

A black and white portrait of John Brademas, a middle-aged man with short, light-colored hair, wearing a dark suit jacket, a white shirt, and a dark tie with small white dots. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. His hands are clasped in front of him, resting on a surface. The background is dark and out of focus.

**The arts are not something to be
thrown a bone after everything
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— John Brademas, 1991

I AM HONORED to have been invited to deliver the Fourth Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy, and I'm for several reasons glad to be here.

First, I want to salute the American Council for the Arts, on whose board I am proud to sit, for spearheading 1991 National Cultural Advocacy Day. I commend the champions of the arts from throughout the country who have come to Washington this week to press our case. And I thank ACA leaders Gerald Blatherwick and Milton Rhodes for asking me to share my thoughts with you.

It is a special honor to be introduced tonight by my old and valued friend, Congressman Sidney Yates of Illinois, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee with jurisdiction over the National Endowment for the Arts and other cultural agencies, and one of the most stalwart advocates of the arts in the United States.

I have often compared Sid Yates to the Dutch boy with his finger in the dike, for he more than any other single person in recent years has defended the arts and humanities against repeated attacks. The American people owe more to the vision and determination of Sidney Yates than they will ever know.

At this time and in this place, it seems fitting that we pay tribute to the memory of a person whose efforts also contributed immeasurably to the cultural life of our country. It was in 1969, when she became chairperson of the National Endowment for the Arts, that I first became acquainted with Nancy Hanks. As Chairman of the subcommittee of the House of Representatives with jurisdiction over the legislation that authorized the endowment, I had countless opportunities over the succeeding eight years to observe firsthand the legendary combination of Hanks' intelligence, tenacity, courage and charm, the qualities that made her such a formidable leader of the NEA.

As you all know, the arts endowment bloomed and flourished during her tenure. Recalling those years of optimism and growth, I thought I might best salute the accomplishments of Nancy Hanks by reflecting, in this darker hour, on what those who care deeply about the arts must do to renew the national commitment to their support.

I speak to you from several perspectives. As a member of Congress for 22 years, I took an active part

in writing most of the legislation enacted between 1959 and 1981 to assist institutions of learning and culture, including schools, colleges and universities, libraries and museums, the arts and humanities.

If during my time in Congress, I was a champion of education and the arts, I have continued to be preoccupied with both as president since 1981 of New York University. As you know, the main campus of New York University is located in Greenwich Village, right next to Soho — in all, a thriving community for artists and the arts.

Beyond the wonderful neighborhood in which it lives, NYU is blessed with outstanding programs in the arts of every kind. NYU's Tisch School of the Arts is one of the nation's foremost centers for education in the performing and communications arts; Tisch film, drama and television graduates are setting a fast and highly successful pace in both Hollywood and New York. Spike Lee, Susan Seidelman, Martin Scorsese, Oliver Stone, all alumni, make my point. New York University's Institute of Fine Arts is the premier center in this country, perhaps the world, for graduate study of art history and conservation. And NYU's undergraduate department of fine arts is one of the finest in the nation. Our Grey Art Gallery on Washington Square is as impressive a place for the exhibition of serious art as can be found at any university in the United States. And our School of Education, Health, Nursing and Arts Professions offers a wide range of arts education courses and a graduate program in museum studies and is home to the National Arts Education Research Center.

I must note, too, that my right arm during my years as chairman of the House subcommittee, of which he was counsel and staff director, Jack Duncan, continues to be active in arts advocacy as special counsel to the ACA; and that another former top associate, Tom Wolanin, is now staff director of the House subcommittee on

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John Brademas

Post-secondary Education, where he serves one of the ablest legislators in Congress, William D. Ford of Michigan, the new Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee and of that subcommittee.

Finally, I speak to you from the perspective of having last year served as Co-Chairman, with Leonard Garment, of the Independent Commission, mandated by Congress to study the operation of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Tonight I want to discuss the role of the federal government in supporting the arts; review that relationship over the past 24 months, with particular attention to the work of the Independent Commission; and consider ways of reinvigorating the National Endowment for the Arts. At the outset, I must warn you that I intend to be as candid as I like to think I was on Capitol Hill!

