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## Iannone, Carol: News Articles (1991): News Article 01

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Almost 30 acres of the residential plot can be classified as wetlands. Peter Acker, a Sharon-based at-

Acker said the sale made "good intermediate use the next several months."

# Guest scholar defends conservative views, 'great books'

By RAMESH SANTANAM  
Allied News Staff Writer

"The great books can help deliver us from the ideologies, politics, trendiness, pop-therapeutic group-oriented junk-food thinking of our time."

That's what literary critic Dr. Carol Iannone said last week while discussing, "The Great Books in Contemporary Education," at Grove City College.

Iannone was rejected 9-8 by the Senate Labor and Human Relations Committee earlier this year to serve on the National Council on the Humanities. The council advises the chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) on procedures and policies and makes recommendations on numerous federal grants awarded by the NEH to promote literature.

The White House nominates individuals to the council, but they must be confirmed by the Senate. Nominees often are recommended to the President by the NEH chair. Iannone came highly recommended by Lynne V. Cheney, NEH chair and wife of President Bush's defense secretary, Dick Cheney. With one exception, Democrats on the Senate committee



Ms. Iannone

claimed she was not qualified for the post. Republicans, however, argued that opposition was based solely on political ideology, not on scholarly grounds. They claimed Iannone, who

is known for her highly conservative views, was a victim of political correctness.

Two leading scholarly organizations, the Modern Language Association (MLA) and American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) opposed her nomination.

Iannone came under fire for her views on African-American and female writers like Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Gloria Naylor and Charles Johnson. In the March 1991 issue of Commentary, Dr. Iannone wrote that the Pulitzer, National Book and American Book awards given to Alice Walker's 'The Color Purple' "seemed less of a recognition of literary achievement than some official act of reparation," and, "A group of black writers demanded and obtained the Pulitzer Prize for Toni Morrison's 'Beloved'."

These views caused Joel Conarroe, president of the Guggenheim Foundation to write to Ms. Cheney saying, Iannone's "condescending attitude toward brilliant writers...reveals the closed mind of a critic whose literary taste is at best questionable."

In her Grove City College lecture, Iannone defined "great books" as those "that have stood the test of time,

accumulated interested commentary and seem to have a fruitful and generative effect on readers."

She said private conscience is an essential part of American life but "the burden of private conscience is sometimes too great, so external ideologies are fashioned to support or supplant it." Ideologies such as feminism, sexism, racism and specicism "encourage us to see ourselves as victims, robbing us of our essential selves."

Iannone said the problems we face today were faced by the great figures Dante, Socrates, Moses, Hamlet and Jane Austen. The recent Thomas confirmation hearings, for example, "can be seen as an excruciating display of the clash between the public and private self."

The problem with sexual harassment, she said, is "feminists seem to feel the woman should take no responsibility - that she can be excused if she doesn't take steps to stop it, if she doesn't come forward, if she doesn't leave her job. That's the nature of what's happening." She agreed this may be the best one can do in such a situation, but "we should never lose sight of the fact that our true moral selves can only emerge as we face the

challenges of our life, however unpleasant, with all the courage we can muster."

Iannone said the criteria for judging contemporary literature should be one of "excellence and literary merit, rather than representation. It's a bad day for the universal villain - the white western Eurocentric heterosexual male," she said. Some new, good works can be taught, she said, but added that the "mistake is to include them only as representational."

After years of "so called value-free education, we have been hearing about the return of values to education...often called upon only in reaction to some public scandal," she said. "But when it comes to ordinary, everyday life, suddenly it seems a host of ideologies... from feminism, racism, colonialism (and) imperialism to the therapeutic ideologies such as co-dependency, rush in to release the individual from real personal responsibility."

The limits of these ideologies are becoming apparent, she said. But, she warned, "the multicultural view will make it harder to teach tragedy and things will fragment further before getting better."

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