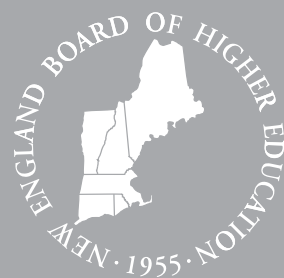
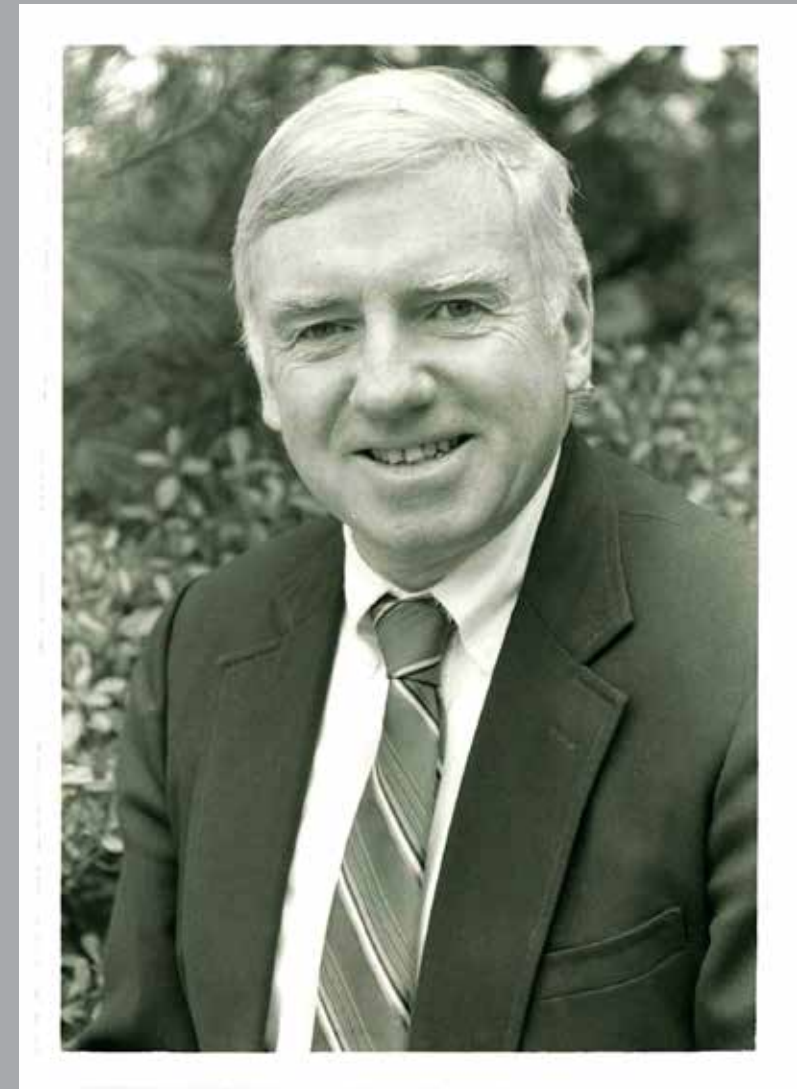


Robert E. Miller

a tribute



This tribute was assembled in April 2019 after the NEBHE staff learned of Bob's resignation from the board due to health reasons, ending a total tenure of 36 years of service. It was to be shared with him to commemorate his substantial leadership and contributions to NEBHE and to higher education in the New England region – but its delivery to Bob was unfortunately preceded by his passing. Many of the tributes speak of Bob in present tense – and we now share it with his family and friends to reflect his abiding influence.



A Man for All Seasons

Remembering Bob Miller

NEBHE colleagues from across New England were saddened to learn of the passing of NEBHE board member Robert E. Miller, a distinguished and long-serving member of the Connecticut delegation.

