



Academy of Authors
South Carolina

Frank Morrison “Mickey” Spillane has attained mythical status in the annals of popular fiction. Considered the king of the pulp novelists in the post-WW II period, he sold an estimated 200 million copies globally. Despite critical condemnation, Spillane explained the appeal of his novels with typical frankness, “People like them.” Throughout his literary life, Spillane’s mantra was “I’m a writer, not an author. The difference is a writer makes money.”

A voracious reader of Dumas and Melville throughout childhood, he “went professional” at the age of 14, writing for the *Elizabeth Daily Journal*. After high school Spillane went to Kansas State College on a football scholarship before dropping out. He started submitting magazine articles in 1935, until a timely connection led him to the “funnies” and he began concocting adventures for major 1940s comic book characters, including Captain Marvel, Superman, Batman and Captain America.

During World War II Spillane served with the Army Air Corps. In 1945, hoping to buy a home, the newlywed Spillane decided to boost his bank account by writing a novel. In 19 days he wrote *I, the Jury* and sent it to E.P. Dutton. The combined total of the 1947 hardcover and the Signet paperback (1948) sold six and a half million copies in the United States alone. The novel introduced Spillane’s most famous character, hardboiled detective Mike Hammer.

Among the dozens of novels he wrote during the subsequent years, several found inspiration in his work experiences. In the fifties, he briefly worked in the Barnum and Bailey Circus as a trampoline artist, adept knife-thrower, and even as cannon fodder, experiences which later emerged in *The Girl Hunters* (1962). He worked for the FBI as an undercover operative to crack a narcotics ring which became the subject of his novel *Kiss Me, Deadly* (1952). Following its publication, Spillane stopped publishing for a decade, which ended with the publication of *The Deep* (1961), followed by the long-awaited return of Mike Hammer in *The Girl Hunters* in 1962. Spillane again stopped publishing Mike Hammer novels in 1970 after the publication of *Survival...Zero!* He did not release another Mike Hammer novel until 1989’s *The Killing Man*. His last novel, *Black Alley* (1996), was published in 1996.

Originally from Brooklyn, NY, Spillane lived for many years prior to his death in 2006 at Murrells Inlet, SC.

2012 Inductees to the South Carolina Academy of Authors

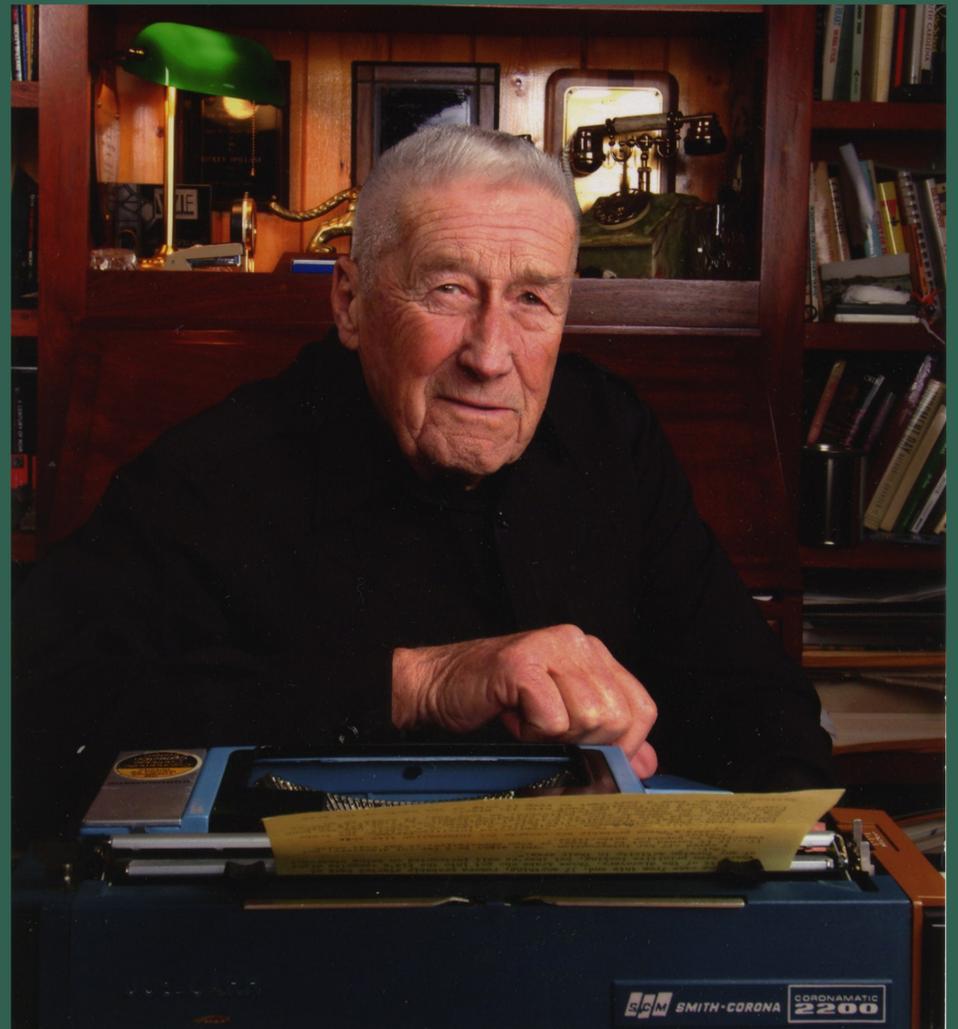


Image courtesy of Jane Spillane

Mickey Spillane