Iannone, Carol: News Articles (1991): News Article 29

Charles Trueheart

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NEH’s Last-Ditch Pitch for a Conservative

By Charles Trueheart
Washington Post Staff Writer

Lynee V. Cheney, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, is escorting embattled scholar Carol Iannone to the Senate today in search of extraordinary opposition from such scholarly groups as the Modern Language Association and the conservative critic and teacher who has written essays sharply critical of some black and feminist writers, has been stoutly defended by, among others, columnists George Will and William F. Buckley Jr. and scholars Donald Kagan and Gertrude Himmelfarb.

The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee had scheduled a vote on Iannone’s nomination for last Thursday. But after learning that committee chairman, Claire del Real, would prevail, Iannone, who has declined interview requests, was to have been considered last week along with three other nominations to the humanities council, Harvard’s Harvey Mansfield and SUNY/Albany’s Michael Madhur, whose nominations have prompted no discernible opposition. Nonetheless, the vote on their nominations was postponed, as at Cheney’s request.

A committee source said yesterday that action on Iannone and the two others would probably come after the July 4 congressional recess.