Bob passed away on Thursday, April 25, 2019, after a number of health challenges in the preceding months. He is survived by his wife, Sylvia (who many NEBHE board and staff members know well from her regular participation in board events over many years) and their five children, which include three sons and two daughters.

I had a chance to speak with Bob via phone about four weeks prior to his passing. He regretted that due to his declining health he would no longer be able to participate in NEBHE board work and expressed sincere regard for his fellow board members.

Bob served two distinguished terms of service on the board, the first from 1972 to 1994 (including as chair from 1981 to 1983) and then again from 2005 to 2019. Throughout those 36 years, Bob had a notable impact on NEBHE programs and policy. He was always a prepared and thoughtful contributor to board and committee discussions. He was often one of the latter people to speak, having listened closely to others' comments and input. His voice and contributions were always valued by NEBHE leaders, myself included, and by his fellow board members. He was the epitome of a true gentleman.

Bob's personal and professional accomplishments were considerable. He was the founding president of Quinebaug Valley Community College (serving from 1971 to 1992 and again from 2012 to 2013). He was asked to lead as an interim president at Connecticut Community Colleges on five different occasions. He was a "go-to" person in every way, known for his leadership, intelligence, warmth and good humor.

After serving in the U.S. Army in the early 1950's in Europe, Bob returned home and began a long and distinguished career in higher education, first as an assistant to the Dean of Men and a Foreign Student Advisor at the University of Connecticut. After a period with the Connecticut Commission for Higher Education, Bob became an associate academic officer with the Central Office of the Community Colleges, signaling the beginning of a long career in service of Connecticut's public two-year institutions. Through his final days, he remained a vocal advocate for community colleges.

Bob was very dedicated to Sylvia and their family, including his his three sons and two daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchild. I always enjoyed receiving an update regarding the most recent global travels that he and Sylvia had undertaken.

Beyond higher education, he made significant leadership contributions to his church and faith communities, and to countless other groups and organizations in Connecticut and beyond – too numerous to mention them all.

NEBHE is better for his having served – and Bob's presence, intellect and character will be greatly missed.



Michael K. Thomas

President and Chief Executive Officer
New England Board of Higher Education

For Release: IMMEDIATELY

Contact: William A. McNamara

Quinebaug's Miller Leads Regional Agency

Robert E. Miller, president of Quinebaug Valley Community College, has been unanimously elected chairman of the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE). He succeeds Rhode Island Senator John C. Revens, who served in the regional post for four years.

Long active in New England and Connecticut higher education affairs, Miller served as vice chairman of NEBHE and is chairman of that interstate compact's Regional Student Program Advisory Council. He was also instrumental in a recent initiative to effect a student interchange between New England and Quebec under NEBHE auspices.

NEBHE, under a regional compact ratified by the U.S. Congress, develops and operates cooperative programs among New England's 261 colleges and universities, and serves as an information resource to the academic community and to government, industry, and labor.

A Connecticut native now living in Brooklyn, Connecticut, Miller served in 1979 as interim president of Manchester Community College. He earned his undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees at the University of Connecticut where he became assistant dean of men before assuming administrative posts with the Connecticut Commission for Higher Education and the Board of Trustees of Regional Community Colleges.

-more-

First page of NEBHE press release, April 1981

From: **New England Board of Higher Education** nebhe@nebhe.org
Subject: Dr. Robert E. Miller Appointed to New England Board of Higher Education
Date: March 31, 2005 at 5:09 PM
To: everybody@nebhe.org

Dr. Robert E. Miller Appointed to New England Board of Higher Education

Contact: Charlotte Stratton, Sr. Director, Communications
cstratton@nebhe.org
617-357-9620 x125

BOSTON, MASS. — Connecticut state Sen. President Pro Tempore Donald Williams has appointed Dr. Robert Miller as a delegate to the nonprofit [New England Board of Higher Education](http://www.nebhe.org) (NEBHE).

This will be Miller's second appointment to the NEBHE board. He served previously from 1972 to 1994 and chaired the organization from 1981 to 1983.

