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Hackney, Sheldon: Humanities Chairman Nomination Hearing (1993): News Article 43

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Hackney nominated
for Washington job

The announcement was expected. He would head the National Endowment for the Humanities.

By Howard Goodman

President Clinton yesterday nominated University of Pennsylvania president Sheldon Hackney to head the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The announcement had been expected.

Hackney, 59, has been at Penn since 1981. He is a professor of history who regularly teaches undergraduates in addition to serving as the school's 21st chief executive.

He said in a brief statement that he was "pleased" by the nomination "and if confirmed by the Senate, I will be honored to serve."

Hackney, a soft-spoken man who shies from the spotlight, was not on campus yesterday and was unavailable for comment. His prepared statement alluded to possible steps he would take to effect his resignation.

"Considering the implication that my possible departure has for Penn and its leadership, I have been giving the matter a great deal of thought," Hackney said in the statement. "I will have more to say about it at the end of this week."

Barbara Beck, a Penn spokeswoman, said a search committee would be formed to find a successor should Hackney resign. Penn's trustees
Penn president is nominated for NEH post

Penn president, chosen from among several candidates, would make the final decision. He would be named in the interim. Clinton took note of Hackney's appointment had been predicted as imminent by White House and congressional sources.

As acting president, chosen from among several candidates, he would make the final decision. Clinton took note of Hackney's appointment as a scholar of the American South in a brief announcement aid by the White House.

The National Endowment of the Humanities plays a vital role in enhancing and enhancing a better understanding of our country's rich traditions, Clinton said. "Doing just that has been the work of Sheldon Hackney's life."

Hackney would succeed Lynne V. Cheney, the wife of former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, as head of NEH when the administration ended.

He also worked to improve Penn's relationship with the West Philadelphia neighborhood surrounding the campus.

Hackney would leave a large university with 22,400 students, 4,200 faculty members and a budget of $1.5 billion for a federal agency of just 200 employees and a budget of less than $180 million.

Clinton yesterday also nominated Michael Shapiro, a Washington lawyer, as the endowment's general counsel.

The National Endowment for the Humanities serves as liaison between the federal government and the academic community.

A native of Alabama, Hackney has written several works about his home region. His "Populism to Progressivism in Alabama" won the Albert J. Beveridge Prize for best book of 1969 on American history.

He serves on numerous boards, including the American Council on Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.