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2-17-1993

Letters: Outgoing (1990-1994): Correspondence 18

Claiborne Pell

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Recommended Citation

Pell, Claiborne, "Letters: Outgoing (1990-1994): Correspondence 18" (1993). *Letters: Outgoing (1990-1994)*. Paper 2.

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND
HUMAN RESOURCES

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

February 17, 1993

Mr. Paul N. Perrot
Director
The Santa Barbara Museum of Art
1130 State Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Paul:

Thank you very much for your recent good letter. I am delighted to know how the Smithsonian's Conservation Analytical Laboratory has succeeded in expanding opportunities for training in conservation. This is good news indeed!

I share your concern about the welfare of the private regional conservation centers. We should have an opportunity in the course of reauthorization hearings later this year to look into this situation.

I very much appreciate your bringing these points to my attention. It is good to hear from you.

With warm regards,

Ever sincerely,

Claiborne Pell
Chairman
Subcommittee on Education,
Arts & Humanities

January 12, 1993

The Honorable Claiborne Pell
United States Senate
Washington, DC

Dear Senator Pell,

I miss our occasional encounters and the stimulation of knowing of your concern for conservation. Your efforts of so many years ago and constant prodding of the Smithsonian and others has produced results.

Recently, from a conversation with Lambertus van Zelst, the Director of the Conservation Analytical Laboratory at the Smithsonian, I gathered that you have not visited the Laboratory in the recent past and might not be aware of the tremendous efforts that have been made to develop advanced training in conservation at the Museum's Support Center. Indeed, things have come a long way!

As you will see from the enclosed announcements of CAL, not only is superb training being provided, but considerable advances are being made in research. In addition, there has been a doctoral program under development in association with John Hopkins University and there is also the closest cooperation with the programs at Winterthur, which are now well established and have produced an impressive crop of highly trained practitioners.

Thanks to NEH and NEA, the Mellon and Kress Foundations and the Getty Trust, the various training programs have been able to survive and produce outstanding practitioners. These "centers of excellence" however, will continue to need assistance and I am hopeful that as the economy improves, the Endowments and other governmental sources may play a more active role.

The needs of the regional conservation centers are particularly acute. Several have had to cut back on their programs. For example, the Balboa Conservation Center in San Diego, because of drastic cutbacks from the State of California for whom they had been doing a considerable amount of work, now find themselves in a very precarious situation.

I am mentioning this to you because of your long standing interest in conservation in the most practical sense: taking

The Santa
Barbara
Museum
of Art

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care of objects. The conservation centers of the Nation in Williamstown, Denver, San Diego, Philadelphia and at other locations have been providing service of high quality and at affordable cost to smaller museums and historical societies around the country.

All these centers are now facing, more or less difficult times and I believe that an inquiry into this subject might lead to worthy results.

There are now far more practitioners than there ever were and well established entities for the conservation of our patrimony, but we also realize how immense the task is and how inadequate the resources are. Hence the need to plan for the future. Can you help? Would well planned hearings be fruitful? Would they provide more ammunition as NEA and NEH are reauthorized? Would this give a higher platform to promote, as well, the work of the National Institute for Conservation?

Your views on these questions would be very helpful.

Hoping you and Mrs. Pell are well and with warmest good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul", enclosed within a simple, hand-drawn rectangular border.

Paul N. Perrot
Director

PNP/tv