For more than two and a half decades, federal funds have served in significant ways to encourage individual artists and arts organizations in the United States. During my own years in Washington, Congress passed several laws to help the arts. I was one of the sponsors of the legislation that created the National Endowment for the Arts, and as I have said, for 10 years chaired the House

subcommittee with responsibility for the NEA, the National Endowment for the Humanities and other programs to support cultural activities.

Indeed, the NEA is not the only federal agency that supports art and culture in the United States. The National Endowment for the Humanities, the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution and the National Gallery of Art, which this year celebrates its 50th anniversary, are all central to our commitment as a people to enriching culture.

Here I want to make special mention of two other

initiatives, which I co-authored with my friend and distinguished Senate colleague, Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island, that opened new doors to the arts.

One, the Museum Services Act, makes available through the Institute of Museum Services, modest but invaluable grants, up to \$75,000, for general operating support and conservation activities, to museums of every kind: art, history, science and technology — and to zoos and botanical gardens. In fiscal 1990, IMS made nearly one thousand grants, totaling an estimated \$21 million. Institutions as diverse as the Sacramento Zoo, the Nebraska State Historical Society, the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago and the Laumeier Sculpture Park in St. Louis have received assistance from the IMS.

The second measure of which I claim joint parenthood with Senator Pell, the Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act, provides indemnification by the federal government to protect art and artifacts loaned by other countries for exhibit in American museums. The ceiling on indemnification was recently increased from \$125 million to \$300 million per exhibition, with an aggregate limit on all outstanding indemnities, formerly \$1.2 billion, now \$3 billion. Since its enactment in 1975, the Indemnity Act has been used in some 360 exhibits, including Tutankhamen, the Vatican, Alexander the Great and the Treasure Houses of Britain, with almost no claims for loss or damage. Most recently, the Indemnity Act helped make possible the Mexico and Malevich exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Frans Hals and Titian exhibits at the National Gallery.

The law establishing the National Endowment for the Arts and its sister agency, NEH, puts the case for the use of federal tax dollars for the arts in succinct terms: It is necessary and appropriate for the federal government to help create and sustain not only a climate encouraging freedom of thought, imagination and inquiry but also the material conditions facilitating the release of this creative talent.

FROM THE BEGINNING, two principles governed the operation of the National Endowment for the Arts — freedom of expression and accountability for the use of public moneys. To guard against political interference, the Senate committee report on the bill establishing the two endowments used straightforward language:

As one of the few
sources of funds for
both folk art and
emerging art forms, the
endowment has helped
preserve and
advance
America's cultural
heritage.

“It is the intent of the committee that in the administration of this act there be given the fullest attention to freedom of artistic and humanistic expression”

To insure that the endowment expends its funds wisely, Congress provided for an elaborate structure of accountability. The Chairperson of the NEA and the 26 rotating members of the advisory National Council on the Arts are nominated by the President and subject to Senate confirmation. Central to the grant selection process are advisory panels, made up of persons with special expertise who are chosen by the Chairperson to judge grant applications. The Chairperson, according to the original statute, would have the final say. The law also makes clear that private initiatives are to be the principal source of money for the arts in this country; all grants to organizations must be matched by non-federal moneys on at least a one-to-one basis.

This matching formula has proved highly effective in attracting private support for, and in stimulating public interest in, the arts in the United States. When the endowment was created in 1965, there were relatively few professional nonprofit performing arts organizations in our country. There were 58 orchestras, 22 professional theaters, 37 dance companies and 27 opera companies. Private support for the arts had been flat for a decade, at approximately \$250 million a year. Only seven states had arts agencies. By 1990, however, there were in the United States 230 orchestras, 420 theaters, 250 dance companies and 120 opera companies. Private giving to the arts is now estimated at \$6 billion annually. And today every state in the union has an arts agency.

