

**Opening Remarks – Chairman Dicks**  
**Arts Panel, March 13, 2007**

I want to thank our guests for joining us this morning. We have a distinguished panel and a number of important guests. I will not list them all, but I do want to recognize legendary actress Jane Powell, who is here with her husband Dickie Moore. We are very appreciative that she has made the effort to be with us to lend her support for the National Endowment for the Arts. I also want to thank Americans for the Arts for helping organize today's panel. At the appropriate point, I will ask their president, Rob Lynch, to introduce the panel and then we will call them each up to testify individually.

If hearings had names, today's session might be called the first Sidney Yates Memorial Arts Advocacy Hearing. Sid, as most of you know, was the last Democratic Chairman of the Interior Subcommittee and a tireless advocate for both the humanities and for the arts. Winner of a Medal of Freedom for his support of the arts, Sid was there to advocate for establishment of the NEA and the NEH in 1966. During those early years he often commented that he wanted Washington to be the artistic as well as the political capital of the United States.

More important, perhaps, Sid was also there as the white knight for the endowments in the mid 1990's, when funding was in doubt. Sid remained the tireless advocate during what many have called the culture wars. He truly believed in the arts as an engine of creativity and innovation both for the individual and of a society. I share these views and look forward during the years when I serve as Chairman to following in Sid's footsteps as an advocate for our cultural agencies.

It is important, as we begin the debate on the 2008 NEA budget, however, to note that today's NEA has been transformed since Sid's days as Chairman of this Subcommittee. Two gifted Chairmen have reinvigorated the NEA into an agency with broader support and with outreach efforts which reach every corner of America. Chairman Bill Ivey, appointed by Bill Clinton, negotiated and then implemented bi-partisan reforms in NEA's grant structure to ensure that funds go to activities for which public funding is appropriate. Dana Gioia, the current Chairman, then energized the agency with many new programs and a commitment to reach beyond the culture centers of our major cities. Last year every Congressional district received

NEA support through innovative programs such as Jazz Masters, represented by Mr. Wynton Marsalis today.

Each of us will find different reasons to support the arts. Some will describe their support in terms of the inherent joy of the arts as a personally enriching experience. When I listen to great music like Mr. Marsalis' trumpet solos or watch Marlon Brando's performance of "On the Waterfront" on late-night TV, I certainly feel this way. Others support the arts as engines of job development and economic growth. I suspect the mayors and CEO's who will speak this morning will provide hard evidence of these advantages in their testimony.

While I think it is important to recognize the many reasons Americans support funding for the arts, it is equally important as we begin this debate to emphasize that , except for a few members of the flat earth society, there is little opposition to this funding. The culture wars are over. For each of the last seven years -- with the help of many people in this room -- a bipartisan majority of the House has voted to increase funding for the NEA and the NEH.

In closing I want to read a quote attributed to actor Richard Dreyfuss at the Grammy awards ceremony a few years ago. I believe this quote sets an appropriate tone for today's testimony:

"Perhaps we've all misunderstood the reason we learn music, and all the arts, in the first place...It is that for hundreds of years it has been known that teaching the arts, along with history and math and biology, helps to create the well rounded mind that western civilization, and America, have been grounded on. America's greatest achievements - in science, in business, in popular culture, would simply not be attainable without an education that encourages achievement in all fields. It is from that creativity and imagination that the solutions to our political and social problems will come. We need that well rounded mind now. Without it, we simply make more difficult the problems we face."

I believe Mr. Dreyfus is right and my charge to our witnesses is to make the case for more robust funding for the NEA for 2008. Our job then on this Committee will be to try to find the money so these great programs can reach more communities with a richer variety of programs.