

try to follow." Jackson closed his remarks by saying, "I for one would—if I could—award Max Kampelman the Nobel Prize for Coalition Management and Staying Power in Adversary Relations."\*

It is a pleasure, Max, to represent this plaque and humanitarian check to you from the National Capital Political Science Association as its 1989 Pi Sigma Alpha Awardee.

\**Congressional Record*, March 15, 1983

## National Endowment for the Humanities Funds Increased for 1989

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**W**ith the President's signature on the Interior and Related Agencies appropriation for fiscal year 1989 secured three days earlier, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) began the new fiscal year on October 1, 1988 with nearly 10% more funds than in the just completed year. The \$12,565,000 increase this year is almost entirely apportioned to two operational areas of the NEH: the Office of Preservation (\$8 million increase) and the Division of State Programs (up \$3.7 million).

Contrary to folk wisdom about Presidential election years, the NEH budget process was vigorous and innovative. Following the routine development of the budget within the Administration (which is largely screened from outsiders and not reported here) major themes in 1988 included:

The annual budget request delivered on February 18, in which the Administration for the first time in seven years offered recommendations of *level funding rather than reductions* from current spending levels for NEH and its sister agencies, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Institute of Museum Services (IMS). In recent years, the budget dynamic

between the executive and legislature was in a sense based upon the Administration always urging cuts and the Congress—prodded by Rep. Sidney Yates (D-IL)—declining to accept the reductions. The net result has been that the humanities funding was mostly flat with an easing downward due to inflation. With the FY-89 proposals, that dynamic changed.

The disparity in appropriations for the arts and humanities endowments has been a budget reality since their establishment in 1965.

NEH staff have been privately annoyed by the growing gap in the two agencies' budgets which has increased steadily over the last decade (e.g., in FY-88, the gap was \$29,296,000). Perhaps in part because the struggle between reductions and hold-the-line budgets abated this year, parity was openly discussed in the House hearings both in testimony from witnesses and in questions from Mr. Yates. For Congress in general and Mr. Yates in particular, simple comparisons of—or complaints about—the parity gap is not a credible issue. On the other hand, discussion of underfunding or non-funding of important work in the humanities (and an implicit or explicit relationship with parity) became a major theme during the hearings. The issue was raised at the March 17 outside witness hearing, notably by Nancy Stevenson and James Veninga (testifying for the Federation of State Humanities Councils) and Vartan Gregorian. During the agency hearing held April 21—in the context of an extended exchange with NEH Chairman Lynne Cheney on the adequacy of NEH appropriations—Mr. Yates remarked that he would like to see "a return to a level playing field" in the funding of arts and humanities. Both the Federation and the Alliance included statements on parity in testimony before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee during a May 9 hearing.

The *adequacy of funds at NEH* has long been an issue between the Congress and the Administration. This year there was a noticeable movement toward addressing the issue more realistically. There were probably several factors in the enhanced attention, including the interplay of the issue with parity and the accumulating

evidence both anecdotal and from foundations and research agencies that there is a growing problem of highly regarded work going unfunded.

William G. Bowen, testifying for the Alliance at the March 17 hearing, underscored the critical role of NEH in the funding of the humanities enterprise by providing an assessment of the funding picture for humanities among private foundations. Mr. Bowen, an economist who served as president of Princeton University and now heads the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, offered an analysis which suggests that there has been far less support outside of the NEH than has been assumed. In a question preceded by the requisite praise for both officials, Mr. Yates asked Mr. Bowen whether he agreed with the argument offered by William Bennett and Lynne Cheney at earlier budget hearings that NEH funds are adequate to support all proposals rated 'excellent' and most rated 'very good' processed by the agency. Mr. Bowen responded diplomatically but observed that external evidence (i.e., requests directed at certain major foundations) indicated that NEH was not able to fully meet the demands for support of high quality work. Mr. Bowen responded in the affirmative to Mr. Yates' question as to whether a Congressional decision to increase NEH's appropriation to the level of NEA would be adequate funding for NEH.

Ms. Cheney was pressed on the adequacy of NEH appropriations at the April 21 agency hearing. Mr. Yates read aloud extensively from the records of similar hearings in years past. While stressing her support for the policies of fiscal restraint, Ms. Cheney said that over the previous 18 months there had been an increase in applications rated excellent. As the exchange shifted to a questioning of whether NEH could effectively use an additional \$27 million (i.e., the parity gap between NEH and NEA), Ms. Cheney mentioned that both the Division of Research Programs and the Office of Challenge Grants were under particularly heavy funding pressure.

