Dollar* and more were among the best at this time. Some of this was due to the fact that the sponsors, who controlled the content, were NOT breathing down the necks of the producers. And while most major stars were not paying much attention to radio (Jimmy Stewart was one of the exceptions as "The Six Shooter."), the veteran radio actors were in their glory. These were people who understood the vocal medium of acting as well as some of the best sound effects.

September 27, 2005

Voice of America and the competition

The Voice of America, which first went on the air in 1942, is a multimedia international broadcasting service funded by the U.S. Government through the Broadcasting Board of Governors. VOA broadcasts more than 1,250 hours of news, information, educational, and cultural programming every week to an estimated worldwide audience of 134 million people.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/about/index.cfm>

VoA differs from Radio Free Europe by their mission statements.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty provides uncensored news and information to countries where a free press is either banned by the government or not fully established.

<http://www.rferl.org/section/homepage/100.html>

The Armed Forces Network can trace its origins back to 1942, when the War Department established the Armed Forces Radio Service (AFRS). A television service was first introduced in 1954 with a "pilot" station at Limestone AFB, Maine and AFRS became the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS). All of the Armed Forces broadcasting affiliates worldwide merged under the AFN banner on 1 January 1998.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed_Forces_Radio#History_of_Armed_Forces_Network

Announcers

Vic Perrin was the commercial announcer that read the lines that started: *"I was curious, I tasted, Now I know why..."* Frank Martin was doing commercials in the early episodes.

Benita Hume's the name

Documentation for this series will use Benita Hume as Mrs. Colman's name.

Radio and Television
New York Times (1857-Current file); Oct 7, 1949; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2005)
pg. 52

Radio and Television

Ronald Colman, as College Professor, and His Wife to Star in New NBC Comedy Show

Ronald Colman and his wife, Benita Hume, will be starred in a new radio comedy series, the "Halls of Ivy," over the National Broadcasting Company network. The starting date has not been set, but it probably will be late in this month or early in November on a Tuesday or Saturday night.

Mr. Colman has been cast in the role of a sedate college professor perplexed by a wife who wishes to maintain the tradition of her former career as a musical comedy star. The program, written by Don Quinn, who writes the "Fibber McGee and Molly" series, will be sponsored by Schlitz beer.

Oct. 17. With each network supplying a special film segment, the program will feature "Stop the Music," "The Goldbergs," Milton Berle with June Havoc, and Janet Blair and the Blackburn Twins. "Red Feather USA," the title of the program, will be televised on the following schedule: WCBS-TV, Oct. 17, 7:30 P. M.; WJZ-TV, Oct. 18, 9:30 P. M.; WABD, Oct. 19, 10 P. M.; WNBT, Oct. 20, 8 P. M.

The New York Philharmonic Symphony will begin its twentieth year over the CBS radio network Sunday, Oct. 16, from 3 to 4:30 P. M. The orchestra will be conducted by Leopold Stokowski.

There is a spoken word deviation from using Benita Hume as Mrs. Colman's name beginning with the October, 1951 episodes. In these shows, Mrs. Colman introduces herself as Benita Colman.

The Halls of Ivy on TV

This sitcom aired from October 1954 until September 1955 on CBS. (ed. Note: last radio broadcast was June 1952)

Dr. William Todhunter Hall (Ronald Colman) was president of scenic Ivy College, somewhere in the Midwest, in this filmed comedy about a literate, witty college administrator. The school's students, its faculty and its board of governors all figured in the stories, as did Dr. Hall's wife Vicky (Benita Hume) a former actress, their housekeeper, Alice (Mary Wickes), and Chairman of the Board of Governors Clarence Wellman (Herb Butterfield). The Halls Of Ivy was adapted from the radio series of the same name (1950-1952), with Ronald Colman and his wife Benita Hume re-creating their radio roles. However its very literacy and lack of physical action militated against it in the video medium and it soon disappeared. One of the more memorable elements of the series was its theme (" We love the Halls Of Ivy/That surround us here today..."), rendered in suitably collegiate fashion by a male chorus. The song achieved some popularity on records during the early 1950's.

An Article from Time Magazine right after Ronald Colman's Death

The Matinee Idol
Monday, Jun. 02, 1958

The Halls of Ivy, Tech that is.

Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana (usually shortened to **Ivy Tech** or **Ivy Tech Community College**) is Indiana's largest and only community college system, encompassing 23 campuses in 14 regions. The community college system now has more than 120,000 students. As of December 2009, the Indianapolis campus of Ivy Tech has been recognized as the nation's second-largest community college.



TV Scripts vs. Radio Scripts

TV Soundtracks\xHOITV541026_02_TheHeartOfPassion.mp3

Cannot locate a radio episode with Heart of Passion in the content

TV Soundtracks\xHOITV541207_08_TheEleventhCommandment.mp3

HOIV 51-05-16 064 Not Available The Eleventh Commandment.rtf

TV Soundtracks\xHOITV541214_09_BoxingVersusMedicine_TheFightingMedStudent.mp3

HOIV 50-05-24 021 The Fighting Med Student.mp3

Decidedly different scripts.

TV Soundtracks\xHOITV550215_18_NoteTheQuote.mp3

HOIV 51-04-25 061 LQ Note the Quote.mp3

Decidedly different scripts.

TV Soundtracks\xHOITV550412_26_Scandal_ProfessorRousseau.mp3

It was subsequently determined the radio episode was actually the TV soundtrack

TV Soundtracks\xHOITV550419_27_FootballFix.mp3

There were several episodes that included football, but none described a "fix"

TV Soundtracks\xHOITV550426_28_FCanisMinor.mp3

Cannot locate a radio episode with F Canis Minor in the content

TV Soundtracks\xHOITV550517_31_ProfessorRoyceReturns_TheUmbrellaMan.mp3

HOIV 51-12-12 082 Professor Royce Returns.mp3

Decidedly different scripts.

TV Soundtracks\xHOITV550524 32 TheHonorStudent.mp3

HOIV 50-11-29 040 The Honor Student.mp3

There is a similarity between the two scripts, but enough differences to determine they are two different performances..

TV Soundtracks\xHOITV550614 35 Maxwell'sComet.mp3

Cannot locate a radio episode with a comet in the content

Halls of Ivy -- Intros and Credits

The following information comes directly from <<http://www.usfamily.net/web/wpattinson/otr/openings/ivyintro.htm>>

Intro Formats

First Format: starts with first broadcast in 1950

- Theme intro
- Announcer
 - Ladies and gentlemen, the Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company of Milwaukee Wisconsin presents "The Halls of Ivy", starring Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Colman.*
- Commercial
- Announcer
 - And now, the Halls of Ivy*
- Theme
- Announcer
 - Welcome again to Ivy...*

Second Format: starts beginning of 1951

- RColman
 - Good evening, this is Ronald Colman inviting you to join Mrs. Colman and me for the next half hour when our sponsors,*
 - a) the Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin...*
 - b) the brewers of Schlitz Beer...*
 - ... present(s) "The Halls of Ivy"*
- Commercial (announcer)
- Announcer
 - And now, the Halls of Ivy*
- Theme
- Announcer
 - Welcome again to Ivy...*

Third Format: starts with third season, September 1951

- Theme intro
- Announcer
 - Schlitz, the beer that made Milwaukee famous presents "The Halls of Ivy", starring Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Colman*
- RColman
 - Good evening, this is Ronald Colman...*
- BColman
 - ... and Benita Colman...*
- RColman
 - ... inviting you to join us again on the campus of Ivy College as the guest of our sponsors, the brewers of Schlitz Beer*
- [optional]
 - Tonight's program is dedicated to...*
- Commercial (announcer)
- Announcer
 - And now, the "Halls of Ivy"*
- Theme
- Announcer

Welcome again to Ivy...