"Bob Miller served Connecticut higher education with tremendous integrity for more than three decades," commented NEBHE president and CEO Dr. Evan S. Dobelle. "We're delighted to see him return to the board."

Miller was the founding president of Quinebaug Valley Community College, where he served from 1971 until his retirement in 1992. During that time he also served as interim president of Mohegan (now Three Rivers) Community College from July 1985 to July 1986 and Manchester Community College from July 1979 to June 1980. Miller came out of retirement to serve as interim president of Middlesex Community College from August 1995 to July 1996.

Miller was an adjunct professor of higher education at the University of Connecticut from 1970 until 2002 where he taught in the master's and doctoral programs. He received his bachelor's degree in political science, master's degree in education and doctorate in higher education administration from the University of Connecticut. He resides in Pomfret Center.

NEBHE is a congressionally authorized, six-state agency whose mission is to promote greater educational opportunities and services for residents of New England. NEBHE programs are principally focused on the relationship between New England higher education and regional economic development. The agency is now in its 50th year.

NEBHE's Regional Student Program (RSP) provides New England residents with a major tuition break at out-of-state public colleges and universities in the six-state New England region if they pursue certain academic programs not offered by their home institutions. In the 2003-04

First page of NEBHE press release, March 2005

Dear Bob,

It is a great honor to have the opportunity to share a few thoughts about your extraordinary commitment and service as a leader and member of the Board of Delegates of the New England Board of Higher Education. It is my understanding that you have set a new milestone as the longest serving member of the Board, having been originally appointed in October 1972. While your longevity as a Board member is truly remarkable, and I can't imagine ever being replicated, the impact of your commitment to NEBHE and quality of your participation warrants even greater recognition.

As a Connecticut community college campus administrator in the 1970s I knew of NEBHE because of the "Apple Program" and my need to understand the tuition discount for NEBHE students. In the early 1980s when I joined the System Office, I learned of the broader importance of the New England Compact, being educated by your reports to our Council of Presidents about the most recent NEBHE meeting and the current policy issues being discussed. Fast forward to the 21st century and I had the honor to serve with you on the Board of Delegates for a mere 14 years. It was during my time with you on the Board that I gained an even greater appreciation for your perspective of the broader issues affecting higher education and your unwavering commitment to provide educational opportunity for all students. Your commitment to excellence, collaboration, cooperation and mutual respect set an example for all of us on the Board to not only cherish but to follow.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention just how honored I continue to feel in having had the opportunity to serve as the NEBHE Chair thanks in large part to your confidence in me and your ongoing support. I am very proud to have followed you as one of the Connecticut delegates to serve as the Board Chair. You taught me much about leading this unique New England institution, and I am forever grateful for your guidance, trust, and support.

I know that I join all of our colleagues in being extremely grateful to you for your decades of involvement, dedication and commitment to NEBHE. Your leadership and participation have been exceptional and have assisted in advancing NEBHE to be the well-respected and valued organization that it is recognized as today, certainly benefiting all of the New England states and its students. Your participation will be missed but your legacy will hopefully guide the organization for generations to come.

Marc S. Herzog
Chancellor Emeritus
Connecticut Community Colleges



Bob Miller is one amazing gentleman. A class act. Totally dedicated to insuring the best in higher education for students. It was impressive to serve with someone so dedicated.

The Hon. Roberta B. Willis
Former Representative
Connecticut General Assembly

The State of Connecticut, United States of America

I, William A. O'Neill, Governor, with the consent of the
SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

placing trust and confidence in the skill and integrity of

ROBERT ERIC MILLER

and acting under the provisions of the General Statutes of this State,
appoint HIM to be

A MEMBER OF THE NEW ENGLAND BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

And I authorize and direct HIM, so long as HE shall hold this office, to execute and perform all the duties and to have the powers and responsibilities which, by our Constitution and Laws, belong to this office.



