

1991

## Iannone, Carol: News Articles (1991): Memorandum 01

Alexander D. Crary

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell\\_neh\\_I\\_36](http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_I_36)

---

### Recommended Citation

Crary, Alexander D., "Iannone, Carol: News Articles (1991): Memorandum 01" (1991). *Iannone, Carol: News Articles (1991)*. Paper 38.

[http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell\\_neh\\_I\\_36/38](http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_I_36/38)

This Memorandum is brought to you for free and open access by the Education: National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, Subject Files I (1973-1996) at DigitalCommons@URI. It has been accepted for inclusion in Iannone, Carol: News Articles (1991) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@etal.uri.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@etal.uri.edu).

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Senator July 15, 1991  
FROM: ADC  
RE: NEW YORK TIMES editorial

You come off very well in this NY TIMES editorial. All of the ideas that you have put forward about the NEH Council are validated in this piece. Lack of credentials, for example, is cited as a valid reason for concern.

The piece endorses Cheney's idea about "public intellectuals" but NOT in the case of Ianonne who is neither distinguished as a "public" humanities person nor as an intellectual.

The warning referred to in the last line was in fact issued by you at the committee meeting last fall when you approved a whole slate of weak nominees with the warning that you would not be so accomodating in the future. How many times can you issue warnings?

This editorial finally puts the debate at a higher level. It does not stoop to the "political correctness" argument that Cheney is using to cover up the inadequacies of her nominee and it makes the very accurate observation that there is more trouble at NEH than meets the eye.

It also makes a ringing endorsement for strong Council members who "must be intellectually authoritative, free of ideological bias and strong enough to advance their own opinions." It goes even further than you have in calling for no ideological bias. Ianonne meets none of these criteria.

## Getting It Right at the N.E.H.

The advisory council of the National Endowment for the Humanities would still be virtually unknown if President Bush hadn't nominated an undistinguished candidate for membership earlier this year. Carol Iannone's thin scholarly record caused an outcry in academic circles, and the Senate committee rejected her nomination.

Mr. Bush seems to have learned from that debacle. His newest nominee, Kenny J. Williams, a conservative professor of English at Duke University, should be an asset to the council. The council advises the N.E.H. on which scholarship, research and public programs deserve Federal money.

The legislation creating the N.E.H. specifies that council appointees must have "established records of distinguished service and scholarship or

creativity." Ms. Iannone, whose work was limited to about 30 articles in conservative journals, was below that mark. Ms. Williams is well up to it. Her work is solid and interestingly offbeat as well. She has published a wide array of articles and books on diverse subjects, including a literary history of Chicago and studies of the writer Sherwood Anderson and of African-American writers from the late 18th to the early 20th century.

The charge by the N.E.H.'s chairman, Lynne V. Cheney, that Ms. Iannone was rejected for being too conservative has been disproved. Ms. Williams is no less conservative, but she has received only praise from the liberal critics who opposed Ms. Iannone. Here's hoping the Williams nomination signals a new intent by Mr. Bush to take the council seriously.