



## 2014 Inductees to the South Carolina Academy of Authors

**Robert Quillen**, newspaper editor, syndicated columnist, and creator of “Aunt Het” and “Willie Willis” single-panel cartoons, was born in Syracuse, Kansas. In 1906 he answered an ad for editor of a weekly newspaper in Fountain Inn, SC; he didn’t stay but three months that first time, but married a Fountain Inn girl. He returned in 1910 when his brother-in-law offered him the editorship of a weekly advertising sheet that eventually became *The Fountain Inn Tribune*.

Quillen published two novels, *One Man’s Religion* (1923), largely a collection of pieces he’d written for *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *The Path Wharton Found* (1924). Both, he once said, were “fortunately out of print.”

His editorials, paragraphs, cartoons, and one-liners were syndicated in more than four hundred newspapers in the US, Canada, and the Far East. He wrote pieces for *The Baltimore Sun*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Literary Digest*, and *Colliers* and often published peoples’ obituaries before they died. He was the prototype for the role Will Rogers’ created in *Life Begins at Forty*. In a piece written after he’d visited with Quillen, Alexander Woollcott called him “The Sage of Fountain Inn.” His friends in town knew him by his tall-crown Stetson hat, his bathrobe, the memorial he erected to Eve, and the writing pad he was never without.

In 2008 USC Press published a volume of Quillen’s writings edited by John Hammond Moore. Titled *The Voice of Small-Town America: The Selected Writings of Robert Quillen, 1920-1948*, the book is still in print. In 2009 Quillen was named to the South Carolina Press Association Hall of Fame.



Image Courtesy of Quillen family

*Robert Quillen*