December 2016

Curran, Edward: Humanities Chairman Nomination Hearing (1985): News Article 05

Mary Battiata

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_I_21

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_I_21/36

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Education: National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, Subject Files I (1973-1996) at DigitalCommons@URI. It has been accepted for inclusion in Curran, Edward: Humanities Chairman Nomination Hearing (1985) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons-group@uri.edu.
appeal a Park Service rejection of the disputed portion of the mural and to receive official certification for the tax credit.

Wynmark last month spent $10,000 to paint over illusionary architectural effects designed by noted muralist Richard Haas on the front of the building. The Park Service threatened to withhold the tax credit if the artwork was not wiped out, on grounds that it changed the historic character of the building. After a work crew painted the front of the 10-story building a beige tone, the Park Service certified the tax credit.

Mark G. Griffin, one of Wynmark's owners, said he had never heard of the provision allowing for a 30-month period to win certification for the tax credit after it had been submitted to the Internal Revenue Service. "If that were the case, I wish someone would have told us," he said.

Rogers acknowledged that "it's probably true we didn't give him that information. We usually think a

See MURAL, D8, Col. 3

Twisted Mister
Of the Big Top
Circus Contortionist Rudolph Delmonte

By Michael Kernan
Washington Post Staff Writer

Let's see now. You do a backbend, and when your hands are all the way down on the floor behind your heels, you slowly lift your legs up so you're standing on your hands. Then you bend your legs at the hip so they extend over your head like a roof. Now you bend your knees—you still with me?—and curl up until you can tuck your feet under your arms.

Then you start doing push-ups.

Rudolph Delmonte is a contortionist with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. He is 23 years old, and the first thing he says is that he is not double-jointed.

Actually, that isn't the question. The question is whether he has any joints at all or is just made of muscle.

"I can't explain the moves," he said. He sketched on a table top with his finger. "My legs are here, my top is here, and my arms, like it makes a zigzag..."

He starts off his act with a one-handed handstand, simplicity itself, and then he balances on a 3-foot-long wand and does the handstand on that. Then he balances a small ladder on one of its legs and does the handstand.

See CONTORTIONIST, D2, Col. 1
Curran

HUMANITIES, From D1

servative columnists and lobbying groups.

His stint at the Peace Corps has been stormy, according to friends and colleagues, who say that he often has been at odds with Peace Corps Director Loret M. Ruppe on agency policy.

News of Curran’s nomination was greeted with reserve by a ranking Republican lawmaker on the Senate committee that must approve Curran’s name before sending it on to the full Senate.

“I have not made up my mind on Mr. Curran and will examine his credentials when he comes before the committee,” said Sen. Robert T. Stafford (R-Vt.), a member of the Labor and Human Resources Committee.

President Reagan reportedly had approved the Curran nomination at least two months ago, but it had been stalled by administration moderates searching for a less controversial, more moderate choice. Leaders of the museum, university and scholarly groups that represent many of the recipients of endowment money had expressed fears that Curran lacked the experience and temperament required to preside over the endowment.

Stafford himself had put a hold on the nomination for a few weeks by notifying the White House that he had questions about Curran’s philosophies, according to a Stafford spokesman.

Curran could not be reached for comment but released a statement saying he was “proud” that the president had chosen him and that he “looked forward to serving the President and the American people.”

Lisa Phillips, executive director of the Humanities Alliance, a trade organization for many of the nation’s universities, learned societies and museums, said the members of her organization are interested in learning more about Curran’s views.

“We hope for in-depth Senate hearings,” Phillips said. “[Curran], of course, is different from previous NEH nominees in that he does not come from higher education and does not have a demonstrated knowledge of public programs that do not involve schools.” Phillips described the nomination as “sensitive” because of the great discretion the endowment’s chairman exercises over funding priorities.

The National Endowment for the Humanities is a federal agency with an impact and visibility far greater than its relatively small $140 million budget, and the periodic search for its chairman usually produces political fireworks.

The endowment awards thousands of grants and fellowships to scholars, museums and universities for research and preservation. The chairmanship has often served as a pulpit for administrations’ views on the role of the liberal arts in American life.

Bennett, for example, used the endowment to call for a return to the study of the classics of western history, literature and philosophy. He is described by friends and critics alike as having steered the endowment away from the cultural pluralism that marked the Carter years.

The Massachusetts-born Curran was headmaster of the National Cathedral School from 1968 to 1980. He subsequently served on President Reagan’s Education Transition Team and put in one year as associate director of the Office of Presidential Personnel. In 1980 he headed a political group called Professionals for Reagan, and is, according to friends, a close friend of Vice President George Bush.

Curran graduated with a bachelor’s degree from Yale University in 1955 and earned a masters’ degree from Duke University in 1968. He was dean of students at a Houston private school from 1957 to 1968, and taught at a private boys’ school in Englewood, N.J., for two years before that.