Hackney, Sheldon: Humanities Chairman Nomination Hearing (1993): News Article 38

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The University of Pennsylvania's president will be named to head the National Endowment for the Humanities on Monday, an agency official said.

Martha Chowning, the agency's liaison to the White House, told the university newspaper Friday that Sheldon Hackney will be nominated for the job.

The Clinton administration had no comment Saturday. Last week, news of the nomination was reported by The Washington Post and The New York Times.

Hackney, 59, would become the chairman of an agency that annually distributes some $160 million in research and education grants to scholars, teachers, writers, colleges, libraries and museums.

He has been president of Penn since 1981 and still teaches a history course about the 1960s to undergraduates. He was president of Tulane University from 1975 to 1981 and has taught at Princeton.

Born in Birmingham, Ala., he has written extensively about the South in the 1960s. He holds degrees from Vanderbilt and Yale universities.

The humanities agency was previously headed by Lynne Cheney, wife of former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney.

Hackney's nomination could provoke opposition from senators who denounced photographs by the late Robert Mapplethorpe as obscene. In 1989, Hackney defended the Institute of Contemporary Art's decision to host the Mapplethorpe exhibit for five months on Penn's campus. The art institute is financed partly by the university.
University of Pennsylvania President Sheldon Hackney will be named to head the National Endowment for the Humanities, it was reported Saturday.

The Philadelphia Inquirer quoted White House sources as saying Hackney's appointment is "imminent," pending the completion of a background check.

Hackney, 59, met Friday in Washington with administration officials and the Inquirer said his appointment could be announced as early as Monday.

The appointment is subject to Senate approval.

Hackney has served as Penn's president since 1981. A native of Birmingham, Ala., he holds degrees from Yale and Vanderbilt universities and is a renowned scholar of Southern history.

Before coming to Penn he taught at Princeton and was president for six years of Tulane University.

The NEH serves as a liaison between the federal government and the academic community. Last year it awarded 2,199 grants worth nearly $160 million to colleges, libraries, museums and scholars.

Hackney would replace Lynne Cheney, who resigned when President Clinton took office. Cheney is the wife of former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney.