

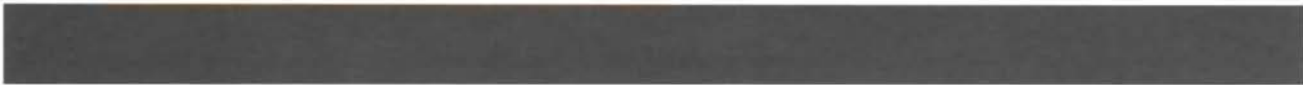
GOVERNMENT'S STAKE IN AMERICAN CULTURE

A
Symposium
at the
Lyndon
Baines
Johnson
Library

September 14, 1995



President and Mrs. Johnson with Gregory Peck, at the signing of the 1965 Arts and Humanities Act.



We must recognize and encourage
those who can be pathfinders for the
nation's imagination and understanding.

Lyndon Baines Johnson
State of the Union Address, 1965



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The Climate Then . . .

When President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act in 1965, it was a time of limitless possibilities. The economy was booming. There was a generosity of spirit, not only in the legislature and in the White House, but in the public mood as well.

Harry Middleton, director of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, recalls, "Those were heady days thirty years ago, when the president and the Congress, launching a Great Society whose hopeful purpose was to improve the quality and condition of American life, saw art and literature and history and music as necessary parts of a nation's sustenance."

Other landmark legislation included an Elementary and Secondary Education Act which provided massive federal aid to the nation's schools; and Medicare, providing medical care to all elderly Americans. It was the time of Head Start, the Job Corps, college student loans and grants, the Voting Rights Act, and a massive War on Poverty. "These measures constitute a legacy from which hundreds of millions of Americans have benefited," notes John Brademas, who served in Congress when much of this legislation was passed.

As a young congressman from Indiana, Brademas was among those joining Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island in the effort to create the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. So, too, was Michigan Representative William Ford, a member (and later chairman) of the House Committee on Education and Labor, which played an important role in the passage of Great Society measures.

So it was fitting that Ford and Brademas were among those who gathered at the LBJ Library in Austin, Texas to review the thirty-year history of the Endowments and to confront a dramatically changed environment in Congress, where strong opponents were pursuing an agenda to dismantle the agencies.

Brademas chaired the House subcommittee with jurisdiction over the Endowments for ten years, and he sponsored legislation that established the Institute of Museum Services, which provides modest grants to museums of every kind. Now president emeritus of the nation's largest private university, New York University, Brademas also serves as chairman of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.*

*Established by President Reagan and continued by Presidents Bush and Clinton to encourage private-sector support of the arts and humanities, the committee is composed of thirty-one private citizens, including Isaac Stern; Quincy Jones; Rita Moreno; Harvey Golub, chairman of American Express; and Ray Smith, CEO of Bell Atlantic. President's Committee members attending the symposium were Everett Fly, San Antonio landscape architect; Harold Williams, president of the J. Paul Getty Trust, and Shirley Wilhite of Louisiana.



John Brademas: "The allegation that programs aided by the two endowments are for but a few people, the so-called elite, is simply not in accord with the facts."

"To a fifth-century B.C. Athenian, the idea that government should not concern itself with such matters as art, architecture and the theater would have seemed bizarre."

The Climate Now . . .

After thirty years of support by presidents and elected officials from both parties, the Endowments are threatened with either drastic reductions or complete extinction. The threat is undeniable and real. Congress was radically changed by the 1994 elections, which gave the **Republicans control of both houses** for the first time in forty years. Many of these newly-elected Republicans have quickly shown themselves to be decidedly against government support of the arts and humanities, among other things.

Brademas remarked that "The 104th Congress . . . seems bent, especially in the House of Representatives, on undoing much of the social and economic advance the United States has made during the last half century." It is interesting to note that back in 1964, it was a *Democratic* landslide in Congress that decisively altered

the balance of power in the House of Representatives, setting the stage for the creation of the Endowments. Before the 1964 election, government support of the arts would not have passed in the House.

What is happening today—after a thirty-year record widely hailed for its dissemination of the arts and humanities throughout the country—is not just the results of the 1994 election. It is the culmination of attacks that began in 1989, when critics found the National Endowment for the Arts to be not only an easy target, but a highly useful fund-raising device for their cause. The visibility of arts programs, coupled with the outlandishness of some of the artists, gave the opponents the sure-fire ammunition they needed.

