

The Commission returned with a forceful recommendation for the creation of such a program and in 1965 we created the National Endowment for the Humanities. Since that time, the Humanities Endowment has supported scholarly research, education and public programs concerned with history, literature, philosophy, language and other humanistic disciplines, and have helped to make the United States a leader in these fields of study. Programs have included both popular and scholarly works characterized by their singular excellence, including the Pulitzer Prize winning Slavery and Human Progress and programs such as "The Civil War," "Columbus and the Age of Discovery" and "Baseball."

Barnaby Keeney, a decorated veteran and a medieval historian, left Brown University to become the first chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Since then, Brown University has been in the forefront of research and study in humanities, recognized for its extraordinary excellence with repeated fellowships and grants for humanities research over the last thirty years. Rhode Island and the Nation as a whole have benefited enormously from this work. Mr. President, I would ask unanimous consent that two pieces by Edward Abrahams, director of government and community relations at Brown University—an op-ed article on the importance of the humanities that appeared recently in the Providence Journal and remarks delivered on Humanities Day—be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From The Providence Journal-Bulletin,  
Mar. 17, 1995]

LYNDON JOHNSON, BROWN AND THE BIRTH OF  
THE NEH

By Edward Abrahams

"A great nation (and a great civilization) feeds upon the depth of its scholarship—as well as the breath of its educational opportunity." So said President Lyndon Johnson at Brown University in 1964.

Today, in sharp contrast, the new Republican majority in Congress has targeted, among many other legislative accomplishments of Johnson's Great Society, the National Endowment for the Humanities. While President Clinton's budget would increase expenditures for the endowment by 3 percent, to \$183 million, House Republicans, led by Newt Gingrich, say they intend to kill both NEH and its more controversial partner, the National Endowment for the Arts.

Because NEH has not been reauthorized for the past two years, most analysts concur that the effort to eliminate it could succeed. House Republicans have said that they do not intend to fund any programs that remain unauthorized. In fact, NEH will claim victory if it survives in its current configuration with a smaller budget. Indicative of things perhaps to come is the current drive to rescind \$5 million from this year's budgets for both endowments.

Last year, the NEH spent about \$150 million to help support research, education and cultural life in America, including \$2.3 million in Rhode Island. Among the larger projects funded by the endowment at Brown

in their joint effort to provide public service through education and research, for example, were a summer seminar for college teachers on *Piers Plowman* and *The Canterbury Tales*, a summer course for high school teachers on *The Tale of Genji*, and the Women Writers Project. The last, matched by contributions from the university, seeks to ensure the inclusion of women's contributions to literature by rediscovering, encoding and sometimes publishing (with Oxford University Press) lost women's writing in English from 1330 to 1830.

The project has enabled scholars to study the development of the English language as well as pioneer the writing of computer codes for international transactions of information in business and technology.

Brown's relations with NEH have been notably close. The university's leaders were in fact present at the proposed creation of the endowment. In September 1964, President Lyndon Johnson traveled to Brown to receive an honorary degree, and announce that in his view "national greatness" required that "there . . . be no neglect of the humanities." Johnson said that he "look[ed] with the greatest favor upon the proposal [issued earlier in the year by Brown's] President [Barnaby] Keeney's Commission for the National Foundation for the Humanities."

In language suggestive of another era, the Keeney Commission had recommended the creation of a federal foundation to support "whatever understanding can be attained . . . of such enduring values as justice, freedom, virtue, beauty, and truth." Within months of Johnson's address, with the help of Sen. Claiborne Pell (who is regarded as the father of both endowments) in the Senate and John Brademas in the House, Johnson pushed through Congress the act that established both NEH and NEA.

In 1966, Keeney, a decorated veteran and a medieval historian, left Brown's presidency to become the first chairman of NEH.

After Vietnam and Watergate, few intellectuals on either side of the political spectrum find much firepower in the old-fashioned liberal rhetoric that Keeney and Johnson both used to launch their hope of providing modest federal funds to promote education and research in the humanities. But in 1964 most Americans felt that the humanities and the arts not only could enrich their lives, but that they also could contribute to realizing the promise of American life, which they did not then, and perhaps do not today, see only in materialist terms.

Without faith in the inherent national significance of the mission of universities like Brown, not to mention the federal government, it becomes difficult to defend, let alone advance, the public commitment Johnson legislatively harnessed only 30 years ago to support scholarship and public programming and, with the passage of the Higher Education Act in 1965, begin to provide universal access to higher education. All have come under considerable pressure for years. They are threatened even more by the new Congress.

The attacks on both endowments are serious, far out of proportion to the insignificant amount of federal dollars in a \$1.6 trillion budget they channel to such projects as rediscovering lost literature or teaching high school and college teachers medieval literature. They suggest that we have lost confidence in our national institutions to solve collective problems or to give us a sense of identity or direction.

#### HUMANITIES DAY

"Our cultural institutions are an essential national resource; they must be kept strong." So said President Reagan in 1981.

For over three decades, one of the most important agencies that has helped keep them strong has been the National Endowment for the Humanities. That is why the Association of American Universities, which I represent here today, unequivocally supports full funding for the Endowment. An association of 60 universities represented in almost all fifty states, the AAU is committed to advancing research and education in America.

NEH has more than fulfilled its mission. It has, in the parlance of our budget conscious era, offered an impressive return on the investment of public dollars. Every President and every Congress since 1965 has supported NEH. They have done so because they have understood that a free and good government, in Jefferson's words, depends on an enlightened citizenry.

A single controversial project should not blind us from seeing how well NEH has advanced culture and learning in America, while helping us also conserve our nation's heritage and preserve its memory.

I have here a list which is also available to you. It is a representative sample of NEH-sponsored projects at America's colleges and universities. Permit me to mention three.

At Rice University in Texas, an NEH grant enables scholars there to compile and edit a seven-volume series of Jefferson Davis' papers.

At the University of Mississippi an NEH grant facilitated a "Memories of Mississippi" exhibit that recorded ordinary citizens' recollections of the Depression era in the northern part of that state.

And at Ohio State University NEH funds are assisting secondary school teachers' efforts to integrate Arabic language and culture courses in local high schools.

What these projects have in common is that they make our nation stronger through the advancement of knowledge, culture, and education.

In brief, we need to understand—and we need to make our elected representatives understand—that if NEH is disproportionately cut, America's cultural institutions will not be kept strong. They will bleed.

#### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:33 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by M, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills and joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2288. An act to amend part D of title IV of the Social Security Act to extend for 2 years the deadline by which States are required to have in effect an automated data processing and information retrieval system for use in the administration of State plans for child and spousal support.

H.R. 2404. An act to extend authorities under the Middle East Peace Facilitation Act of 1994 until November 1, 1995, and for other purposes.

H.J. Res. 108. Joint Resolution making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 1996, and for other purposes.

#### MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent and referred as indicated:

H.R. 2288. An act to amend part D of title IV of the Social Security Act to extend for 2 years the deadline by which States are required to have in effect an automated data processing and information retrieval system