

1978

Biddle, Livy: Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (1977-1979): Correspondence 01

Judy Landis

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NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR
THE ARTS

WASHINGTON
D.C. 20506



A Federal agency advised by the
National Council on the Arts

Jan. 28, 1978

Ms. Jean Frolicher
Counsel
Subcommittee on Education
Rm. 4230, DSOB
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Ms. Frolicher:

I have had your request for Mr. Biddle's remarks at his Swearing-In Ceremony for some time now, and have been waiting until they were edited and reprinted before sending them. So far, this has not happened--both Mr. Biddle and the Press Office have had a busy schedule, and the Chairman has not gotten around to this task yet. So, I am sending you the excerpted pages from our transcript which contain his remarks.

I hope this will be sufficient until an edited text is available.

Sincerely,

Judy Landis
Press Office

Nov. 30, 1977
Swearing In

-8-

MR. BIDDLE

On which I am about to enter.

REP. BRADEMAS

So help me God.

MR. BIDDLE

So help me God.

REP. BRADEMAS

Congratulations.

(applause)

MR. BIDDLE

Mrs. Mondale, Congressman Brademas, my bride, distinguished speakers, ladies and gentlemen and distinguished guests, this is a momentous day, and a very special time -- a very special and happy time -- a very moving time for my wife, Katherina, and me and for our family sitting here in front of me. It is an especially momentous day because I am here as President Carter's appointed Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts with so many friends -- friends whose history with me goes back many, many years in many cases. And I am here with the Mayor and Mrs. Washington, with leaders of the arts in the White House, with members of the National Council on the Arts, and particularly with Congressional leaders whose experience and guidance and wisdom have so invigorated this program over such a long period of time relatively speaking; although actually in time it is a short period when we think of the history of our country and the way the arts have been brought into the

forefront by our government in recent times. And I am very much touched, Mrs. Mondale, by the good wishes of the Vice President and the good wishes of Mrs. Carter, and I am deeply moved by those expressions which you so generously read, and also, Congressman Brademas, by your words of wisdom and counsel to me.

A special moment in anyone's life, I think, gives that individual a different perspective on time itself, and today time is somehow arrested for me. I think back to a poem which I read for the first time long ago by the French writer Delamartine, and in that poem mankind is portrayed as restlessly and even relentlessly driven forward toward distant shores, toward new directions and distant horizons. And the poet asks can we never on the ocean of ages, put down our anchor for one single day.

(funny noise, followed by laughter)

REP. BRADEMAS

That is Congressional support. (laughter, hoots, and applause)

MR. BIDDLE

We have just raised the anchor slightly. (laughter)

A special moment of time can cause us to pause and reflect and in a way, for me in this brief moment today, time seems to have stopped. And I think of the arts in this same regard because the arts can cause us to pause and reflect, and

they give us different perspectives on the past and present.

But the arts do much more than merely arrest time. There is a continuity to the arts, a constant evolving, a spirit of quest, a constant reaching out toward those new shores, those new horizons, and those new directions. And those involved in the arts may drop anchor for a brief moment in some safe harbor, but then the arts put them constantly in motion again.

So the arts transcend the special event and the stationary moment. They embark us, it seems to me, on the oceans of self-discovery. They quicken our awareness. They extend our imaginations. They open our eyes and ears and minds so that we may perceive new insights and new meanings in life.

The arts enliven us all as individuals and perhaps that is their most important contribution. In our society, in our democratic form of government where we place such fundamental and important value on the individual, the arts themselves have an abiding value. So I would ask us today just briefly in the midst of our own quest to pause for a moment this afternoon and reflect on the meaning which the arts have for all of us.

And I have asked four speakers to present to us this afternoon their own individual insights on the meaning of the federal program, on the meaning of the arts, and to speak as they may see fit in their own way, in their own fashion. They are all eloquent in the marvelous work that they have done for the arts, and I now would like to introduce the first of those speakers. I am introducing them in alphabetical

order -
End.