The range of activities that have benefited from endowment assistance is impressive. The agency has been indispensable, for example, to television programming in the arts, to regional theater and dance. As one of the few sources of funds for both folk art and emerging art forms, the endowment has helped preserve and advance America's cultural heritage.

All four Pulitzer Prize winners in 1990 for music, fiction, poetry and playwriting received, at critical points in their careers, grants from the NEA. The Alexander Calder sculpture in Grand Rapids, Michigan; the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C.; the Dance Theater of Harlem, all might not exist had each not received support from the NEA.

Despite its highly successful record and wide

bipartisan support in Congress, the endowment has at times provoked sharp controversy. The controversial incidents have been rare. Of some 83,000 grants awarded by the NEA over the past quarter of a century, only 20 have raised significant questions.

In the past, a mixture of astute leadership by the heads of the NEA, presidential and congressional willingness to strengthen the arts, effective lobbying by arts advocates and widespread public support combined to diffuse attacks on the endowment and sustain it.

The situation that arose two years ago, however, was far different. There was, above all, a virtual vacuum of leadership for the arts at the highest levels of government. The harsh years of Ronald Reagan, with their initial hostile and, later, stagnant budgets for the arts, paved the way for George Bush, who seems to want to keep the troubled arts endowment at arm's length.

If Mr. Bush has had little to say to defend the agency, his has not been the only silence. Indeed, as I shall illustrate, in the past two years, key elements that had helped repel earlier assaults on the NEA were weakened or missing.

IN CONSEQUENCE, as we have seen, when determined opponents unleashed an unprecedented attack against the National Endowment for the Arts, they would succeed not only in radically altering the legislation governing the agency but in also threatening its existence.

Let me, in light of these observations, now turn to the events of the past 24 months and the work of the Independent Commission. As you all know, in 1989, a firestorm was sparked by two exhibits assisted by NEA grants. One show, presented by the Southeastern Center of Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, contained a photograph by Andres Serrano of a crucifix in urine; the other, at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, included some photographs by the late Mapplethorpe of homoerotic activities and nude children.

In April 1989, the Serrano piece triggered the formidable machine of the religious right. Orchestrated by the Reverend Donald Wildmon and his American Family Association, letters attacking the artist poured into Congress; incensed legislators denounced both Serrano's work and Mapplethorpe's as

“morally reprehensible trash.” In June, the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., canceled a scheduled Mapplethorpe show.

The dispute leapt onto the pages of leading newspapers and magazines. Rival coalitions mobilized on the issue, with accusations of “blasphemy” and “pornography” from one side, “censorship” and “thought control” from the other.

The debate in Congress produced proposals to alter the criteria the agency had used for nearly 25 years to judge grant applications. The most radical change, introduced by Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina, was a legislative prohibition on grants for the promotion, dissemination or production of material deemed obscene, offensive or denigrating of religions or peoples. Helms’ amendment proponents sought to frame the issue for Congress in this fashion: “If you vote ‘No’ against ‘censorship,’ you’re voting in favor of ‘pornography.’” That is to say, if you defend freedom of speech and support for the arts, then you can expect campaign attacks back home.

Given the gritty realities of modern American politics, supporters of the National Endowment for the Arts on Capitol Hill struggled to find a compromise. To stave off more onerous alternatives, they reluctantly accepted a provision in the appropriations bill for fiscal 1990 intended to draw on the 1973 *Miller v. California* Supreme Court decision on pornography.

The new language prohibited the NEA from promoting, disseminating or producing materials which “may be considered obscene, including but not limited to, depictions of sadomasochism, homoeroticism, sexual exploitation of children, or individuals engaged in sex acts which, when taken as a whole, do not have serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.”

For the first time in the history of the National Endowment for the Arts, the criteria for judging applications had been changed and the endowment placed on a collision course with the Bill of Rights.

