

A black and white close-up portrait of an elderly man with a serious expression. He has short, light-colored hair and deep wrinkles on his forehead and around his eyes. He is wearing a dark suit jacket, a white dress shirt with thin vertical stripes, and a dark tie with thin vertical stripes. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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—Franklin D. Murphy, 1992

I AM FLATTERED AND HONORED to be asked to deliver the fifth Nancy Hanks Lecture on arts and public policy. My recollections of Nancy go back to the days of her association with Nelson Rockefeller, and I watched with awed admiration her inspired leadership of the National Endowment for the Arts. I recall especially how her sweet southern persuasiveness masked a steely determination to achieve what she had set as the endowment's goals — and what a record she wrote.

**1992 Nancy Hanks Lecture
on Arts and Public Policy
March 18, 1992
National Gallery of Art,
East Wing Auditorium
Washington, D.C.**

Sponsored by Philip Morris Companies Inc.

Franklin D. Murphy

Hanks Lecturers — a notable historian who can provide historical perspective; a distinguished lawyer and close advisor to a U.S. President; a talented writer and poetess; and last year one of the fathers of the endowment, a gifted politician, and highly successful university president. Each of these individuals has been able to bring to this lecture special insights into the artistic, political and technical aspects of the endowment

So what can I add? Although not an artist, I can only say that I have had a rather extensive and varied experience working in a range of activities having to deal with the arts, both public and private and a combination of both. I was associated with two state-supported universities with very active arts programs. I have been a trustee of three art museums — the National Gallery of Art, supported mainly by government; The J. Paul Getty Museum, supported by private funds only; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, which receives support from both the County of Los Angeles and the private sector. In most all of these institutions I have seen first hand the extremely helpful role played by the endowment. So,

up front I must tell you that I come to this lecture unabashed and vigorous supporter of the endowment and the role of government in support of the arts.

Some of the thoughts I will express tonight have been put forward by previous lecturers, but I think I need not apologize, for there are some thoughts that cannot be repeated too often. I am also aware that I give this lecture at a somewhat tumultuous time in the life of the endowment, when doubts are expressed about the very existence of it, to say nothing of the role of the endowment in evaluating content in making individual as well as institutional grants. Once again we are witness to an exacerbation of the historical tendency of those who believe they are possessed of ultimate virtue to impose their arbitrary standards on all.

First, let me touch on the propriety of government at any level providing support for the arts. The concept that the arts are as vital to society as roads and sewers, armies and navies is a very old one. In Greece, temples such as the Parthenon were embellished with sculpture of timeless quality. The Medici of Florence commissioned great works of art and supported artists and scholars. Popes permitted Raphael and Michelangelo to fully express their genius. The great theaters and opera houses of Europe were established and are maintained by the state. It is not to be forgotten that the first act of rebuilding in Vienna after World War II was the reconstruction of the war-damaged opera house. And, of course, the remarkable art museums of Europe have been primarily the result of the commitment of governments to protect and display great objects of art for the benefit of the public.

In the United States the involvement of government in the arts was understandably slow to develop. First, there was the necessity to organize a system of self-government, and then the priorities were to open up a vast and mainly empty continent, which acted as a vacuum to the stream of immigrants who for a variety of reasons sought these shores. Action, not contemplation, was the order of the day as we necessarily became a nation of farmers and Yankee toolmakers. Yet, even at the outset, there were thoughtful ones who understood that in the end nothing would be more important than the cultivation of the intellect and of the spirit. And so in this context we remember Benjamin Franklin and his University of Pennsylvania, Thomas Jefferson and his University of Virginia, and especially tonight I

would want again to quote that remarkable New Englander, John Adams, who in May 1780, wrote to his wife, Abigail, as follows:

I must study politics and war, that my sons may have the liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, and architecture.

In short, a charter for the National Endowment for the Arts written 213 years ago by a great American patriot and statesman who foresaw the future more accurately than some with limited vision can understand the present.

THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT in the arts is by no means limited to the National Endowment. The mounting of extraordinary exhibitions of the arts of many cultures in museums across this country would have been impossible without indemnification provided by the Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act, which now provides federal indemnification protection up to \$300 million per exhibition with an overall total of \$3 billion. The act has been in effect since 1975, and the cost to the government has been almost nonexistent; but the impact on our society has been enormous and unprecedented.

The Museum Services Act has served to supply modest but often crucial grants, especially to smaller museums all across the country serving, among others, colleges and school children. The museums are of many kinds — art history, science, technology, etc. The bulk of the operating funds are generated locally, but the federal grants are often disproportionately crucial. The impact of these facilities on the intellectual and cultural life of our society is incalculable.

For many years the government has generously supported the Smithsonian Institution with its remarkable museums touching all aspects of the human experience, including art, as well as examining the world in which we live.

And then there is the National Gallery of Art — perhaps the youngest of the great picture galleries of the world — which has just celebrated its 50th birthday with an outpouring of gifts of works of art

from all over the country. The National Gallery is a classic example of one of the most important aspects of American cultural life — namely, the mix of public and private resources in the building and maintenance of our cultural institutions, a phenomenon that is almost uniquely American.

For example, Mr. Andrew Mellon in the 1930s offered to build and then give to the nation an art museum as well as his splendid collection of art and an endowment to support the salaries of certain of the senior staff of the museum. He asked that the government provide the land on which to build the museum, and with great foresight to reserve certain contiguous land in the event one day in the future it would be necessary to expand the structure. He also proposed that the government provide the funds to operate and maintain what was to become the National Gallery of Art at a level befitting a great country. These points were incorporated into federal legislation, passed by Congress, and signed into law. I should add that the legislation did not provide that Congress should appropriate funds for acquisition of works of art. Mr. Mellon believed that the private sector would over time join him in making gifts of works of art to their country and its gallery. To this end, he unselfishly insisted that the gallery not bear the Mellon name but that it be called the National Gallery.

Although Mr. Mellon could not see the fulfillment of his vision, as he died before the building was completed, his intuition was unerring. In a few decades following its dedication, the National Gallery received gifts of collections of staggering size and quality from such collectors as Samuel Kress, the Widener Family, Lessing Rosenwald and Chester Dale. After this jump start, works of art of great beauty have continued to flow into the Gallery from private collections, notably from Andrew Mellon's son and daughter, Paul and Elsa Mellon Bruce, and from many others as well from all across the United States.

Then some years ago the trustees of the National Gallery, the majority of whom are private citizens, decided that the time had come to take advantage of Andrew Mellon's foresight and to expand the gallery on the land reserved for just such an expansion back in the 1930s.

Under Paul Mellon's leadership and with I.M. Pei's inspired design, a wonderful new modern but compat-

ible structure was again built and given to the nation. The great East Building was, in fact, another Mellon gift to the nation as the funds to build it came from Paul and Elsa Mellon in honor of their father and from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Such is the story of a

classic example of that great American invention, the commingling of public and private funds to enhance the cultural life of our people.

Of course, there are other notable examples of this partnership in Washington such as, the Freer Gallery, the Hirshhorn and the Sackler Museums to name but three.

Furthermore, all across the country there are many local examples of this relationship. I think of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Los Angeles Music Center, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which receives substantial support from the City of New York, to mention but a few of many. It is true that at this moment public support has in some instances diminished somewhat, but so

has public support for many civic functions as a result of the downturn in the economy. The point is that the fundamental principle of the public-private partnership in cultural matters is as solid as ever. It has proved its worth over time and for millions of people all across this country. It has permitted them to enrich their lives beyond measure. The few shrill voices one occasionally hears in opposition to this principle speak out of ignorance and poorly serve their fellow man.