These openings are used for the "unsponsored" episodes

Edited from the above intros, most likely used for armed forces broadcasts

Unsponsored 1

- Theme intro
- Announcer1
 - "The Halls of Ivy" starring Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Colman*
- RColman
 - Good evening, this is Ronald Colman...*
- BColman
 - ... and Benita Colman...*
- RColman
 - ... inviting you to join us again on the campus of Ivy College*
- Announcer
 - And now, "The Halls of Ivy"*
- Theme
- Announcer
 - Welcome again to Ivy...*

Voice of America (VOA)

- Announcer2
 - The Voice of America presents "The Halls of Ivy" starring Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Colman*
- RColman
 - Good evening, this is Ronald Colman...*
- BColman
 - ... and Benita Colman...*
- RColman
 - ... inviting you to join us again on the campus of Ivy College*
- Announcer
 - And now, "The Halls of Ivy"*
- Theme
- Announcer
 - Welcome again to Ivy...*

Pasted from <<http://www.usfamily.net/web/wpattinson/otr/openings/ivyintro.htm>>

Nabisco Sponsorship

Well the mystery of the Nabisco sponsorship has been solved. Nabisco was a sponsor of the TV series.

Ronald Colman releases movie



Ronald Colman's current movie, *Champagne for Caesar*, released May 11, 1950. This movie is available through the OTRR Library

LOOK Magazine – June 20, 1950

The June 14, 1950 broadcast of The Halls of Ivy ran a promo spot for this magazine. It contains an article about The Halls of Ivy and Mr. and Mrs. Colman.



\$35.00 (2008 price to collectors) Original price \$0.15

Cover : Liz Hastings in a two piece swimming suit.

- The case against psychoanalysis.
- How prepared are we if Russia should attack?
- Full page color movie poster ad for “The White Tower” with Glenn Ford, Valli and others – this is the great story by James Ramsey Ullman, set in the Alps, mountain climbing.
- Full page movie poster ad for “Winchester ‘73” with James Stewart, Shelley Winters, more.
- Half page color Tartan suntan lotion ad with swimsuit by Frances Sider.
- **Short Reader’s poll “Do you agree?” pertaining to child rearing.**
- Can we afford Truman and the Fair Deal?
- Neat full page color Western Electric ad with telephone switchboard operators from 1881.

- Great full page color National Trailways bus system ad with bus license number KC 4091.
- Evil Los Angeles smog, with great photos.
- Full page color United States Brewer's Foundation ad, # 43 in Home Life series, art by John Gannam.
- Captain Walter Karig thinks having LOTS of pet animals is good.
- Excellent full page color Oldsmobile 88 car ad, green convertible, "Make a date with a Rocket 8!"
- Jeanne Odenbrett and Mary Hendrickson vacation at King's Gateway Hotel in Land O'Lakes, Wisconsin, includes Chief Dakota.
- Full page De Beers diamonds ad with "Honeymoon in Paris" painting by Jean Hugo.
- **A new arthritis remedy with some truly GRUESOME X-rays of bent hands.**
- Pajamas for men.
- **Ronald Colman and Benita Hume play the roles on the radio show "Halls of Ivy."**
- Nazi Johann Miller is on trial.
- Full page Blatz beer ad with actor Dan Duryea.
- Summer shoes.
- Feature on actress Jane Russell.
- Erhard Weyhe, art book seller in Manhattan.
- Two page Hamm's Beer ad with golfers in background.
- Dogs and their famous owners in Hollywood.
- Baseball manager Leo Durocher and the New York Giants, includes teams under former managers.
- Lockheed's new F-90 jet airplane, including plane number 6687.
- **Teenager Sherwyn M. Woods writes about the high car accident rate for teens.**
- Full page color 7up ad, The Fresh Up Family drink, family picnicking.

Air Gossip

From the *Air Gossip* column of the Detroit Free Press, 11/29/50: There's a rumor that we hope isn't true. It's that "Halls of Ivy" may go off the air, not because it isn't clicking, but because the sponsor has invested so heavily in television.

Detroit News radio listings

The following link will take you to the site that lists all of the comments about The Halls of Ivy in the Detroit News.

[Detroit News Radio Guide Listings](#)

George Foster Peabody Award

The spoken work on the 51/05/02 episode indicates the award was presented 51/04/27. The Peabody Awards website contains the following information.

Year: **1950**

Title: **Halls of Ivy**

Producing

Organization(s): **NBC Radio**

City/State: **New York New York**

The Peabody Award for Entertainment in radio goes to the "Halls of Ivy" of NBC because it has succeeded in mixing wit and charm with liberal and enlightened social philosophy. Its writers, Don Quinn and Walter Brown Newman, and its principal actors, Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Colman, have demonstrated that radio comedy can be successful even at the risk of being intelligent.