Congressman Yates, however, acted to protect the endowment by adding a provision to the appropriations bill calling for the creation of a “temporary Independent Commission.” The commission, by law to expire on September 30, 1990, was charged with reviewing the grantmaking procedures of the National Endowment for the Arts, including those of its panel system; and considering whether the standard for

publicly funded art should differ from the standard for privately funded art.

The commission would be composed of 12 members, all to be appointed by President Bush, four on the recommendation of Speaker of the House of Representatives Thomas Foley in consultation with House Minority Leader Robert Michel, four on the recommendation of the President pro tempore of the Senate Robert Byrd in consultation with Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole, and four by the President himself.

Although Congress asked the Independent Commission for its report by April 23, 1990, White House tardiness in nominating its four members — the President did not, for reasons never explained, name his four choices until May 16, seven months after enactment of the appropriations act — prevented my colleagues and me from being sworn in until June 6, 1990, six weeks after the statutory deadline for the report!

During these months of delay, the controversy about the endowment became still more acrimonious. As leaders of the religious right and crusading politicians continued to pound the agency, they were joined by a number of conservative art critics and intellectuals, lending the attack a patina of respectability. Fresh targets such as performance artist Karen Finley drew particular wrath.

Meanwhile, the endowment found itself battling not only this band of opponents but its own beneficiaries. When the new chairperson, John Frohnmayer, issued regulations requiring grantees to sign an anti-obscenity pledge, dozens of them refused to do so and three, a university, a dance company and a museum, took the NEA to court.

A NEW ATMOSPHERE of censorship appeared in some parts of the land. Local police stormed the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati and, for exhibiting Mapplethorpe photographs, its director was indicted on obscenity charges. A prosecutor in Florida indicted the rap group 2 Live Crew for obscenity. And Republicans in Congress, supported by President Bush, pressed a constitutional amendment to ban flag burning.

It was in this deteriorating environment that senators and representatives began the process of reauthorizing the NEA. By the summer of 1990, their

chances of crafting a bill free of so-called content restrictions, legislative limitations on the viewpoint expressed in a work of art, seemed increasingly remote. “There aren’t many issues left and NEA is potentially a big one,” said National Republican Congressional Committee Co-Chairman Ed Rollins, a warning to incumbent legislators seeking re-election in November.

It was against such a backdrop that the 12 members of the Independent Commission held their first meeting in early June 1990 in Washington. Let me here salute them. They were a dedicated, hard-working group. Nominated by the House of Representatives were David E. Connor, President of David E. Connor and Associates of Peoria, Illinois; Joan Harris, Former Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs of Chicago; Kitty Carlisle Hart, Chairman of the New York State Council on the Arts; and I.

Members recommended by the Senate were Marcia Laing Golden, Past President of the Association of Community Arts Agencies of Kansas; Kay Huffman Goodwin, a Former Chairman of the West Virginia Arts and Humanities Commission; Peter Kyros of California, a former White House aide on the arts and humanities; and also of California, Rosalind Wyman, a former member of the National Council on the Arts.

Mr. Bush’s choices were John Agresto, President of St. John’s College in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Former Deputy Chairman of NEH; Theresa Elmore Behrendt of New York, a Former White House Liaison to the arts and humanities; Leonard Garment, of the law firm of Dickstein, Shapiro & Morin in Washington, D.C. and Former Assistant to President Richard Nixon; and Charles K. McWhorter of New York, a lawyer and Former Legislative Assistant to Vice President Nixon.

LET ME TELL YOU about what we did. The Independent Commission made several key decisions on the first day we met. The commission elected not one Chair but two Co-Chairs, Leonard Garment and me. Far from prompting a deadlock, the co-chairmanship and a personal friendship that developed between Leonard Garment and me proved indispensable to the work of the commission and its ultimate success. Indeed, for me one of the great pleasures of serving on the Independent Commission was the opportunity to

engage wits, cross swords and fashion agreements with one of the country’s leading lawyers. Leonard is a man of both passion and intellect. I was exposed in our deliberations to both qualities!

