

world" waiting on tables to stay alive, towns whose only building that is not air conditioned is the library—is partly a result of the government's laissez-faire attitude toward what is not a commercial enterprise. The Ford Foundation's vice president McNeil Lowry has noted that artistic standards have become "generalized and popularized" when subjected to the laws of the marketplace.

The argument that art and the state don't mix has become nearly obsolete in face of the fact that private sources are inadequate to supply the financial support needed by the arts to experiment and flourish. Far from preempting the fields in which it operates, NFAH grants serve as magnets to attract other funds, and, for every federal dollar spent, well over \$3 in outside money has been generated. As Keeney says, "There's nothing like money to attract money." The respectability conferred by government endorsement of a program is also attractive. One witness at congressional hearings claimed that corporation boards whose philanthropic contributions had been limited to the "kids and dogs" category were becoming emboldened to dip into cultural activities.

Careful Selection

The NFAH procedure for selecting projects for funding was meticulously designed to avoid any suggestion of government manipulation. Once a program is designated by an endowment's council, project applications are invited. The staff forwards feasible-looking applications to selected specialists and to appropriate members of large, multidisciplinary "peer panels" (whose names are kept confidential to spare them harassment) for criticism and recommendations. The applications then undergo exhaustive screening by the council, which meets privately four times a year. The chairman must approve the final selections. The responsibility for grant selection is diffused by the requirement that the entire council must vote on every sum over \$10,000.

Congress has found little cause for complaint in the Foundation's mode of operation. One exception was an uproar in the House occasioned by certain colorful-sounding projects, most notably a study of 19th century comic strips. Several members chose the occasion to call for a termination of "handouts" to individuals under the arts program, an alarming prospect since grants to individual artists go to the core of cre-

ative activity. Some observers think that the problem was simply one of public relations—if the comic strips had been called "visual satire," for instance, the project would have met with no objections.

On the whole, staffs and councils feel that Congress leans over backward to avoid imposing its preferences. Still, they look forward to being granted a permanent lease on life (they were granted a 3-year extension this year). "We're so small that if Congress makes any cuts they could kill us," said one arts council member. "I would like us to get bigger and feel we were a permanent part of the scene." The size of the budget leaves little leeway for mistakes, and staff members feel strongly that they must have enough freedom to take risks. "Congress jumped down our throats for including one example of concrete poetry—poetry which relies on visual effect—in a literary anthology [a one-word poem: *Light*]," said one. "If a scientist does 100 experiments and succeeds the 101st time he's called a success—but if an artist goofs after 100 successes he's judged by the failure." The comparison, while overdrawn, reflects the defensive stance humanists have assumed in recent decades in response to uncritical public support of science and technology.

The NFAH, for all its hundreds of programs, remains in the pilot stage. Next year will be the first in which its beneficence outstrips that of the Ford Foundation's contributions to arts and humanities, which, this year, amounts to about \$20 million. Witnesses at this spring's hearings estimated that some \$150 million a year per endowment would be required to make a real dent in the country's cultural scene.

But the ball is rolling. The Foundation has always had a solid base of bipartisan support in Congress, and insiders believe the agency has successfully kept its nose above governmental politics. Congressional opposition, almost entirely limited to the House, has dwindled to some ritualistic carping—and Senator Strom Thurmond (D-S.C.), who 5 years ago labeled the whole idea unconstitutional, was recently to be found introducing one of the witnesses at the 1970 hearings. Press coverage is favorable, particularly for the more visible activities of the arts endowment.

Some observers, Keeney among them, think that ultimately the interests of both humanists and scientists would be

best served if NFAH and NSF were merged into a single National Foundation for the advancement of research, education, and the arts. (Representative Emilio Daddario's subcommittee recommended a similar body in the form of a National Institute of Research and Advanced Studies.) Such a body would be a public symbol of the interrelationship of all branches of knowledge and could more effectively support programs in which the respective purposes of scientists and humanists merge. Most arts people, however, would strongly resist such a combination since they feel their identity and objectives would be drowned in a large, multi-purpose organization. A more fruitful alliance, they suggest, might be with the cultural exchange programs of the State Department.

The marriage of convenience, as many regard it, between the arts and humanities may one day be dissolved in a government reshuffle. But right now the Foundation is young and happy, and many would agree with a staff member who calls it "the most exciting thing in government." As a federal agency devoted to spreading truth and beauty rather than combating misery and evil, the Foundation is rare indeed. And it will have further claim to distinction if its spirited and individualistic approach to its job can survive bureaucratic maturity.

—CONSTANCE HOLDEN

(This concludes a two-part series.)

RECENT DEATHS

C. Ralph Arthur, 53; president, Ferrum Junior College; 13 October.

Anna Bartsch-Dunne, 93; former professor of histology and experimental physiology, Howard University; 13 October.

Myron L. Begeman, 77; professor emeritus of mechanical engineering, University of Texas; 25 October.

Edward B. Blackman, 53; professor of humanities and education, Michigan State University; 15 October.

Raymond B. Blakney, 74; former president, Olivet College; 24 October.

Dan F. Bradley, 41; professor of polymer chemistry, Polytechnic Institute; 31 October.

Joseph N. Spencer, 62; associate professor of pharmacology, University of South Dakota School of Medicine; 30 September.