In the matter of public-private initiatives, the National Endowment for the Arts has played a vital role. It

is quite clear that in spite of tax-based support of the arts, by far the greatest ongoing support for cultural activities in this country comes from the private sector. Therefore, the matching principle in endowment grants to organizations — on at least a one-to-one basis and often more — has clearly been one of the most effective parts of the endowment's program. Throughout the country, millions of private dollars have been raised for a huge number of cultural activities, touching institutions large and small and involving the whole range of art forms. Many of these activities have been multicultural. This is important, for in a nation such as ours, the ability of Americans of different ethnic backgrounds to display their unique cultural skills to themselves and to others becomes important to their sense of self and a source of pride to be shared with Americans of other backgrounds. This matching grant program alone gives the lie to know-nothing demagogic election-year prose such as labeling the endowment as “the upholstered playpen of the arts and crafts auxiliary of the Eastern Liberal Establishment.” If the endowment did nothing else, and happily it does, the matching grant program has more than justified the creators of the program. It has led to a real explosion of the arts at all levels in this country.

Referring back to John Adams' comment to Abigail, it can be understood that at the federal level there was first established a National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, both designed to improve the scientific skills of Americans and to help support scientific and biomedical research, all in the public interest. To my way of thinking, the subsequent establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts and its counterpart for the humanities by Congress represented the ultimate step to cultural maturity envisioned by that wise old Yankee. To put an end to any of those initiatives today or in the future is unthinkable. To do so would be an act of political violence against the American people. No amount of demagogic, overwrought prose can disguise that fact.

Earlier in this talk I have noted that by far the greatest support of the arts in the United States comes from the private sector. Such has been true in the past, is true of the present, and will be true in the future. The tax-based support can only fill in gaps,

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help start worthy enterprises, and through the matching principle, serve as a catalyst to generate private support. The principle of private support for our cultural and educational institutions has been one of the fundamental hallmarks of American society.

EARLY IN THIS CENTURY, Congress in writing the tax laws recognized the necessity of encouraging private giving and provided tax incentives to that end. These incentives remained in force for decades and were from time to time enhanced, all made relatively more important by the increasing tax bite on those in a position to provide substantial private support both in dollars and in kind. Some few years ago, however, Congress seemed to reverse a more than 60-year-old tradition by substantially reducing these incentives, especially in the matter of appreciated property. Thus, overnight, colleges, universities, art museums, symphony orchestras — to name but a few voluntary organizations — were hard hit and at a particularly difficult time. There was a huge irony in this in that it occurred during an administration in Washington that urged the private sector to step up and reduce the demand on public funds. If I remember correctly, they even created some kind of a commission on volunteerism — the old story of the right hand and the left hand.

The next chapter in the story came last year when, in the closing hours of the Congress, Senator Moynihan managed to put into the tax bill a provision providing a one-year window during which donors could give objects to institutions — mainly museums and libraries — and deduct the fair market value, honestly appraised, from their taxes without this gift throwing the donor into the alternate tax zone. What was the result? An extraordinary number of remarkable objects of art flowed into American museums. Here in Washington the National Gallery of Art received treasures on its 50th birthday far beyond expectation; and such was the case from Los Angeles to Boston and scores of places in between — thus, increasing the cultural wealth of the public. Incentives do work.

Good to relate, this window has been left open for the first six months of 1992. It is the earnest hope of art museums everywhere that this window will be permanently left open and that other assets such as securities once again will receive the same treatment

for the benefit of other cultural institutions, such as colleges and universities and performing arts organizations. All that is asked is that the Congress return this nation to a time-honored tradition that has helped build great educational and cultural institutions all across these United States. Those institutions now need nourishment to continue to serve the increasing cultural appetite of the American people in a qualitative way.

Now, assuming not only the propriety but the necessity that government continue to play a relatively small but crucial role in support of cultural activity in our country, including legislative encouragement for private philanthropy, I would like to turn to the second issue which seems to be at the root of much of the current controversy over the endowment especially — specifically, how the grants are made, how the money is in fact spent, all of which seems to lead to the issue of content.

