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A Revived Panel on The Arts

Joan Mondale To Chair The Blue-Ribbon Council

By Paul Richard

President Carter is expected today to initiate an "across-the-board" policy review of the government's cultural activities. Joan Mondale, it was learned yesterday, will be named honorary chairman of the top-level federal board that will conduct the study.

The board is the blue ribbon, but previously moribund, Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities, whose 14 ex-officio members include the chairmen of both the arts and humanities endowments, the director of the National Gallery of Art, the commissioner of education, and other high officials.

Joseph D. Duffey, chairman of the humanities endowment, yesterday confirmed the reactivation of the council and its broadened scope.

Mrs. Mondale's assignment, which will give her her first official high position in the cultural bureaucracy, and the revival of the council as an important policy-making body, will be announced today by the White House.

The council, established by Congress in 1965 to "advise and consult" with the arts and humanities chairmen and "promote coordination" between their programs and those of other federal agencies has done little in the past. But on paper, anyway, it is well situated for its new assignment. "On the flow charts it's that thing between the two endowments," said one White House official.

Its revival with additional funds and a strengthened staff, and Monday's announcement of its new presidential mission, may dim criticism that no one in the Carter White House speaks with authority on governmental policies on cultural affairs.

Humanities Chairman Duffey and Livingston L. Biddle, his counterpart in the arts, will share the council's chairmanship. Peter Kyros Jr., now a deputy counsel to the vice president and the chair of the staff-level working group that has been called the "White House culture cluster," will be named the council's deputy chairman, it was learned.

Mrs. Mondale, the administration's most visible arts enthusiast, has worked out of her husband's office in the past. Her involvement in White House policy-making, though unofficial, has not been insignificant. One former White House official, Mary Ann Tighe, who though a member of the vice president's staff worked closely with Mrs. Mondale as her arts adviser, recently was named a deputy chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.