Biddle, Livingston: National Medal of Arts (1994): Article 02

Claiborne Pell

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Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to urge as strongly as I can that Livingston L. Biddle be selected as a recipient for the National Medal of Arts. I have already written to National Endowment for the Arts Chairperson Jane Alexander concerning Liv’s nomination, but I wanted to call your attention to this remarkable individual.

I can think of no person more deserving of this distinguished award than Liv Biddle. At the start of his career, Liv played the pivotal role in fashioning and securing passage of the landmark legislation resulting in the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts.

After serving the Senate for many years as the Professional Staff Member charged with responsibilities for Arts, Humanities, Museum Services and Libraries, Liv moved to the National Endowment for the Arts, where he served as Deputy Chairman. In 1977 he was selected by President Carter to be Chairman of the Endowment. Liv served with eminent distinction and received high marks as an especially skilled Chairman who provided exceptional leadership.

Since its inception, almost two and one half billion dollars in grants have been made by the Endowment to support arts projects and programs throughout America. It is without question that this would not have been possible had it not been for the extraordinary and visionary leadership of Liv Biddle.

If we talk about people who have made a lifetime of contributions to the arts, Liv is one who has not only done that himself, but has made it possible for many others to do the same. To award him the National Medal of Arts would, to my mind, be a most fitting and appropriate expression of the deep debt we all owe him for an outstanding career in the arts.

With very real regard and respect, I am

Ever sincerely,

Claiborne Pell
Chairman
Subcommittee on Education, Arts and Humanities