First, let us note that the vast majority of public moneys spent on the arts at all levels — local, state, and federal — are spent constructively and without consequential or passionate dissent or acrimony. As is to be expected in a free and open society, one hears and even may himself engage in criticism about the design of a new public building, the character of commissioned sculpture for public places, the quality of a new piece of music or opera, the quality of a painting or piece of sculpture. But this criticism is generally within the bounds of reasonable civility even when a proposed addition to the National Gallery in London was referred to as a “carbuncle” to be engrafted on a great and noble building. In fact, an examination of cultural history makes interesting and amusing reading, especially when one notes the reaction of society to changes in the artistic status quo.

TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THIS, we must realize that unlike the scientist who is bound in the end by immutable laws of nature, the artist deals not with natural phenomena but with the human experience, made up of human beings themselves, their instincts, their prejudices, their emotions, their conditioned reflexes, their bodies, and their environment and how they view it all. The scientist lives mostly in the intellect; the artist spends much of his time in the area of perception and feeling, areas impossible to quantify

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and with roads which when followed lead often to new and unfamiliar places. As such, he often lives dangerously for he works in and serves a society that is more often than not reluctant to change. Thus, in a way as he breaks new ground, he is often in tension with those

to whom he or she must look for support. But support these people we must for they lead us to new ways of seeing and thinking. As Cezanne liberated the painter from photographic realism, James Joyce showed the writer new ways of describing the human experience. Criticized, even reviled, they were then; giants they are today.

Of course, all of this — that is, the flourishing of the arts — can only take place in a free society. We are aware of how Stalinism effectively sterilized the arts in the Soviet Union; and the remarkable exhibit recently shown in Washington titled “Degenerate Art” dramatically demonstrated the attempted destruction of an entire art movement — German Expressionism — by Adolf Hitler and his thugs. But happily we still live by the First Amendment in this

country; and as a result, we have a thriving and healthy arts establishment in spite of censorious efforts on the part of some misguided souls, including what has been called, among other things, the religious right.

As indicated, healthy, often vigorous criticism has always been a part of the art scene and so it should be.

John Ruskin commented with nostalgia on the passing of Gothic architecture to what he regarded as decadent Renaissance forms. On the other hand, the word Gothic as applied to art and architecture by people at the time of the Renaissance was a term of opprobrium, meaning barbaric. People taken with Renaissance art and architectural forms referred to forms that followed as “baroque” with the original meaning of irregular, contorted, grotesque, taken from the Portuguese word meaning an imperfect pearl. And, of course, we recall the 19th Century Paris art critic who labeled Matisse and his colleagues “Les Fauves” — that is, “the wild beasts.”

To turn to another art form, let me quote from a music critic in Vienna writing in 1804:

Beethoven’s Second Symphony is a crass monster, a hideously writhing wounded dragon that refuses to expire and though bleeding in the Finale, furiously beats about with its tail erect.

And moving to our time, Pitts Sanborn, writing in the *New York World Telegram* in 1936, says:

“Rachmaninoff’s Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini sometimes sounds like a plague of insects in the Amazon Valley, sometimes like a miniature of the Day of Judgment—and for a change goes lachrymose.”

In 1913 the then infamous, now famous Armory Show opened in New York to a hail of criticism. Americans for the first time were exposed to an extensive cross section of modern art and for the first time were being confronted with new ways that artists looked at mankind and at nature. Many didn’t like what they saw. Matisse and the Cubists were singled out for special abuse. Now 80 years later works by these same artists are treasured by museums and collectors alike.

AND SO IT HAS GONE throughout history — new art forms upsetting one generation’s esthetic sensibilities, many accepted by the next generation, and the best of them standing the test of time and then fully accepted into the public consciousness.

Of course, there have been ups and downs in this process, and nowhere is this better seen than in the treatment by the artist of the human body and the physical relationships between humans.