Julia H. Kashjian
Secretary of the State

William A. O'Neill
Governor

SEPTEMBER 9 1988

MAILGRAM SERVICE CENTER
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4-027567S117002 04/27/81 ICS IPMTZZ CSP BSNB
1 6174687341 MGM TDMT WENHAM MA 04-27 1239P EST

NEW ENGLAND BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION J HOY
68 WALNUT RD
WENHAM MA 01984

THIS MAILGRAM IS A CONFIRMATION COPY OF THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE:

6174687341 MGM TDMT WENHAM MA 59 04-27 1239P EST
ZIP

DR ROBERT E MILLER PRESIDENT
QUINEBAUG VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
24 SCHOOL ST
DANIELSON CT 06239

WARMEST CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ELECTION AS CHAIRMAN OF THE NEW ENGLAND BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AT THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING IN HARTFORD CONNECTICUT APRIL 23 1981.

GREATLY LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU IN THE CHALLENGING YEAR AHEAD. YOURS SINCERELY
JOHN C HOY PRESIDENT

12:41 EST

MGMCOMP MGM

TO REPLY BY MAILGRAM, SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR WESTERN UNION'S TOLL - FREE PHONE NUMBERS

Connecticut's Steady Habit: Downsizing

A tale of survival from
New England's only
active founding president

ROBERT E. MILLER

It was 20 years ago this summer when I began an adventure that relatively few people experience — founding a college. In June 1971, I was selected to be president of Quinebaug Valley Community College. The college was to serve northeastern Connecticut, a rural area with the highest unemployment and lowest educational attainment level in the nation's most affluent state.

By September, a "temporary campus" had been established at a technical school, faculty and staff had been hired and 200 students had been admitted. These were the "Governor [Thomas] Meskill years," when the notion of austerity took on a new meaning. Connecticut had gone through a decade of expansion of state services under the previous governor, John Dempsey, and Meskill took office determined to rein in state spending. He singled out higher-education employees for no pay increases during the first year of his administration.

For most of the summer of 1971 there was no clerical support at QVCC. My wife contributed to the cause by typing correspondence at night. Other times, I would carry batches of materials to Hartford for processing by the clerical staff of the community college central office.

QVCC's temporary campus consisted of several offices and six classrooms at a state vocational-technical school available after 3 p.m. These rooms were augmented by six well-used trailers that housed our library, business office, student services offices and faculty. When the wind blew over 15 miles per hour, the trailers rocked on their foundations and the clatter of the metal roofs drowned out conversation.

The temporary campus would last 12 years and expand to include space for the president's office at the nearby state airport and classrooms at a local church, a parochial school and a high school. Space was also leased in an industrial building as enrollments increased steadily and staff grew modestly.

Around the same time, Virginia and other states were building and equipping new public campuses before the colleges opened. It just doesn't work that way in Connecticut. After nearly 26 years, Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport, the state's largest city, still does not have a campus of its own, but instead continues to lease a portion of an old Singer Sewing Machine building.

It is fascinating to speculate on why Connecticut's approach and that of some of the other New England states to the support of community colleges as well as four-year public institutions has been so parsimonious. Is it the shadow of prestigious private institutions that obscures the need for a quality public system? Is it a carry-over from the attitude of the 19th-century mill own-



ers that an educated populace would result in demands for higher wages? Or is it simply the feeling of those whose salaries generate the highest per-capita income in the United States that state services which they do not use need not be characterized by excellence?