It began with two now infamous photographic exhibitions. The first included works by a young photographer, Andres Serrano. His photograph of a crucifix submerged in urine was deeply offensive to many and provided the opportunity for Senator Alfonse D'Amato to rip up the exhibition catalogue on the Senate floor. Senator Jesse Helms stepped forward to begin a campaign that was to continue unabated for the next six years.

Just six days after the Serrano scene on the Senate floor, Congress became aware of another NEA-funded exhibit, "Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment," which contained several homoerotic photographs among its 150 pieces. This proved to be the "perfect moment" for the opponents of the NEA to launch a direct-mail and advertising onslaught. The purpose of their continuing campaign was to brand the agency as the "poster child" of government waste and social decay. Even the National Endowment for the Humanities was pulled into the fray eventually, with complaints (which NEH claims were distorted) about its history standards.

The Endowments found this rough-tough playing field unfamiliar and extremely uneven. "Our opponents do a thirty-second spot, for which we need a thirty-minute explanation," said Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, executive director of the President's Committee. "And by then millions of Americans have received the op-ed pieces, and heard the radio commentary stating the NEA funds blasphemous and obscene art, and the NEH is helping to undermine Western Civilization." But, she asked, "Can our opponents honestly say that over the last thirty years the Endowments did not help produce any great work?"

That didn't seem to matter. As this symposium convened, bills were before Congress that would drastically reduce the funding for both agencies immediately or eliminate them outright. The best-case scenario seemed to be the package that would allow the agencies to continue for two years before closing down altogether. That is the prospect in September 1995.

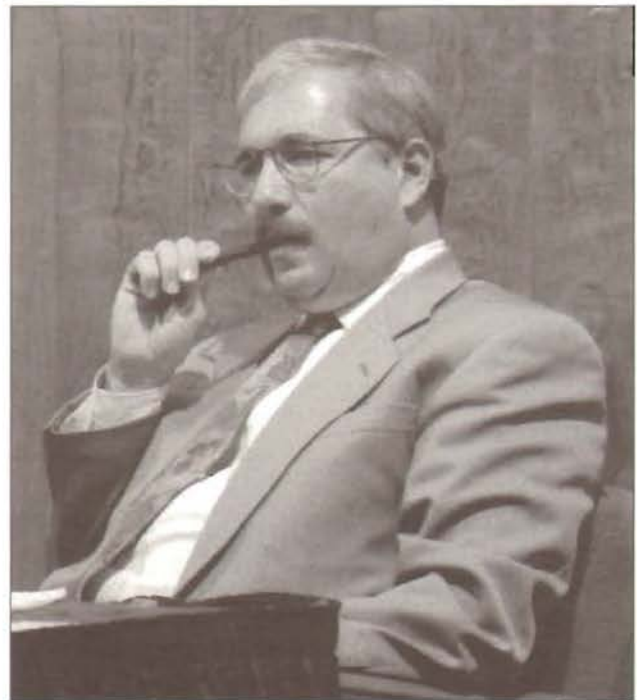
"The Endowments Committed Suicide"

What was behind these attacks? "The principal motivation, in my judgment, is ideological," Brademas told the symposium.

The Congress elected last year is controlled . . . by persons who, now that the Cold War is over, need a new enemy, a new devil to attack, and that devil is culture, the arts, the humanities. Claiming that these tiny agencies are . . . the cause of cultural degradation has turned out to be fruitful for campaign fund raising.

John Agresto, president of St. John's College and a former member of the National Council for the Humanities, presented the opposition viewpoint. Charging the agency with contributing to its own undoing, he said, "The Arts Endowment was not killed by right-wing forces in Congress; rather, the Endowment committed suicide in public.

What Americans saw was the NEA mounting a principled defense of something new, radical, shrill, and I must say a totally sophomoric view of what art really is, namely, that all art is provocative, that real art offends, that true art is by nature countercultural and bites the hand that feeds it. This view is the poison pill that killed the Arts Endowment.



John Agresto: "The arts endowment . . . committed suicide in public, a long, slow, and needlessly stupid suicide.



William Ford: "I found the Mapplethorpe exhibit offensive, too, if that's comforting to you, but I would still defend the right of somebody to be a damn fool."

