

1993

Hackney, Sheldon: Humanities Chairman Nomination Hearing (1993): Speech 08

Edward Kennedy

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from the office of

*Senator Edward M. Kennedy
of Massachusetts*

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR KENNEDY ON THE
NOMINATION OF SHELDON HACKNEY TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES**

June 25, 1993

**Contact: Theresa Bourgeois
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I want to welcome Dr. Sheldon Hackney to the Committee this morning, and I commend him on his nomination to be Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

I am pleased to see so many members of the Hackney family. I welcome each of you, and I know that you are especially proud of this honor that the President has bestowed on Dr. Hackney.

The Endowment is an important federal agency that provides support for advanced scholarly research. It plays an effective role in encouraging academic work in the humanities.

Dr. Hackney's remarkable career and lifelong commitment to public service give him outstanding professional qualifications for this position. His integrity, his vision and sense of purpose, and his strong standing in the academic community demonstrate his extraordinary leadership qualities that will be a great asset to the Endowment.

Few in the academic community have such a record of accomplishment and range of achievement. Dr. Hackney is an historian of the first rank. His scholarship has been honored with the Southern Historical Association's Prize for best work in Southern History and the Albert J. Beveridge Prize in American History. He has served with great distinction as Provost of Princeton University, President of Tulane University and now President of the University of Pennsylvania.

(more)

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The humanities, along with the sciences, are the intellectual foundation of our history and culture. Universities are at the cutting edge of research and debate in this field, and Dr. Hackney has been deeply involved in these issues. He has often spoken of the importance of including all points of view in the Humanities. Universities provide a forum for these disciplines, and outreach brings greater understanding into neighborhoods and communities across the country. The nation as a whole will benefit from Dr. Hackney's ability and leadership in this process of bringing people together and understanding ourselves more clearly.

Let me also say that Dr. Hackney has demonstrated remarkable restraint in recent months while critics have unfairly debated his role in a recent controversy at the University of Pennsylvania. He was unwilling to intervene in established university procedures for resolving conflicts on the campus. It might have been expedient for him to intervene, but he was concerned that to do so would set an unfortunate precedent for future interference in the university's legitimate procedures. Now that the controversy has been settled, he has done the right thing again, by directing a comprehensive review of these procedures to see that they meet the needs of the students and the university.

Dr. Hackney took a principled stand and demonstrated his strong character in this controversy. He refused to bend to one side or the other, and deserves credit for doing so. He is a man of outstanding achievement and integrity whose commitment to free speech and respect for diversity is unquestioned.

Finally, Dr. Hackney's eminence as a historian will bring needed perspective and prestige for the Endowment. He has a clear sense of the nation's past and an equally clear vision of its future. President Clinton has made an excellent choice in Dr. Hackney to head this agency, and I look forward to working with him in the years ahead.

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