Whatever the source of the "keep it small and do it cheap" syndrome, it has pervaded the state's bureaucracy. In 1978, QVCC finally cleared what seemed like the last hurdle for a new campus. We had been allowed by the Connecticut Public Works Department to help select the architect. (This was almost unheard of: Selection of architects was, at least in part, a

**QVCC
Campus 1991:
The old campus
consisted of
trailers and space
at area schools,
churches,
industrial
buildings and
an airport.**

CONNECTION SUMMER 1991 19

political decision and had always been the prerogative of the public works commissioner.) We were also permitted to submit design concepts. The result was a very attractive and functional building of 80,000 square feet to be built on a bucolic 68-acre site. Yet, in the course of a weekend, the deputy commissioner



of higher education, with the help of a consultant in public higher-education building design from Massachusetts, drew plans for a cinderblock building based on a supermarket design — an approach aimed at

substantially reducing the cost of the project. The consultant also recommended placing it near the road to avoid the cost of an access drive. Our board of trustees, area legislators and a proximate state of apoplexy on my part helped scuttle that proposal. The compromise was a downsizing from 80,000 to 63,000 square feet and the loss of an auditorium, library space, storage space and other facilities that are now desperately needed. The cost of the building had been reduced by \$1 million, but double-digit inflation ate up \$500,000 of the savings by the time the building was constructed. QVCC is now planning a \$400,000 addition primarily for storage space.



Miller speaks at groundbreaking, 1981. From left: Gov. William O'Neill, U.S. Rep. Sam Gejdenson, state Sen. Kevin Johnston, state Sen. Audrey Beck and Department of Administrative Services Commissioner Elisha Friedman.

Insurance company chief executives seem to be the leaders of choice for special task forces on reorganization. In 1976, there was the Filer Commission, headed by John Filer of the Aetna Life Insurance Co. Its major recommendation on higher education was to abolish all of the coordinating and governing bodies and place higher education under the administration of a commissioner who would report to a board appointed by the governor. The Filer report noted that there had been, prior to that time, at least 11 major studies dealing with the organizational structure of higher education. The slogan that Connecticut seems to have embraced over the years as it contemplates the future of its higher-education system is: "If in doubt, reorganize."

The Thomas Commission, named for its chairman DeRoy Thomas of the Hartford Insurance Group, was established in 1990. Out-of-state consultants were engaged to research and write the section of its report relating to higher education. Although the consultants made some praiseworthy suggestions on the elimination of bureaucratic controls, they also recommended changes in the structure of higher education and in tuition levels that would sharply reduce services and limit access. These included consolidating the state's 17 community and technical colleges into six regional institutions and raising tuition by almost 40 percent at community colleges.

A management review of the report noted that "the consultants' plans undermine the fundamental mission of Connecticut's public institutions of higher education — to provide affordable higher-education opportunities to those who need them most." Most of the Thomas Commission's recommendations remain under review.

Is it the shadow of prestigious private colleges that obscures the need for a quality public system? Or is it the feeling of those whose salaries generate the highest income in the United States that state services they do not use need not be characterized by excellence?

New Start

There is at least one bright spot on the horizon. The General Assembly recently enacted a bill that will, among other provisions, give Connecticut's several systems of higher education new and increased authority to fill positions, make purchases, pay bills, approve travel expenses, lease facilities and control equipment. This legislation presents a welcome opportunity for system leaders and campus chief executives to manage important areas previously controlled by other state agencies, including the Department of Administrative Services, the Office of Policy and Management, the state Comptroller's Office and the Department of Higher Education.

These two decades of occasional frustration have not diminished my pride in the quality of public higher education in Connecticut, for we have achieved a level of excellence through the dedication of trustees and staff. The years have made me at times Machiavellian in my educational politics, a bureaucrat par excellence where need be and, certainly, a survivor. As the millennium approaches, I remain optimistic that public policy toward higher education in Connecticut will be characterized by advocacy rather than control, that the gap between the willingness and the ability to support higher education will be narrowed and that permanency of structure can be achieved. With the threat of reorganization removed, the college and university communities around the state can direct their energies to fulfilling their missions rather than defending their existence. □

Robert E. Miller is the president of Quinebaug Valley Community College.

20 NEW ENGLAND BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Bob,

Congratulations on your extraordinary service to New England higher education through your many years of service to NEBHE., As with all of your endeavors, you have served with your customary grace and dignity motivated by a deep commitment to advancing the cause of educational opportunity.