The Greeks and Romans admired the beauty of the human body and with great skill unashamedly made statues glorifying the nude body — male as well as female; and the Romans who, not as talented and original as the Greeks, made copies for homes and public places as well.

All of this changed with the appearance of Adam and Eve, who carried the new message that nudity led to evil thoughts and actions (although I could never understand that procreation was either evil or, in moderation, contrary to the public interest). Nonetheless, the message was clear and unequivocal. The human figure was no longer to be considered beautiful and to be admired but was now to be hidden from view. Adam and Eve were discovered, as you know, by the ancient Hebrews and enthusiastically adopted by the Christians; and ever since, western civilization has been very ambivalent in dealing with the issues raised by the story of this couple. At one extreme one stands sadly before once beautiful Greek and Roman sculptures now mutilated by the chopping away of the male genitalia. On the other hand, we can admire with awe the extraordinary power of Michelangelo's unmutated fully nude sculpture of David in Florence, and we can also still appreciate Pollaiuolo's remarkable engraving entitled *Ten Naked Men*, Titian's *Venus of Urbino*, Giorgione's *Sleeping Venus*, Manet's *Olympia*, Goya's *The Nude Maja* among many others.

I suspect this ambivalence is best illustrated by the strange saga of one of the greatest masterpieces of western art — namely, Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, commissioned by Pope Paul III and unveiled in 1541. Pius IV, who became Pope in 1560, was very upset over the fresco, especially the nudity, both frontal and rear, and threatened to destroy it in its entirety but relented and then ordered Daniela da Volterra to paint draperies over some of the figures. Still not satisfied, he ordered even more overpainting. Clement VIII, it is said, was only prevented from completely destroying the fresco by the appeals of the Academy of St. Luke (the artists' academy). Pope Pius V was again offended and had still more figures repainted. Now, as you may know, the *Last*

Judgment is being cleaned and restored and, possibly, at last we may see this masterpiece as Michelangelo intended it to be seen when he painted it.

Many other examples of this nervousness about nudity abound, such as Goya being called before the inquisition in 1815 to answer questions about his two matched paintings, the nude and the clothed Maja. But happily, artists continue to be inspired by the human figure and in spite of small-minded efforts to the contrary. We and our children can freely go to museums and in a healthy and non-self-conscious way see examples of the human figure — male or female. May it always remain so.

HOWEVER, IN RECENT YEARS a modification of the usual heterosexual human relationship, although having existed from the beginning of recorded history, has now become increasingly permissible by at least a substantial minority of the public and has become legally protected. I refer, of course, to homoeroticism. How is the artist, who in the end is a mirror on society, to deal with this new and still sensitive issue — new at least in public terms? It seems to me that the answer is clear — no different than the artist deals with heterosexual issues.

Painters and sculptors as a rule do not describe human coupling with brush or chisel, and I believe that it is clear that the majority of our people accept and strongly support this unwritten ground rule. The physical relationship between consenting human beings is an extremely private matter, not a subject for public display. And when there are those artists of whatever medium who would transgress this basic and generally accepted social concept, they then must deal with society as represented by our courts of law.

But now I am dealing with what may be called obscenity, not government policy, although they are certainly related. Let me say that the definition of obscenity and the description of what is obscene are matters that every generation has had to deal with, and the debate is and will be never-ending. The definition has been and is bound to continue to change just as society itself changes. But one thing is, I think, very clear. We must be very cautious about becoming too restrictive as a society. We are a free people and we must remain so. Yet with freedom comes responsibility and recognition that to remain free we must accept

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limits. Mr. Justice Holmes pointed out that even the First Amendment has limits. In his opinion in *Schenck v. the United States*, he insisted that the First Amendment did not protect one who falsely cried "Fire!" in a crowded theater.