I remind you, too, that six commissioners were chosen by Democratic elected officials and six by Republicans. With co-chairmen, every member would be assured that his or her voice would be heard. Another crucial determination: after considerable discussion, the commission agreed not to ask Congress to extend its life for another year or more but instead to move quickly and produce a report by the date the commission would statutorily go out of business on September 30, 1990.

Mr. Garment, who as you know delivered the Nancy Hanks Lecture two years ago, and I immediately appointed a staff director, Dr. Margaret Jane Wyszomirski, a respected scholar specializing in public policy for the arts. Only last week, I am pleased to note, Dr. Wyszomirski was named director of the NEA’s Office of Policy, Planning and Research.

Leonard and I felt it imperative that the commission’s work be characterized by and be seen to have three qualities: balance, independence and a striving for consensus. During six days of public hearings, the commission sought to elicit the broadest array of opinions. We took testimony from top endowment officials, peer review panelists, policy analysts, foundation supporters of the arts, artists and critics of the NEA.

Because Leonard Garment and I realized that the issues the commission had been charged with considering entailed First Amendment questions, we convened a Legal Task Force of six constitutional lawyers — Leonard chose three and I chose three — selected on the basis of their outstanding reputations and the diversity of their views.

Members of the task force both testified before the commission and drafted a consensus statement. A particularly significant conclusion, widely cited in the press, in the legal scholars’ statement, was this: “. . . While Congress has broad powers as to how to spend public funds, it may not do so in a way that the Supreme Court has said is ‘aimed at the suppression of dangerous ideas.’” I think it here important to note that all six lawyers, conservatives and liberals, opposed the requirement that NEA grant recipients certify that

their work would not be obscene.

By the time, last August, that the commissioners began negotiations on our recommendations, it was clear that our philosophical differences meant that each of us would have to compromise. A divided commission, Leonard and I reminded our colleagues, would carry little weight in Congress. That the commission's final report, issued on September 11, 1990, was unanimous was an achievement in which Leonard, our

fellow commissioners and I took, and take, great pride. Let me here summarize some of our chief recommendations.

First, the commission declared that "to assure that the NEA operate in a manner accountable to the President, Congress and the American people, the endowment's procedures for scrutiny and evaluation of applications for grants must be reformed." In

pressing for reform, the commission urged that the sole authority of the NEA chairperson to decide on grants be made explicit in legislation and that he or she be given more choices. Our commission also called for the reestablishment of "committees" of National Council members to assure another opportunity for review between, on the one hand, grant advisory panels, and on the other, the full council and the chairperson.

We said that recommendations of specific amounts of grant awards should be set by endowment staff after consultation with panelists. We also said that the panels and National Council should recommend a larger number of grants than funds available for them,

thereby giving the chairperson a genuine choice in making awards.

In addition, the commission urged steps to diminish conflicts of interest on panels. Panelists, we said, should not be permitted to serve on a panel considering applications from organizations with which they are affiliated. And the pool of panelists should be expanded to include persons knowledgeable about the arts but who do not earn their living in them.

In light of subsequent developments in Congress, I think it important to point out that one change the Independent Commission carefully considered and roundly rejected was alteration in the percentage of endowment funds directed to state arts agencies.

Moreover, although the commission urged reforms in the grantmaking procedures of the NEA, we unanimously recommended "against legislative changes to impose specific restrictions on the content of works of art supported by the endowment."

IN MY VIEW, this recommendation that the government not tell artists how to produce their art, and that it won unanimous support, represented the single most important conclusion of the Independent Commission. For when a 12-person commission, created by congressional mandate, the members of which were selected by George Bush, Tom Foley, Bob Michel, Bob Byrd and Bob Dole, can reject content restrictions, such a decision sends a powerful bipartisan signal about the appropriate relationship between the National Endowment for the Arts and the freedom of expression of artists.

You well may ask why commissioners with such diverse political perspectives decided to oppose legislative limitations on the content of art funded by the NEA. The answer, in the words of our report: "Content restrictions may raise serious constitutional issues, would be inherently ambiguous and would almost certainly involve the endowment and the Department of Justice in costly and unproductive lawsuits."