"The Endowment stopped looking at the American people as its patron and its constituency," charged Agresto, "and instead began to see them as the enemy. . . . Americans did not like being insulted and offended, and they hated being insulted with their own money. 'If you don't like it, don't look, but pay for it anyway,' simply struck the public as wrong."

Alice Goldfarb Marquis, author of *Art Lessons: Learning from the Rise and Fall of Public Arts Funding*, partially concurred: "What the Arts Endowment forgot most of all is who it worked for. It forgot its constituency was the American people."

Still, Marquis did not object to NEA's funding of contemporary works.

The argument that the NEA has funded too much controversial art is ridiculous. By and large, the NEA has been . . . far too conservative. When I looked at their grants, what I found is that over and over again they were sponsoring another Beethoven festival, another performance of a Mozart series, another production of Shakespeare. . . . [T]he emphasis . . . has been a very conservative one.

Recalling the debates in Congress when the Endowments were created in 1965, Sheldon Hackney, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, noted a certain irony. "Republicans, believe it or not, worried that the Endowments would try too hard to avoid controversy and would contribute to a spirit of compromise and conservatism in the arts and humanities."

Ford agreed, and added that

From the very beginning, there was never a disagreement on the committee between Democrats and Republicans, or conservatives and liberals, about one proposition: Washington should never have the power to be able to determine what was and was not art, and therefore what was good and what was not good art.

The Danger of Risk-Taking

The NEA has not shied away from risk-taking. It was a risk to support the fledgling Dance Theater of Harlem, but that company went on to achieve national and international acclaim. It was a risk to fund many experimental nonprofit theaters, but since 1976 every Pulitzer Prize-winning play received its premiere production at a nonprofit theater, with NEA support. It is an extraordinary record of achievement.

Risk-taking has its dangers. Many of the controversial images were powerful and extremely jarring. "There are many reasons why this has happened, but in part it's a tribute to the power of ideas and images, and their impact on the emotion and on the soul," said McCulloch-Lovell.

"People want glorious art," added Brademas, "but they don't want to take any risks." Even so, the reaction to the controversial grants, no matter how few, was extreme—and unbalanced. Brademas added:

That a United States senator has been shown to have abused his authority in genuinely disgraceful fashion does not mean that we should . . . do away with the United States Senate . . . nor does evidence of horrendous cost overruns or even proof of bribery in a military procurement mean that we should close the doors of the Department of Defense.

Transmitting the Acclaimed Works

Agresto declared that "The Endowments would have flourished if they devoted themselves to one great task: transmitting the acclaimed and celebrated works of this and other cultures from one generation to the next."

Sheldon Hackney and many others believe the NEH did just that. "It may surprise you when I say that much of our best work over the last thirty years has been, quite literally, conservative," Hackney proclaimed.

Since 1965, the NEH has made an unrivaled contribution to protecting our cultural heritage. We have sponsored the compilation and publication of the writings of American presidents and other great American figures. We gave the seed money for the Library of America series, a wonderful production of the authoritative texts of great American authors, thirty-six of them in seventy-some-odd volumes. We have supported dictionaries, the first of their kind, for the Hopi, Siouxan, Wichita, Osage, Arapaho and Navaho languages. We have supported archeological digs at Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Monticello in Virginia; in St. Augustine, Florida; in old Mobile, Alabama, and at many other Spanish, French, English and Native American settlement sites across the country.

The United States Newspaper Program, created by the NEH in 1982, is microfilming 54 million pages from hundreds of thousands of local newspapers that would otherwise be lost to decay. The Endowment is also helping save three million books that are deteriorating and will be lost otherwise from our nation's libraries. This is genuine conservatism, saving a precious past from destruction and indifference. Milan Kundera, speaking from his experiences as a Czech citizen whose nation was targeted for extinction first by the Nazis and then by the Soviets, reminds us that a nation which loses awareness of its past gradually loses itself. The self-styled conservatives who trust everything to the market put our precious past at risk. . . .



Ellen McCulloch-Lovell: "Are we really going to be the only great nation to withdraw even our minuscule amount of support for culture?"

The NEH is our best guarantee that our cultural heritage will be available to all Americans regardless of how much money they make or where they happen to live.

Demise of Faith in Government

Some opponents in Congress are not driven by ideological concerns, but by a genuine desire to decrease the power and size of the federal government. Some are also motivated by the need to decrease the size of government debt, with the Endowments being just one of many programs they would cut.

