

1991

Iannone, Carol: News Articles (1991): News Article 44

Stephan Salisbury

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_I_36

Recommended Citation

Salisbury, Stephan, "Iannone, Carol: News Articles (1991): News Article 44" (1991). *Iannone, Carol: News Articles (1991)*. Paper 44.
http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_I_36/44

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Education: National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, Subject Files I (1973-1996) at DigitalCommons@URI. It has been accepted for inclusion in Iannone, Carol: News Articles (1991) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@etal.uri.edu.

Senate panel rejects humanities board nominee

By Stephan Salisbury
Inquirer Staff Writer

For the first time in memory, the Senate has spurned a presidential nomination to the largest advisory panel of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

In a 9-8 vote yesterday, the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee rejected the appointment of Carol Iannone, a professor in the Gallatin Division of New York University, to the 26-member National Council on the Humanities.

The largely partisan vote climaxed a bitter and lengthy controversy pitting Lynne V. Cheney, head of the endowment, against many of the nation's largest scholarly groups, led by the 29,000-member Modern Language Association (MLA).

The MLA contended that Iannone, whose published writing consists

largely of polemical book reviews for conservative journals, had not achieved a level of scholarly distinction that would warrant appointment to the council. Cheney, who fought hard for the nominee, dismissed the MLA objections as elitist, and suggested that the group of language and literature professors actually opposed Iannone's conservative political views.

The controversy became increasingly shrill, with conservative columnists and Bush-administration allies charging the MLA with attempting to impose "politically correct" views on the council. Several Senate sources said they believed the vitriolic attacks on the MLA and the behind-the-scenes hard-ball politicking ultimately worked against Iannone. In the end, despite many telephone calls, White House breakfasts,

courtesy calls and the like, Jeff Bingaman (D., N.M.) was the only Democrat to join the committee's seven Republicans in support of the nominee yesterday.

Iannone did not return telephone inquiries yesterday.

In a statement following the vote, Cheney said Iannone's nomination "has raised vital First Amendment issues."

"This vote will be seen as sanctioning limits on free expression," Cheney said. "That should be of concern to all Americans, both on and off the campuses."

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D., Mass.), committee chairman, said that "ideology is not the issue."

"No one is imposing political correctness on the council," Kennedy said. "No amount of strident rhetoric can make up for the nominee's lack

of qualifications."

Phyllis Franklin, MLA executive director, said she felt "relieved and grateful to members of the committee who really ... listened to our criticisms."

Franklin dismissed the idea that Iannone's politics were at issue, noting that the MLA had not objected to many other conservative council nominees, such as Peter Shaw, a humanities professor at St. Peter's College in Jersey City, N.J.

"We did not object because Peter Shaw had academic credentials. Carol Iannone does not," Franklin said.

She said that the terms of several academic members of the council will expire in 1992. In the MLA's view, she said, it was important to draw the line on "scholarly qualifications" this year. "Otherwise, we

would be unable to object ... next year," she said.

Franklin also noted that the MLA did not object to two other nominees to the council, both conservatives, who were approved yesterday without opposition. Those nominees were Harvey C. Mansfield, a professor of government at Harvard, and Michael J. Malbin, a professor of political science at the State University of New York-Albany and a former speechwriter for Defense Secretary Dick Cheney. Lynne Cheney's husband, Franklin said Malbin and Mansfield had bona fide scholarly qualifications.

Sen. Claiborne Pell (D., R.I.), one of those voting against Iannone, also expressed dismay at "the mediocrity of some recent" council appointments.