Although the commission recognized that "obscenity is not protected speech and that the National Endowment for the Arts is prohibited from funding the production of works which are obscene or otherwise illegal," we asserted that the NEA "is an inappropriate tribunal for the legal determination of obscenity. The

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nature and structure of the endowment are not such that it can make the necessary due process findings of fact and conclusions of law involved in these determinations. . . [T]he appropriate forum for the formal determination of obscenity is the courts." The commission also urged that the endowment rescind its certification requirement.

Finally, to communicate the spirit that motivated much of our work, the Independent Commission proposed that Congress add to the "Declaration of Purpose," or preamble of the legislation authorizing the NEA, several hortatory statements such as language making clear that "The arts and humanities belong to all the people of the United States."

The overwhelmingly positive reception the report received indicated that most public officials, journalists and arts policy analysts agreed with our conclusions. An editorial in the *Washington Post*, "Cooler Heads on the Arts," captured the most common response. The item commended the commission for debunking "the idea that accountability without content restrictions is impossible."

Now I have described the controversy which led to the creation of the Independent Commission, how we proceeded and what we found. Did the commission make a difference? As I speak to you more than six months after the release of our report, I draw these conclusions about the impact of our work.

I believe that in the short term, the report of the Independent Commission helped prevent the destruction of the National Endowment for the Arts. After months of bitter wrangling, the House of Representatives hammered out a compromise passed by Congress in late October 1990.

ALTHOUGH THE LEGISLATION continues the life of the National Endowment for the Arts for three more years, the measure contains what, in my view, are two unfortunate provisions. One will increase the percentage of the total NEA appropriation to be channeled to the states from 20 to 35 percent by fiscal year 1993, a change I believe is precipitous and can only weaken the NEA's program. I speak, may I add, as the author of the 1975 amendment mandating that one-fifth of all appropriations to the NEA go to the states.

The witnesses, conservatives and liberals who testified on this subject before the commission were

emphatic and unanimous in their view that the existing formula not be altered at this time. Any future change in the ratio, our report concluded, should be preceded by a careful, congressionally mandated study of the impact of the modification on federal, state and local funding.

Under the new reallocation formula, Mr. Frohnmayer faces the difficult task this year of coring the endowment's budget, cutting out in order to give the states their windfall, an additional \$12 million. To do so, the NEA must pare individual grants and kill some programs. The initiative, for example, to give money to museums to purchase the work of living American artists is disappearing, just the sort of effort my colleagues and I who founded the NEA would have sought to encourage.

With many states in deficit, their own support of the arts has for the first time in years fallen overall by 10 percent from fiscal 1990 to 1991. There is a danger that states may use their increased allocations of endowment money as an excuse to trim arts budgets still further. I need not remind this audience of arts advocates of the fault lines and bitter feelings this change in the law has created within your own ranks.

Of course, the other troubling aspect of the new legislation is the language that requires the NEA chairperson to ensure that grants are made "taking into consideration general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs and values of the American public."

Professor Kathleen Sullivan of the Harvard Law School, a member of the commission's Legal Task Force, said of this language, "It's both better and worse than the old law. Better, in that it contains no enforceable content restriction. Worse, in the sense that artists may steer too clear of what they think the public might find indecent, which is a far broader category than obscenity."

As you know, Mr. Frohnmayer has said that when applying the "decency" standard, he will not impose his own judgment but will defer to that of the grant review panels and National Council. As the chairperson explained in congressional hearings last month, ". . . [N]o one individual is wise enough to be able to consider general standards of decency . . . all by him- or herself." Both Mr. Frohnmayer and the National Council appear to have concluded that because of their diverse makeup,

Montana, who have worked to protect the endowment from those who seemed intent on destroying it.

I cite, too, for his tireless leadership from the beginning, Senator Claiborne Pell. I believe Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah deserves special mention for his courageous and principled stance. May his example

fortify his colleagues!

