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Biddle, Livy: Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (1977-1979): News Article 04

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Biddle sees no contradiction in 'elite' v. 'popular'

WASHINGTON - If Livingston Biddle Jr. were running for elected office at the hearings before the Senate Committee on Human Resources, he would win by a landslide.

Probably one of the most popular nominations which the President has made, Biddle will probably be approved by the Senate before it adjourns around the end of the month.

In his statement before the committee, Biddle expressed a few of his general ideas about his prospective position as chairman for the National Endowment for the Arts.

"We find words like elitism and populism being used to suggest a polarization of the arts," Biddle said. "Some suggest that elitism applies to the quality of our major arts institutions, our orchestras, our opera companies, our dance and theatre organizations, our museums. And some suggest that populism applies to an opposite and perhaps equally separate domain - the State and local organizations which represent the arts at the grassroots. And some even suggest that battle lines should be drawn and alternatives chosen."

He said he was convinced a very different approach is needed, a different means of defining the nation's cultural goals.