They reflect a growing sentiment, so different from the prevailing mood of 1965, that government *cannot* make a positive difference in the lives of its citizens. Confidence in government is at an all-time low—and in many quarters it is seen as the enemy, or at best a highly inefficient mechanism for addressing society's needs. To such critics, the notion that a democratic nation has an obligation to promote imagination and understanding, rings hollow.

The English Example

The British began their government support of the arts in the very darkest days of World War II, when London itself was under bombardment. It was a remarkable time to begin investing in the arts; a testament to the hardy faith of the English people and their understanding of the value of their culture.

"Your culture in America is intimately related to ours," Lord Gowrie, minister for the arts in the Thatcher government and now chairman of the Arts Council of England, told the conference, "and the signals you give out are of immense weight for us and indeed for all the open societies."

He noted that England, too, is faced with the need to decrease the size of government. "I happen to be a conservative, and I believe that public spending is unsustainably high all over the developed democracies, but the sums of money [for the arts] . . . are too tiny to have any macroeconomic influence whatsoever."

In England, observed Gowrie, cultural support is viewed as "seed-corn investment, as modest venture capital to an industry which makes a staggering contribution to Britain's economy."* Britain's arts and entertainment industry are major sources of foreign exchange, a significant source of revenue for the government. "They're labor intensive. They raise a lot

*See p. 11 for U.S. figures.



Lord Gowrie: "We're talking about building a civilization, as well as preserving what has gone before."

of direct and value-added tax. They have nothing to apologize for." Gowrie also made the interesting point that in a sense, those who work in the arts also subsidize the arts, by taking on insecure jobs at low rates of pay compared to what they could make in other fields.

The arts' contribution to Britain's tourist economy is widely recognized in the halls of Parliament. For example, "The Arts Council's annual subsidy of 1.9 million pounds given to the Royal Shakespeare Company seems to us a sound investment, in relation to the 20 million pounds of revenue generated by overseas visitors alone in connection with their visits to that one company," said Lord Gowrie. He noted that the Philadelphia-based Barnes collection of French impressionists generated \$75 million of new money for Paris in its first week there. In Germany the artist Christo's three-week wrapping of the Reichstag brought in over \$100 million in visitor spending.

Though not new information to most of those in attendance at the symposium, comparisons of U.S. government support for the arts with that found in Europe are astonishing. Aggregate cultural support in the United Kingdom is running at about \$2.7 billion. Per capita government spending on the arts in Austria is over \$15 per person per year; in France it is over

\$12 per person per year. West Germany spends almost \$40 per person per year; Sweden almost \$25 per person per year. In the United States, it is 68 cents.

The Interlocking World of Nonprofit and Commercial Art

Lord Gowrie observed that there is no clear dividing line between subsidized and commercial art. "They make up a single delicate ecosystem and the one feeds the other," he said. He cited one example, not atypical, of a new play by a little-known South American writer that was given a rehearsed reading—"perhaps the lowest form of theatrical life"—at the subsidized Institute of Contemporary Arts. It went from there to a full production at the small studio theater at the subsidized Royal Court, then to the Royal Court's main stage, then to London's commercial West End, where it ran for nearly two years, was broadcast on BBC radio and then around the world on the BBC World Service. Next it opened on Broadway with Glenn Close and Gene Hackman. And then Hollywood made a film of it. Observed Gowrie,

It's called *Death and the Maiden*, by the Chilean writer Ariel Dorfman. Aside from its artistic merits, just consider what has grown from that single, subsidized, cheap, rehearsed reading, in terms of employment, and skill, and money. What may seem like icing on the cake is in fact the cake itself, or the bread and butter, of our new economies.

Gowrie also noted that many artists receive their training and begin their careers in the nonprofit world. For example, he said, "I met a young Irish actor, Liam Neeson, in 1986 in a small subsidized London theater. Today he is known all over the world as the lead in *Schindler's List*."

How Much is Enough Subsidy?

How much *should* governments make available for arts subsidy? Furthermore, "How much has the health of a culture to do with government expenditure, after all?" Lord Gowrie wondered.

"Let me assure you that we aren't even close to that point now," Hackney responded. "We can go for years adding double-digit figures to the budget and not get close [to too much]."

Lord Gowrie hailed the American practice of giving tax breaks to encourage donations, and stated that "[a]s arts minister . . . copying you, I initiated a scheme of challenge funding."