Fourth, I think it imperative that we expand and improve the coalition working for the arts. Let me linger on this matter for a moment.

I am well aware that the battle to save the National Endowment for the Arts has produced points of serious friction among arts advocates, with some organizations determined to pursue an agenda separate from and even antithetical to the interests of others. As one who has lived much of his life in the arena of political combat, I must warn you that if arts advocates float warring agendas, your opponents will perceive your weakness and exploit it, and policymakers will play you off one against another.

FOR COALITIONS TO SUCCEED, whether minorities pressing to win civil rights or environmentalists to repel a hostile secretary of the interior, members must settle their differences before they come to Congress and seek to present a united front. So it is most encouraging to me that you are taking steps to achieve consensus, including the formation of the Legislative Coalition that I know has been meeting in

Washington. Keep at it!

Moreover, for your advocacy to be most effective, I urge you to broaden your coalition to embrace those whose interests in significant ways coincide with your own: educators, scholars, performers, art collectors and dealers, business and civic leaders, among others. In this regard, as a university president, I must tell you that I have been frankly disappointed by the relative absence these past two years of scholars willing to defend freedom of expression in the arts. Freedom endangered anywhere is freedom endangered everywhere.

Fifth, I believe we must much more effectively teach children to appreciate the arts and to respect artists. The arts can play an indispensable role in a child's learning.

I am proud in this connection that the New York University School of Education, Health, Nursing and Arts Professions houses the National Arts Education Research Center. This center, supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Department of Education, is studying the most effective ways to improve arts instruction in elementary and secondary schools.

I also commend the members of Congress who in the reauthorization bill for the arts endowment last fall acted to include new spending authority for access to the arts through support of education. Indeed, although arts education was not on our agenda, members of the Independent Commission felt so strongly about the subject that we recommended that the NEA "collaborate to a greater extent with state and local arts agencies and with other sectors of society to advance arts education."

We added: "Recognizing that contributions to arts education can be made by several federal agencies, the commission believes that the National Endowment for the Arts should lead this effort."

Although the commission drew particular attention to arts education for children, which I wholeheartedly support, I think it also imperative to encourage arts education in our colleges and universities, in community institutions and in lifelong learning programs.

Sixth, and as I speak of enhancing knowledge and understanding of the arts, I think it important, too, to find ways to enable more Americans to enjoy more art. Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about.

For your **advocacy**
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I HAVE IN MIND a new dimension of the Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act, of which I spoke earlier. I propose that Congress now consider providing indemnification by the federal government to protect art and artifacts housed in museums in the United States for exhibit throughout our own country. Because the cost of insuring materials loaned to other museums can be prohibitively expensive, many Americans cannot see great works of art housed in American museums. Through such a program, to illustrate, the Snite Museum at the University of Notre Dame, in my hometown, could show treasures of the Metropolitan Museum of Art to South Benders. Or Asian masterpieces from Kansas City or Cleveland might travel to the West Coast where large populations of Asian-Americans, and others, could see them. Hispanic-Americans in Florida and New York might have the chance to look at Latin-American art from museums in the Southwest.

I have one final observation, and it is this: you and I must continue to make the case for the arts with our elected representatives here in Washington, D.C.

And what is the case? It is that the arts are essential; the arts are not something to be thrown a bone after everything else is taken care of because everything else will never be taken care of. And it will be up to each of you to make clear that the arts matter.

It will be up to each of you to press both for more generous support of the arts by the federal government and for the removal of harmful tax policies that discourage giving to the arts by private benefactors. It will be up to each of you to help replace the distorted image of the National Endowment for the Arts peddled by its enemies.

All of us, you and I, must remind people of the close connection between support for the arts and the greater public interests that are served. For you and I know the immense difference that the arts and artists make to enriching our lives as individual persons and to building a culture that illumines and ennobles.

