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National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities (1965-1967): Memorandum 02

Livingston L. Biddle Jr.

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M E M O R A N D U M

February 1st, 1966

TO: Isabelle Leeds
Senator Pell's Office

FROM: Livingston L. Biddle, Jr.
Deputy Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts

Rhode Island College could ^{now} ~~not~~ submit a request to the National Endowment for the Humanities, Dr. Henry Allen Moe, Chairman.

The Council has just been appointed and no programs are set up at this time, but they are answering requests and building their files of applications.

Enclosed is an extra summary of programs for the National Endowment for the Arts.

All best.

*called Joseph Graham
2/15/66*

LLB

INFORMATION REGARDING BEGINNING ACTIVITIES
OF NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

As the result of a three-day meeting in mid November, and of previous planning and study, The National Council on the Arts has announced its first allocations for funding programs to support the advancement of the arts in the United States.

The Council, appointed on February 23, 1965, by President Johnson and working under the newly enacted legislation, establishing a National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities, emphasized that these are initial programs to assist the Nation's cultural progress. The Council will continue its study and planning, and expects to meet again in early 1966 to consider programs in additional areas pertinent to the broad purposes of the Act.

The Council also stressed its responsibility to work with Federal, State and local agencies. A special liaison committee was formed for these purposes and meetings will be held as soon as possible with Federal officials who are administering the current programs of President Johnson's Administration to explore ways in which the arts may contribute to the Nation's future goals.

Plans were approved by the Council for grants-in-aid to assist individual creative artists and art organizations in the following areas:

* Up to 50 one-semester sabbatical grants to artists teaching at educational institutions, to enable them to have greater time to pursue creative work in the arts.

* Up to 50 grants-in-aid to composers to enable them to defray costs of copying scores and parts for orchestral presentation of their works.

* Grants-in-aid for up to 25 orchestral commissions for new works.

* Up to 10 grants to choreographers to help them to create, rehearse or produce new works.

* Aid for up to 20 grants to creative writers to enable them to supplement their income from already published works. Many new books published today receive high critical acclaim, but do not return to the writer sufficient financial reward to encourage him to continue his work. This program would enable such a writer to receive a modest, but perhaps all-important, extra sum over and above his otherwise-received royalties, and, at the same time permit a wider distribution of his works.

* American Film Institute: The Council approved \$100,000 for a study of all existing educational facilities as a basis for developing a plan for an American Film Institute. In addition the Council approved a matching grant of \$500,000 to assist in financing the establishment of such an institution upon successful completion of the study.

* Laboratory Theatre Project for Education: Subject to feasibility and the cooperation of local school boards and districts, and the U. S. Office of Education, three theatre companies of the highest professional quality will be assembled by recognized producing groups for a research program to improve the instruction of dramatic literature in secondary schools. It is proposed that these companies would play in cities where classical theatre is not readily available. They would give free performances to student audiences five afternoons per week, and play three evenings per week to the general public at a reasonable charge. The Council approved \$500,000 for this project.

* An immediate emergency matching grant of \$100,000 was approved for The American Ballet Theatre to enable this historic company to continue its operation; and an additional matching grant of \$250,000 was approved for a nation-wide tour.

* \$125,000 was approved for an invitational competition of American contemporary artists with 35-50 paintings and sculptures to be selected for national tour to cities with populations under 250,000. During the tour, participating artists would receive a rental fee of \$100 per month. Cities wishing to participate would provide 50 per cent of the touring costs for their area. The artists would receive a minimum of twelve months' rental, but must agree to make their works available for rental for 36 months.

* Artists' Housing Projects: A \$100,000 revolving fund for the planning of artists studio-living quarters was approved. Under certain conditions, the HHFA can provide 100 per cent financing to certain foundations created for the purpose of supplying low rental housing to artists. Before any loan can be granted, the housing agency must have preliminary plans and specifications for said project. Funds used for these purposes can be recovered after successful renovation.

* Playwrights Experimental Theatre: From testimony before Congress, from the Rockefeller Fund Panel Report, and after discussions with the Dramatists Guild, it appears there are plays of literary merit by known and unknown playwrights which cannot be produced under economic conditions facing the commercial theatre today. In order to help a playwright secure a public performance of high professional

standards, the Council approved up to \$250,000 for the selection of up to ten new plays for production outside the New York area in university and community theatres. These funds would enable the producing unit to pay the author a reasonable fee and to increase the effectiveness of the production by added rehearsal time, and the employment of actors and directors necessary to give the production higher professional excellence, which is difficult to achieve with the limited budgets now available to these theatres.

Other projects approved by the Council for financing, and awaiting further staff study, included technical assistance to existing arts organizations through their national associations; support to museums to enable them to make exhibits available to a wider audience; and graduation awards through educational institutions of higher learning for further study in the United States by artists of outstanding promise.

The advice of panels of experts will be utilized to aid the Chairman and the Council to administer the above programs which will be carried out by the National Endowment for the Arts.

The National Endowment for the Arts welcomes all applications for support consistent with the purposes of Public Law 89-209. At the outset, it is suggested that applicants direct their attention to the above specific areas for the Endowment's beginning activities.