Hackney, Sheldon: Humanities Chairman Nomination Hearing (1993): News Article 37

Irvin Molotsky

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POLITICS

Liberal to head National Endowment for Humanities

University of Pennsylvania President Sheldon Hackney advocates freedom of expression.

By Irvin Molotsky

WASHINGTON - The Clinton administration has selected Sheldon Hackney, president of the University of Pennsylvania, to head the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The official announcement, which the official said would be made Friday, is subject to Senate confirmation.

The selection was praised by Clinton aides said Thursday that the White House remained committed to the appointment of Hackney.

Hackney, who also could not be reached, could create a stir on Capitol Hill. His nomination is likely to provoke opposition from conservative senators, like Jesse Helms, R-N.C., a foe of the Mapplethorpe exhibit.

Helms was in North Carolina on Friday and his staff did not return calls seeking comment on Hackney's nomination.

Praised by Pell

The selection was praised by others, including Sen. Claiborne Pell, D-R.I., chairman of the subcommittee that is to act on Hackney's nomination. Pell called him a "distinguished educator and an excellent choice."

Hackney, who was born in Birmingham, Ala., has written extensively about the South in the 1960s, including a book, Populism to Progressivism in Alabama.

He has an undergraduate degree from Vanderbilt University and graduate degrees from Yale University. Before being named president of the University of Pennsylvania in 1981, Hackney was a professor at Princeton University and president of Tulane University.

He is married to Judith Judkins Durr, a lawyer and a colleague of Hillary Rodham Clinton at the Children's Defense Fund. Mrs. Clinton is to speak at the University of Pennsylvania's commencement this year.