

Chairman's Statement

Commitment to Communities

The year 2000 was an important one for the National Endowment for the Arts: it marked the 35th anniversary of the NEA, as well as the beginning of a new millennium. It is appropriate, then, to examine not only the Endowment's activities over the past fiscal year—as this Annual Report documents—but how the NEA continues to forward its mission: fostering creativity, strengthening communities through the arts, promoting arts education, and nurturing the nation's cultural heritage.

The legacy of the NEA over the last 35 years is impressive and lasting. In the early 1960s, there were fewer than ten state arts agencies. Today every state, the District of Columbia and the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa and the Virgin Islands have arts agencies, in addition to the seven regional arts organizations. To increase access to the arts for all Americans through support for artists and arts organizations, 40 percent of NEA funds—more than \$33 million—were allocated to these state and regional arts agencies in FY 2000. In addition, we have seen a more-than-tenfold increase in the number of cultural nonprofit organizations over the last three decades, leading to more arts activities and programs throughout the country. As the number of arts agencies and organizations has grown, so has the size of arts audiences. For example, in 1965 roughly one million people bought tickets for dance performances, mostly in New York City; by the late 1990s, more than 35 million people at-

tended dance programs across the nation. This overwhelming increase in audiences for the arts is yet another indication of the importance of art in American life.

It is through our grantmaking function that we provide the most direct assistance to America's communities. Total appropriated funds for FY 2000 were \$97,627,600, with more than 1,900 grants awarded in the areas of Grants to Organizations, Individual Fellowships, Partnership Agreements, and Leadership Initiatives, totaling \$83,482,942. Grantees must match each grant dollar with a dollar from other sources, which means that the NEA's support helps leverage other arts funding, both public and private.

Two grant programs begun in 2000 illustrate the NEA's commitment to communities. The New Public Works initiative provided nearly \$500,000 to help fund national design competitions for a range of public projects from schools to housing to parks. The initiative will make available high-quality design for these community facilities. The Creative Links pilot program provided \$1,435,000 to support partnerships between arts organizations and other community groups for artists' residencies in after-school or summer programs for youth. Artists act as mentors as well as teachers and instill valuable life skills in the students, often from low-income communities, in addition to increased knowledge of and ability in the arts.

Fostering Arts Education

Arts education, as the Creative Links program demonstrates, is one of the NEA's primary focuses. In addition to granting millions of dollars each year to support arts education programs, the NEA also partners with other federal agencies on arts education initiatives, such as those with the U.S. Department of Education on media literacy, and with federal advisory committees, such as the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities on the Coming Up Taller awards.

In FY 2000, a collaboration linking the NEA and the U.S. Department of Education awarded nearly \$1 million in grants to improve media literacy in young people. The grants were awarded to school districts to help students better understand and interpret the artistic content of electronic media images, especially those containing violence, and to use the media arts to communicate their ideas creatively.

For the third year, the NEA, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities presented the Coming Up Taller awards, honoring excellence in after-school, weekend, and summer arts and humanities programs for children. These awards focus national attention on programs that are making a real difference in children's lives, such as the People's Light & Theatre Company of Malvern, Pennsylvania, which brings together professional theater artists and children from impoverished areas to use the theater arts for self-expression.

These are just two examples of the many arts education activities the NEA undertakes. Additional detailed examples are found in this report under Grants to Organizations in Education, the Creative Links program, and the Arts Education Partnership.



From left to right: Chairman Bill Ivey with former chairs Jane Alexander, John Frohnmayer, Livingston Biddle, and Frank Hodsoll at the NEA Forum on America's Creative Legacy at Harvard University. (Photo by Mark Morelli)

Looking at 2000...

In 2000, the NEA celebrated its 35th anniversary, and to highlight some of the Endowment's significant achievements we published *A Legacy of Leadership: Investing in America's Living Cultural Heritage since 1965*. The publication features more than fifty NEA projects that have made a lasting difference to communities, individuals, and organizations over the last 35 years. Although they constitute a small sampling of the important projects NEA has funded over the years, these stories speak to the lasting value of a modest federal investment in America's cultural life.

As part of our anniversary celebration, a Harvard University NEA Forum on America's Creative Legacy examined the state of the arts in America today, and the NEA's role in maintaining and building the arts in our communities. Joining me in discussing these important issues were the last four chairs of the NEA: Jane Alexander, John Frohnmayer, Frank Hodsoll, and Livingston Biddle.

The NEA celebrated the leap into the new millennium with the continuation of its National Millennium Projects, supporting activities in all 50 states and involving local communities in the creation and preservation of artistic works. For example, the NEA worked with the American Library Association on "LIVE at the Library 2000: Building Cultural Communities," which featured readings and performances by artists and writers at libraries nationwide. The project showcased libraries as cultural resources that, through the interaction of artists and audience, bring communities together. In a similar vein, the Favorite Poem Project, a National Millennium



Marcus Green performs in the final rehearsals of *Three Animal Kings* as part of the People's Light & Theatre Company's program that won a 2000 Coming Up Taller award. (Photo by Mark Garvin)

Project in partnership with Boston University, the Library of Congress, and the New England Foundation for the Arts, celebrated poetry and the important place it holds in the lives of Americans. The project assembled an audio and video archive of hundreds of Americans from all walks of life reading their favorite poems. A premiere public screening of the video recordings was held at the Library of Congress in March 2000. These are just two examples of the special projects that touched American lives as we celebrated the beginning of a new century.

...And Beyond

As we move into the 21st century, technology becomes more and more important to our programs. To expand the resources available on our Web site, the NEA added a new feature, Cultural Funding: Federal Opportunities. This online guide helps nonprofit arts organizations locate potential federal support for cultural programs by identifying more than 100 federal programs and related project examples. By engaging the power of the Internet, we help the arts community better access the resources necessary to develop quality arts activities.

Today, the NEA enjoys bipartisan Congressional support, and again we are seeing the Endowment's budget grow. In this time of transition, the future holds many exciting opportunities. One of the major initiatives the NEA is undertaking is Challenge America, an innovative initiative designed to strengthen America's communities through the unique power of the arts. Challenge America will carry forward both the Creative Links program described earlier and the ArtsREACH program that ended in 2000, a three-year pilot program targeting the 20 states most underrepresented among the NEA's direct grantees. In its first year, Challenge America will focus on arts education, access to the arts, and community development projects. Congress appropriated \$7 mil-

lion in FY 2001 to begin the program.

Challenge America enables the NEA to expand its important work fostering the arts throughout the nation, working with partners both large and small, and serving citizens through the arts. To advance our national conversation about the importance of living cultural heritage to our families and communities, I recently proposed a Cultural Bill of Rights. The rights of all Americans include:

Heritage. The right to fully explore America's artistic traditions that define us as families, communities, ethnicities, and regions.

A Creative Life. The right to learn the processes and traditions of art, and the right to create art.

Artists and Their Work. The right to engage the work and knowledge of a healthy community of creative artists.

Performances, Exhibitions, and Programs. The right to be able to choose among a broad range of experiences and services provided by a well-supported community of cultural organizations.

Art and Diplomacy. The right to have the rich diversity of our nation's creative life made available to those outside of the United States.

Understanding Quality. The right to engage and share in art that embodies overarching values and ideas that have lasted through the centuries.

As we move into a new millennium, the NEA is committed to citizen service, and to bringing the benefits of engagement in art, creativity, and America's living cultural heritage to communities and families throughout the nation. The activities described in this report demonstrate the NEA's commitment to these goals.

Bill Ivey
Chairman