Stanley N. Katz, testifying for the National Humanities Alliance at the May 9 Senate hearing, emphasized that all programs of the Endowment are in need of additional resources because their ability

to respond to the most urgent needs from the field has been reduced significantly as the real dollar value of their appropriations has declined on an average by more than one third over this decade.

Finally, after a long buildup, preservation in general and brittle books in particular moved to front and center in the House appropriations process. With the caveat that a number of federal agencies and entities (notably the Library of Congress and the National Archives and Records Administration) are very active on preservation issues, the following is intended to sketch the growth of the issue *vis a vis* NEH funding:

The deterioration of cultural records and artifacts is one of the major problems confronting our society. The Endowment has been playing a key role in mobilizing and supporting research and resource development in libraries, archives, and other institutions on the front lines in the battle to save books, papers, films, recordings, and other cultural records at risk.

Understanding of the enormous challenge of the brittle book crisis in our nation's libraries and archives has increased markedly over the last two years. A consensus has formed among major libraries and library organizations, foundations, the Library of Congress, and most recently the leadership of the National Endowment for the Humanities that a core plan and the institutional mechanisms are in place to begin a massive project to save at a minimum of 3.3 million volumes of the books at risk.

In March 1987, Rep. Pat Williams' Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education held a well-attended hearing on "The Brittle Book Problem" which made clear the dimensions of the problem and underscored its urgency.

At the March 17 hearing this year, Patricia Battin, President of the Commission on Preservation and Access (appearing as a witness for the Alliance), testified on a plan developed by the Commission which would make possible the preservation of a core of more than 3 million endangered volumes. (The Library of Congress is committed to preserving an additional million volumes.)

## The Profession

In April, at the request of Rep. Yates, the NEH developed a capability statement assessing the immediate and long-range funding requirements for a full response to a plan developed by the Commission on Preservation and Access for preserving on microfilm 3 million volumes that are at risk. The NEH plan is flexible in that it seems to make provision for the numerous preparatory costs and other non-direct filming costs and gives appropriate attention to other areas besides brittle books (e.g., the national newspaper program and conservation training). In terms of budget projections for the Office of Preservation, the plan may be unprecedented in this decade: Beginning with the jump to \$12.5 million in FY-89 (from \$4.5 million in FY-88), the funding levels increase yearly until a level of \$20.3 million is reached in FY-93. The plan (presented in the form of a letter from Ms. Cheney to Rep. Yates and now incorporated into the legislation for the FY-89 budget) also asserts, "The proper federal role in this area should continue to be a limited one. The major roles must be played by state and local governments, foundations, professional groups and organizations, and the libraries, archives, and other repositories that hold endangered materials."

The NEH's capability statement served as a central focus for a hearing chaired by Rep. Yates on April 21 which, in symposium fashion, brought together an extraordinary grouping of knowledgeable individuals from libraries, foundations, federal agencies, and other institutions concerned with the preservation issue. Lynne Cheney, James Billington, Patricia Battin, Warren J. Haas, William Bowen, and others discussed the brittle book problem from three vantage points: 1) The plan for large-scale filming of at least three million already embrittled volumes; 2) the Library of Congress' efforts to make feasible massive deacidification of books before they become embrittled; and 3) issues surrounding conversion to publication of books of potential lasting value on permanent or at least alkaline paper. A major outcome of the hearing was recognition that libraries, foundations, and others are ready to move ahead on the filming plan; and that the National Endowment for the

Humanities was both in agreement with the general plan and prepared to handle effectively a rapid increase in federal funds for the effort.

The budget for NEH approved by the House in June totaled \$153.7 million, whereas in July the Senate voted for an NEH budget totaling \$144,235,000. Both included a jump in funds for the Division of State Programs to \$25 million (an increase from \$21.3 million which appeared to respond directly to a persuasive campaign by the state councils). The major difference, which was resolved in conference during August was the Senate's decision against funding NEH's preservation initiative. Many observers speculated that the non-inclusion of the preservation funds was based on strategy, i.e. to provide Senate negotiators with a useful bargaining chip in the conference on the overall Interior budget.

The "compromise" which emerged from the conference and is now the enacted budget totaled \$153 million, and includes the entire preservation request (except that \$170,000 of the new \$8 million may be used for administration). The House receded to the Senate on funding for education and general programs which ACLS Newsletter, Vol. I, No. 4, Autumn, approved earlier by the House. The only NEH activity to receive less in FY-89 than FY-88 was the Division of Education Programs.

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