Harold Williams: "We've lost our way. [T]he arts are . . . the cornerstone of any civilized society. And if the federal government of this country can't put a little money into helping this be a civilized society, we've got even bigger problems than we imagined."

Gowrie also shared information on the new British national lottery that supports the arts. Launched at the end of last year, the lottery devotes 28 per cent of revenues to "good causes," with a fifth of the profits earmarked for the arts. In the first year this is expected to amount to over 150 million pounds. The lottery is reportedly so popular that over half the population of England can be found watching "the telly" every Friday night to hear the winning numbers.

Turning to the Private Sector

The private sector consists of three major "donor communities": individuals, foundations, and corporations. These sources gave nearly \$130 billion to non-profit institutions of all kinds in 1994. Of that total, nearly 88 per cent came from individuals, 7.6 per cent from foundations, and 4.2 per cent from corporations. Over the last ten years, individual giving has remained stable. Foundation giving has gradually increased, while corporate giving has gradually dropped off. In 1991, total private-sector contributions specifically earmarked for the arts, culture, and humanities were almost \$9 billion.

These figures come from a sobering study by the Rockefeller Foundation, which concluded that private foundations will not, indeed cannot fill the future gap in funding for culture. The study also described the delicate, interlocking ecosystem of arts support:

Since 1965, funding for the arts and the humanities in the United States has undergone enormous growth, which coincided with

the creation of the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities.

However the phenomenon is explained, the fact is that thirty years ago a remarkable energizing of the nation's cultural life began, shaped by a partnership of the public and private sector. That partnership has persisted ever since. . . . What we have in place today is a complex national cultural structure in which private and public sectors reinforce each other, picking up different pieces and parts, exercising differing cultural priorities within the whole.

All the patterns suggest that arts and humanities will continue to be last on the list of sectors supported by private donors. Private-sector support will continue to favor large, regionally important, well-established organizations over the smaller, community-oriented, less visible organizations.

The report observed that museums and performing arts organizations also will continue to be funded more generously than other cultural offerings, such as media, writing, emerging artists and art forms, *or any of the humanities*.

Similarly, as numerous business articles have shown, corporations cannot be counted on to rescue the arts, and their support of the humanities is extremely small. Despite the philanthropic commitment of many of America's top business firms, chief executive officers feel both increasing internal pressure to meet essential operating needs and external pressure to support a variety of social service demands, including elementary and secondary education.

Private funding has real drawbacks anyway. As Harold Williams pointed out, "If you look at where corporate and individual and foundation funding goes in this country, about two-thirds of it goes to five states." Endowment support, on the other hand, funds culture in every state, in major cities, in towns, in communities and in rural areas.

The Role of Federal Funding

Some at the conference believed that loss of federal support would not make any difference. "Artists create because they must," said Marquis, "not because someone gives them a grant." Anyway, she continued, the NEA is not the largest source of public arts support. "The states spend quite a lot more than the Endowment, and cities and counties spend about five times as much as the NEA to support the arts, largely [to] encourage tourism" and for other non-artistic reasons.

But the real point of federal support, others countered, is its psychological effect. "If the federal government sends a signal that the arts are not an important part of this culture and this civilization, not important enough to have any federal recognition, why should the states take a different attitude?" asked Williams. "If it isn't important to the federal government, it won't be important to state governments."

Brademas concurred.

The withdrawal of these funds will signal a devaluing of the place of culture in American life, and the result will be further to diminish support for the arts and the humanities from individuals, from corporations, from foundations and from governors.

"Synergy," noted Brademas, "works both ways."

The Biggest Losers

Though large organizations and cities will feel the effect of decreased federal support of culture, it is likely that most of these will manage to survive, even if it might mean cutbacks in activities. Small and emerging arts groups and small communities will be the hardest hit, but so will many important medium-sized arts groups and cities.

"The major arts organizations in Los Angeles, and Atlanta, and New York, and Chicago, and probably Boston, will survive," said Williams. "But those in La Crosse, Wisconsin, and La Grange, Texas, will not survive. And our ability to reach out to the larger community and . . . to build audiences for future generations . . . will not be there."

The biggest loser, concluded Williams, will be American society as a whole.

Money Isn't the Point

Money, translated into support for the arts and humanities, means that millions more people will be enriched by the creations of our artists, writers, and composers; that schoolchildren might have as part of their natural heritage the experience of the rich diversity of American cultures and an intimate knowledge of our unique history. But for all that, Brademas said, money is not finally the point. "We are talking about building a civilization."