In recent weeks, you and I have been reflecting on the fundamental values that characterize us as Americans: the willingness to risk life for a cause we believe in, a love of country no one can take from us, a belief in the sanctity of individual freedom. Proud as we are of the engine of our economy or of our military might, we know, too, that the more enduring legacy of our wealth

as a people is in the canvases of our painters, the songs of our composers and the words of our poets.

Here I recall some of the most eloquent testimony I heard in all my years of sitting in congressional hearings. The witness was the distinguished American artist, Robert Motherwell, who was testifying in 1970 in support of legislation I had introduced to encourage education about the environment. This is what Motherwell said:

I am sure that scientists have or will testify to the relevant facts here and know them far better than I. I speak only as an artist. But to speak as an artist is no small thing. Most people ignorantly suppose that artists are the decorators of our human existence, the aesthetes to whom the cultivated may turn when the real business of the day is done. But actually what an artist is, is a person skilled in expressing human feeling . . . Far from being merely decorative, the artist's awareness . . . is one . . . of the few guardians of the inherent sanity and equilibrium of the human spirit that we have.

For my part, I believe that proponents of federal support of the arts, support unfettered by restrictions imposed by government, will continue to find encouragement in the report my colleagues and I on the Independent Commission prepared last year. I hope that legislators and other public officials will resist the impulse to censor, remembering the admonition of our group that "maintaining the principle of an open society requires all of us, at times, to put up with much we do not like, but the bargain has proved in the long run a good one."

Proud as we are of the engine of our economy or of our military might, we know, too, that the more enduring legacy of our wealth as a people is in the canvases of our painters, the songs of our composers and the words of our poets.

For what I think should be obvious from the record of the National Endowment for the Arts and other federal programs to support culture is that our national government, with modest amounts of money, without stifling bureaucratic control and without unwarranted intervention, can provide support for the arts in ways that greatly enhance the quality of American life.

As I conclude these remarks, I recall for you the words of Nancy Hanks just 17 years ago when she replied to some who even then were attempting to impose censorship on the endowment. Said Nancy, in words as powerful for 1991 as when she wrote them, in 1974:

“FOR AN ARTIST TO CREATE what society needs, he or she must be given the opportunity to try . . . Nurturing the broad range of the nation’s creativity is far more important than the few tempests that arise. I say that because of my conviction that the cornerstone of any culture is the nurtured talent of its creative artists.”

You and I then must strive to ensure that we nurture the talent of our creative artists so that art — beautiful, ugly; ordered, unruly; free-spirited, controlled . . . but indispensable — continues to nurture the creativity of our nation. ■

John Brademas

John Brademas, President Emeritus of New York University (NYU), served as President of the University from 1981 to 1992. During that time, he led the transition of NYU from a regional commuter school to a national and international residential research university. In 1984 he initiated a fundraising campaign that produced a total of \$1 billion in ten years.

Before coming to New York, Brademas served for 22 years (1959-1981) as United States Representative in Congress from Indiana’s third district, the last four

years as House Majority Whip. While in Congress he earned a particular reputation for his leadership in education and the arts.

In addition to his responsibilities at New York University, Brademas serves on the boards of Americans for the Arts, Kos Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Loews Corporation, Oxford University Press- U.S.A., Scholastic Inc., Texaco, Inc., and the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation. He is a former member of the boards of the Aspen Institute, the New York Stock Exchange and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Brademas has been awarded honorary degrees by forty-seven colleges and universities. He has received many other awards, including the Annual Cultural Award, Recording Industry of America; the distinguished Service Award, American Association of University Presses; the Medal for Distinguished Service, Teachers College, Columbia University; and the award for Distinguished Service in International Education of the Institute of International Education. Brademas also received the first James Bryant Conant Award for distinguished service to education from the Education Commission of the States, the Gold Key Award of the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine, the Distinguished Service Award of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Caritas Society Award for outstanding contributions in the field of mental retardation, and the Humanist of the Year award of the National Association for Humanities Education.

Brademas is currently the Chairman, by appointment of President Bill Clinton, of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, which in February 1997 released *Creative America*, a Report to the President on ways of strengthening support, private and public, for these two fields.