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Letters: Outgoing (1990-1994): Correspondence 26

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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Washington, D.C. 20560

U.S.A.

Honorable Claiborne Pell
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

July 7, 1992

Dear Senator Pell:

Thank you for your letter of May 20th and for your thoughts about the Institution's 150th anniversary. Our programs in the sciences, arts, and the humanities, as you point out, range across a number of fields and disciplines, and, indeed, represent a considerable resource for fostering intellectual exchange and extending knowledge.

Laboring under tight budgetary constraints, the Institution has been obliged to reduce operating costs, resulting in the closing down of some offices. Nevertheless, we remain committed to interdisciplinary exchanges and programs such as the ones that were so well served in the past by the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies. These functions have not been eliminated; rather, they have been reassigned or transferred to our museums and research centers.

In the sciences, for example, the Biological Diversity Office in the Natural History Museum oversees a number of scholarly and educational programs that bridge several fields of biology and environmental science. The Office of Environmental Awareness in November, 1991, convened a pioneering forum on ocean conservation, bringing together scientists, educators, and policy specialists from many disciplines and international institutions. Similarly, the Office of Quincentenary Programs has convened distinguished programs focusing on the culture and history of the Americas that forged an important dialogue among scholars, educators, and public figures representing North, Central, and South America.

You may be assured that the Smithsonian's 150th anniversary activities in 1996 will draw on comparable Institutional strengths in providing exceptional programs of intellectual and cultural exchange.

Sincerely,

Robert McC. Adams
Secretary