Recently Brademas attended a meeting in Greece, held on Pnyx Hill, where ancient Athenians gave birth to democracy.

Under a full moon with the illuminated Acropolis behind us, I joined the president of

Cyprus, Mr. Clerides, and the president of the National Assembly of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Kaklamanis, with noted French scholar Jacques Attali; and the former president of the former Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, for a conference on the future of democracy and the outlook for culture.

Brademas quoted Bernard Knox, the director of the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, D.C.:

We remember the democratic Athens that for all its faults produced Thucydides, though it exiled him, and Socrates, though it executed him; that listened to Plato, though he despised it, and sheltered Aristotle, though he condemned it; that built the temples that even in their ruins leave us awestruck, and created and supported the first theater of the West; leaving us, from the enormous wealth of its dramatic productions, the hundreds of plays produced by its three great tragedians and its one comedic genius, a handful of plays that, like the ruins of the Acropolis, can still stun us with the greatness of their vision and the power of their speech and action.

Hackney echoed those sentiments:

Only through our awareness of our cultural heritage are we able to see ourselves as members of a democratic community, as part of a fabric that stretches backwards and forwards across time, and indeed in a complex weave across space. The sociologist Robert Bellah reminds us that we are only able to understand ourselves and our future in constant conversation with our past. "Memory and hope," he writes, "belong together."

"This isn't about money," said Hackney. "It is about the soul of America."

Not for Sissies

"Being a supporter of the NEA and NEH is not for sissies," said a member of the symposium audience. "We have to learn to take some hits."

It is clear that the Endowments are at the crossroads of change. "I believe that all change is not progress, nor all movement forward," said Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, "but you can't stop it. It's going to happen. Change is upon us." Valenti mused that the NEA might evolve into the "National Endowment for Creativity, because what you're trying to do is to give

encouragement, to nourish, to elevate, to bring to the fore talents which might not have been exhibited had not somebody given a helping hand."

"Culture, at the end of the twentieth century, is a somewhat uncomfortable concept," ventured Tom Spencer, senior producer of public affairs programming, KLRU-TV, who served as rapporteur at the conference.

At PBS, we have to entertain people, otherwise those pledge dollars don't come in. But part of our mission is to do something special beyond that. Sometimes we need to draw a protective circle around certain aspects of our culture, and shelter them from the tyranny of the bottom line and the entertainment ethic.

Spencer concluded that the outcome in Congress will "reverberate for good or ill through the states, and the local institutions, and through the lives of each of us."

Postscript: What the 104th Congress Did

As this goes to press, Congress has not finished the FY 1996 budget. The Interior appropriations bill, which includes funding for the Endowments, has not been approved. However, the House/Senate conference bill on the Endowments is not expected to change when the Interior bill finally passes Congress.

It appears that all three cultural agencies will take major cuts; for the Endowments, around a 40 per cent

reduction to each. For FY 1996, the National Endowment for the Arts will be appropriated \$99.5 million, down from \$162.4 million. The National Endowment for the Humanities will get \$110 million, down from \$172 million. The Institute for Museum Services will receive \$21 million, down from \$28 million. Further, the percentage of NEA's funds which must go directly to state arts councils is increased from 35 to 43 per cent.

Language restricting the type of grants the NEA can give, drafted by Senator Helms and slightly modified by Senator Gorton, remained in the conference bill, despite attempts to have it deleted. This language restricts the NEA from funding any material or performance which "denigrates the religious objects or religious beliefs of the adherents of a particular religion, or depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual or excretory activities or organs."

Both the NEA and NEH have announced major work-force reductions that, when complete, will leave them with a little more than half their current staffs. Both agencies have also announced complete restructuring plans. The NEA has eliminated all discipline-based programs such as art, music, and dance, and has instead developed four theme areas for grants: heritage and preservation, creation and presentation, education and access, and planning and stabilization. The NEA will no longer offer seasonal support or award direct grants to individuals, except in literature.