One of the most powerful statements supporting free speech and against censorship was written in 1644 by John Milton in his *Areopagitica*. He wrote: . . . as good almost to kill a man as kill a good book. Who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were in the eye.

I have personally lived by this concept, yet I have difficulty in believing that even Milton would fight to the death over a book recently in the news entitled quite accurately *Live Sex Acts*.

I have touched on the issues of creative freedom and obscenity generally. Now let me bring these issues down to

public funding generally and the endowment particularly.

First, in summary, let me repeat that the vast percentage of cultural projects fully or partially funded by the federal government have not only been non-controversial, but have enormously enriched the lives of Americans from coast to coast. The Congress, in funding the National Gallery, the Smithsonian Museums (happily about to be joined by the Museum of the American Indian), and by providing the arts indemnity, has permitted these mainly Washington-based institutions to receive and enrich the lives of the millions of Americans who visit their nation's capital every year. It has permitted the showcasing of the arts of Asia, Africa, and soon of the native American, thus enhancing the image and self-confidence of these ethnic groups which make up much of the mosaic which is our country today.

And, finally, in one of its finest hours, the Congress

established the two National Endowments, one for the Arts and one for the Humanities. Now there was provided the opportunity to leave Washington and touch people in their own communities all across the country. Individual artists have been helped, the raising of private funds for the arts has been greatly stimulated, little theaters and dance groups have been established, and museums invigorated. Most heartening is that a number of ethnically-based cultural groups or centers have been created or assisted. In short, there has been an explosion of arts activity in the United States in the last 20 years, and the National Endowment for the Arts deserves a major share of the credit.

However, in spite of an enormous amount of constructive activity, the endowment has made a mere handful of grants, the reaction to which has all but eclipsed the great good brought by the vast majority of grants. Frankly, in my view the subjects of these few grants, such as the exhibition of explicitly sadomasochistic photographs and the publication of a book entitled *Live Sex Acts*, have been understandably offensive in the extreme to the vast majority of Americans. Let me add that the right of artists to create such works is beyond question in our society; this controversy has nothing to do with artistic freedom. It has only to do with the expenditure of public funds in which the taxpayer has a very proper interest.

As you know, because of shrill attacks on the endowment by people with different but all-destructive agendas, the Congress, led by Congressman Yates, authorized a bipartisan commission charged with reviewing the grant-making procedures of the endowment.

This 12-person commission, chaired by two distinguished and thoughtful Americans, John Brademas and Leonard Garment, and made up of a broad spectrum of highly competent people, rendered a unanimous report in September 1990. In general the Commission called for a modest but important reform which called for greater scrutiny of proposed grants and avoidance of conflicts of interest on the part of panel members, and made clear the right and obligation not to slavishly follow the recommendation of each panel automatically, leaving genuine choices to the chairperson of the endowment following review by the National Council members. Most important, the Commission unanimously recommended

“against legislative changes to impose specific restrictions on the content of works of art supported by the endowment.”

SO WHERE ARE WE at present in the matter of government and the arts and, more particularly, the National Endowment? I might start this set of conclusions by suggesting that we follow the lines of Kipling’s poem “If”:

*. . . if you can keep your head while all about you
others are losing theirs . . .*

I thought of these lines as I read a recent exchange in the *Los Angeles Times*. Christopher Knight, art critic, in an article headlined “Cloud of Politics Spreads Ominously Over Arts Grants Process,” suggested that the nation’s artists are about to be brought under the heavy hand of some kind of government control because the National Council had turned down a handful of 128 panel recommendations for funding (including two sexually explicit projects). My old friend, Charlton Heston — artist himself, tireless worker on behalf of the arts, and one-time member of the National Council on the Arts — responded, referring to Knight’s “hyperventilated prose” and suggesting that a 1.7 percent rejection rate is certainly less than Draconian. Heston then makes a point worth listening to:

“If enough constituents of enough Congressmen feel their tax money is spent irresponsibly, Congress will deny the relevant funding; that’s the simple reality. The First Amendment guarantees wide protection of public expressions. It does not guarantee public money to pay for it.”

