

The original documents are located in Box 1, folder “9/4/74 – Tenth Anniversary of the National Endowment of the Arts Reception at the Kennedy Center (Draft only, no reading copy)” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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September 4, 1974

GF REMARKS FOR TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT ON THE ARTS RECEPTION AT THE ATRIUM OF
THE KENNEDY CENTER -- SEPTEMBER 4, 1974

Miss
~~Madame Chairwoman~~ Hanks, past, present, and future
members of the National Council on the Arts, and distinguished
guests.

I received my first baptism in the work of the National
Council of the Arts nearly five years ago. Frankly, until then I
had always opposed Federal funding for the arts.

But then the arts came into my life and the lives of my
constituents in Grand Rapids, through the National Endowment for
the Arts. A large mobile by the modernistic sculptor Alexander
Calder was placed in downtown Grand Rapids. It was begun in 1969
and put in place in 1970, with the help of the Endowment and private
donors.

The whole city became proud of it. Calder's work is now
a stimulating and welcome aspect of life in Grand Rapids.

In fact, I am now a convert. I believe that the Federal Government has an important role to play in the arts.

But Jim still not quite sure what Calder is trying to tell me.
I was happy that among my first appointments were 8 new members of the National Council on the Arts.

We are now celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Council on the Arts, the advisory group for the National Endowment for the Arts. The progress that has been made by the Council and the Endowment since 1964 has been extremely impressive. Support for the Endowment has always come from both sides of the aisle in the Congress as well as from Presidents Johnson and Nixon. It will continue to be so under my Administration. In fact, I might note that it was under the administration of my immediate predecessor that funding for the Endowment for the Arts became really substantial, going from some 7 million dollars in fiscal year 1969 to some 75 million dollars in fiscal 1975. ~~A Democratic President started the Endowment. Republican Presidents helped it flourish.~~
arts belong to no political party
I hope that kind of bipartisan support will continue.

What the Council and the Endowment have done with the appropriations has been even more impressive. They have reached out to the grassroots level in America to place the arts before people who never before had exposure to this aspect of our culture. In the ten years that have passed since this Council was founded, access to the arts has come to be a right of all Americans and not the privilege of a few.

It has been done in a uniquely American way. The Federal Government has been the junior partner in artistic enterprises. For every dollar of Federal funds, between four and five dollars of private money has been forthcoming. I hope the activities of the Council will be continued in that vein.

Tonight I pay my respects to the Council. My wife, who devoted herself to the arts in following a career in contemporary dance, until I interrupted her, joins me in saluting you. You can be sure that if I forget my duty to the arts, she will remind me.

I pay my respects especially to your ^{distinguished} Chairwoman,
Nancy Hanks. Before I got my current job, she and I worked
together in fighting for funding for the arts in Congress. I know
her capabilities. I know she was reappointed to a four-year term
last September. I look forward to working with her for at least
another ^{two and a half} ~~three~~ years.

Again, my congratulations to the members of the Council.
Thank you for your contributions to America.

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