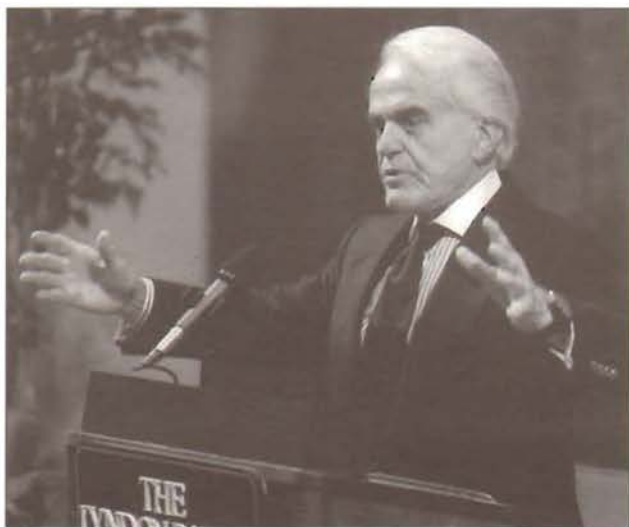
The NEH has reduced its grants categories to just three: research, preservation and access, and public programs.

The Bottom Line: After Thirty Years of Government Support of the Arts and the Humanities

The Endowments have nourished a wondrous growth of cultural organizations and activities.

Since the founding of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965, the number of state arts councils has risen dramatically from 5 to 56. Local arts councils in cities and small towns have soared from less than 500 to nearly 4,000. The number of large symphony orchestras has more than doubled from 110 to 230. There are today eight times as many nonprofit theaters, an increase from 56 to over 400. Dance companies have grown from 37 to 450; opera companies from 27 to 120.

Because of the National Endowment for the Humanities, all fifty states now have humanities councils which match, dollar for dollar, federal funds.



Jack Valenti: "... of the four great masters of the dramatic stage, three are Greek. Whatever subsidies they were using in Athens in those days, that's the formula that we ought to employ today."

Cultural programs have been made accessible to millions of Americans.

Each year, eleven million Americans participate in activities sponsored by state humanities councils; scores of millions of Americans attend museum and library exhibits made possible by grants from the NEH; the audience for radio and television documentaries each year is about 244 million. Allegations that programs aided by the Endowments are for only a few people, the so-called elite, are simply not in accord with the facts.

The partnership between the public and private sectors works. Federal support has been synergistic in leveraging billions in nonfederal dollars.

Both the NEA and NEH have matching requirements that attract nonfederal funds. In less than two decades, NEH challenge grants have attracted over \$1.3 billion in nonfederal funds for libraries, museums, colleges and universities. The NEA challenge programs have been a powerful magnet for nearly \$2.5 billion in nonfederal funds. Each dollar awarded by the NEA generates some \$12 or more from state or local agencies, foundations, corporations and individuals.

The arts and humanities are vital to the economy of every state and nearly every local community.

Nonprofit arts institutions alone create some \$38 billion in economic activity annually in this country. They support 1.3 million jobs and generate \$3.4 billion in tax revenues.

As many thoughtful leaders have pointed out, if the American genius for innovation is to flourish in an increasingly global economy, the competencies required



Tom Spencer: "We need to draw a protective circle around certain aspects of our culture, and shelter them from the tyranny of the bottom line and the entertainment ethic."

will be creativity, adaptability, discipline, sensitivity, and risk-taking, all animated and enhanced through study and practice of the arts and the humanities.

The true value of the Endowments' programs is often intangible.

The fundamental value of the arts and the humanities is their association with the most profound expressions of the human spirit, that unquantifiable entity so crucial to the quality of life in any society.



Lady Bird Johnson, with John Brademas and William Ford.

PRESIDENTS AND CULTURE: THE BIPARTISAN RECORD

Few investments we could make would give us so great a return in . . . human understanding, human satisfaction and the intangible but essential qualities of grace, beauty and spiritual fulfillment [as the National Foundations for the Arts and the Humanities].

Richard M. Nixon
1969

The Arts, Humanities, and Cultural Affairs Act of 1976 reflects the continuing strong bipartisan support of the programs of the National Endowments for the Arts and . . . the Humanities.

Gerald R. Ford
1976

It would not be appropriate for the government to . . . define what is good or what is true or what is beautiful. But [through the Endowments] government can provide nourishment to the ground within which these ideas spring forth from the seeds of inspiration within the human mind.

Jimmy Carter
1980

Our cultural institutions are an essential national resource; they must be kept strong.

Ronald Reagan
1981

. . . I don't know of anybody in government . . . that should be set up to censor what you write or what you paint or how you express yourself.

George Bush
1990