It is an indelible mark of our democracy that when public moneys are expended on a thing, the public will expect to have its say. Politically, it is as practical to suggest that only artists should have a say about federal arts funding as it is to suggest that only the Department of Defense should have a say about defense spending.

The federal government cannot be a totally disinterested patron of anything; the dollars it contributes to the arts, and everything else, have been extracted through the compulsion of civil law from the pockets of the people. The voices of the people and their government thus have their places in this process and this debate.

Alas, that debate has gone on too long and taken too

high a toll. In spite of the enormous good the endowment has brought millions of Americans, it is in trouble. It has just lost its head — a decent, intelligent, moderate man — to political expediency. A presidential candidate has called for its offices to be closed and fumigated. Some artists and art administrators — who deny the reality of accountability in the expenditure of public funds — continue to insist that artists be given public money to spend as only they see fit. Their attitude is that if the art offends people and is contrary to generally accepted and reasonable standards, so be it. People don’t have to look at or listen to it, they just have to pay for it. This proud posture crosses the line into arrogance and unreality, and plays into the hands of the demagogues of the right. Thus, discussions of the work of the endowment are concentrated on minor and spurious issues — but such is the technique of the demagogue.

So what are we, who admire the National Endowment and are profoundly grateful for its accomplishments, to do? I propose a compromise. Like most compromises, the only thing certain is that no one will like it at first. But like the best compromises, the logic of it may emerge over time. In essence, I propose that we strengthen our positions where we agree and moderate our positions where we disagree.

First, we must stop insisting on moral absolutes in a public, political environment which by its very nature cannot deal with moral absolutes on so subjective a subject. Let’s all calm down.

Second, we must not forget that there are too many out there who think the arts are not very important and are peripheral to their lives and interest. Therefore, those of us who understand the importance of the arts in enriching the spirit must work with ever greater vigor to personally support the arts and communicate

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our strong belief in these matters to our elected representatives. We can with quiet, polite, and persistent logic more than match reactionary bombast.

Third, I would ask my friends in the arts community to recognize that artistic freedom has never been at issue in this controversy. The expenditure of public funds has. Those who will condemn the endowment if it *doesn't* make a certain few grants must be careful lest they sound just like those who will condemn it if it *does*. We are reaching the dangerous but familiar point where the misguided on both sides of an issue have taken up what is, in essence, the same chant.

Fourth, and most important of all, the National Council and the chairman and his staff must not fear to exert their fiduciary responsibility, not only to support traditional art forms, but also to encourage experimentation at the cutting edge. But I urge them to reconsider the use of public funds to support art that is overwhelmingly offensive to the mores of a large majority of the citizenry, else such support bring the whole temple down. There is too much at stake to risk all on what would prove to be a Pyrrhic victory. It might be well to remember the parable wherein, at the end, the kingdom was lost for want of a horseshoe nail.

FINALLY, LET US AGREE that a strong, reasonable, and committed person must soon be appointed to succeed John Frohnmayer, and he or she must have *unreserved* support.

In conclusion, I do not believe it is asking too much of anyone, including those in the arts community, just to use good common sense. One thing I remember is that, with all of her other attributes, one thing Nancy Hanks possessed in abundance was common sense. ■

Franklin D. Murphy

Franklin D. Murphy enjoyed an extraordinarily diverse and productive career. He was director emeritus of the Times Mirror Company and chairman and CEO from 1968 to 1981. Prior to that, he was chancellor of UCLA from 1960 to 1968. Among his many philanthropic and civil activities, Murphy served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Gallery of Art, Chairman of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, Trustee of the Ahmanson Foundation and Trustee Emeritus at the J. Paul Getty Trust. He was a President and Chairman of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, where he continued to serve as a Trustee, and was a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Royal Society of Art. Franklin Murphy died on June 16, 1994.