Thousands and thousands of students may never know your name nor how much they are indebted to you for all that you have done to enable them to fulfill their talents and their aspirations. But we do know, and we thank and applaud you on their behalf for all that you have done to help them, through education and training, to enlarge their understanding of the world and to better equip themselves to meet its challenges. Best wishes.ys ahead.

Andy McKirdy

Former NEBHE Board delegate

It has been my great pleasure to know Bob and to serve with him on the NEBHE Board. He is respected as an educator, and a champion of community colleges, institutions that are dear to me. I wish Bob and his family the very best in the days ahead.

The Hon. Joan Menard

Former Senator
Massachusetts General Court



The Providence Journal, April 5, 1982

Mr. and Mrs. Miller were wonderful friends and colleagues while I served on the New England Board of Higher Education. I wish him nothing but the best and thank him for his friendship and service to the Board. I can't think of anyone who resembled Walter Peterson more. Two great men who I was honored to serve with. Extend my very best wishes to Bob and his wife on his retirement from the Board.

He will be missed yet his legacy will live on.

Sen. Lou D'Allesandro
New Hampshire General Court



From left: NEBHE President & CEO Michael K. Thomas; Robert E. Miller; Sylvia Miller; Linda Daube; Esther Daube-Valois; and 2008 NEBHE Excellence Award recipient Jonathan Daube, President of Manchester Community College .



Washington briefing

Dr. Robert E. Miller (right), NEBHE chairman, speaks to Senator Claiborne Pell, D-R.I., following a briefing on "A Threat to Excellence" for New England's congressional delegation. Board representatives and legislators discussed possible federal responses to the report (story pages 5-6).

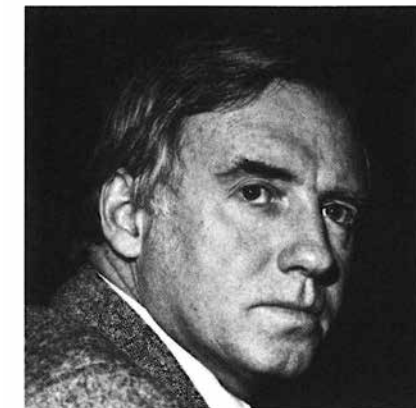
From *Connection: The Journal of the New England Board of Higher Education*, Summer 1982

My memories of Bob Miller begin with my first years at NEBHE. I started working at NEBHE in the fall of 1979, and Bob already had been on the NEBHE board for seven years. No doubt he was a champion of the Regional Student Program and NEBHE. I will especially remember him for his (and Sylvia's!) warm smile and kindness and the genuine interest he took in me and the other staff.

Thank you, Bob.

Wendy A. Lindsay
NEBHE Staff

Speaking about the Commission on Higher Education and the Economy of New England's report *A Threat To Excellence* (From *Connection: The Journal of the New England Board of Higher Education*, Winter 1982)



'The commission has provided a benchmark and historic piece of work for this region and its emerging economic philosophy.'

— Dr. Robert E. Miller
Chairman
New England Board of Higher Education

*You are cordially invited to
Quinebaug Valley Community College's
Ground-Breaking Ceremony
Friday, November 6, 1981*

3 o'clock pm

*Maple Street Campus Site
Danielson, Connecticut*

*Reception following at
H.H. Ellis Vocational Technical School
Maple Street
Danielson, Connecticut*

*Parking facilities at the Technical School
near the campus site*



NEBHE
RECEIVED

QUINEBAUG VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DANIELSON, CONNECTICUT 06239

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

AUG 3 1989

July 31, 1989

MEMO TO: John Hoy, President, NEBHE
FROM: Robert E. Miller
SUBJECT: Letter to Governor Dukakis

Attached is a copy of my letter to Governor Dukakis.
Although I am not sure he will ever see it or be enor-
mously moved by it, at least I feel better for having
written it.

REM/rp
Att.

