President Authorizes SI to Seek Funds for Support Facility

President Ford signed legislation September 19 authorizing the Smithsonian Institution to request an appropriation for planning a museum support facility to be built adjacent to the present SI installation at Suitland, Maryland.

The bill, passed by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, authorizes the Regents to prepare plans for a museum support facility "to aid in (1) the care, curation, conservation, deposit, preparation, and study of the national collections of scientific, historic, and artistic objects, specimens and artifacts; (2) the related documentation of such collections; and (3) the training of museum conservators."

The bill directs that the facility shall be located on federally owned land within the Washington metropolitan area and any federal agency to transfer land under its jurisdiction to the Institution for such purposes without reimbursement. The bill also authorized the Smithsonian to request an appropriation to proceed with the plans.

The Institute is proposing in its Fiscal Year 1977 budget request to seek funds for planning the new facility.

In testimony before the House Subcommittee on Library and Memorials, Secretary Ripley explained that the support facility will house expanding national collections and museum support and maintenance services, and will permit greater utilization of the museum buildings on the Mall for public exhibitions to serve increasing numbers of visitors.

The Secretary pointed out that at the request of Congress for justification for many years has accepted responsibility for the development, preservation, study, exhibition, and interpretation of the national collections.

As more of the natural world is destroyed, as civilizations change, and as habitable space decreases, museums such as the Smithsonian's have increasing responsibilities for preserving the material documentation of our history. Mr. Ripley said: "As the nation grows and changes, the Smithsonian will continue to expand. . . ."

"Through acquisitions are rapidly screened, the rate of increase of the national collections over the past two decades has averaged about one million objects and specimens a year. The rate of increase is in many respects beyond the Institution's control. . . . This selective growth of collections is an essential part of the Smithsonian's mission to increase and diffuse knowledge. Like books in a library, the specimens, objects, and artifacts in the collections grow in significance."

In testifying before the House Appropriations Committee on the Institution's Fiscal Year 1977 budget request, Dr. Ripley also testified that the Institution's budget request included funds to rent space initially and to expand its Facility Planning program to both plan and purchase the new facility. The Institution currently operates from the 10-story Smithson Tower in the Washington metropolitan area.

The bill also is designed to permit the Institution to keep the new facility open to the public, to serve as a center for research by its scientists and others, to enable it to continue to accept responsibility for the national collections, and to provide an environment in which collections of scientific, historic, and artistic objects, specimens and artifacts can be stored in an environment that will help preserve them.

Mrs. Owen Heads Women's Committee

Mrs. Dudley Owen has been elected as the new chairman of the Women's Committee of the Smithsonian Institution.

Mrs. Owen was born in Chicago and received her B.A. degree from Smith College. Since moving to the Washington area, Mrs. Owen has donated much of her time to community activities. Most recently she was co-founder and first president of FHES (The Hospitality and Information Service for Diplomatic Residents) and a trustee of MHI (Meridian House International). Mrs. Owen currently serves on the Children's Hospital Ladies Board and Board of Visiting Nurses Association as well as the D.C. Citizens for Better Public Education, and a member of the Women's National Democratic Club.

The Women's Committee, formed in 1965, advances the interests of the Smithsonian Institution by promoting public participation in Associates activities. The 51 members of the Committee donate their services to numerous projects each year. For the past several years proceeds from the annual Christmas Dance have been used for Resident Associates scholarships to classes for city children as well as for museum educational services. During the past year the Committee supported the Arsenal Zoo and the Smithsonian Collection of Insect Zoology.

Funds for 1976 exhibit - T. Ames Wheeler, Smithsonian Treasurer, on September 3 presented a check for $5,000 to Paul Perrot, Assistant Secretary for Museum Programs, to be used for the support of the National Air and Space Museum's first annual Traveling Exhibition Service. At the presentation were (from left) Anne Gosssett, SITES Program Officer; Margaret Perrot, Mrs. Wheeler; Paul Perrot; Chairman of the Board of Governors of the National Air and Space Museum, and Mrs. Dan Sawyer, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Air and Space Museum. Dr. Wheeler presented the funds to the National Air and Space Museum for the development of its first annual traveling exhibition.
Secretary Receives French Honor

Secretary S. Dillon Ripley was presented the "Monsieur d'Officier-des-Arts et des Lettres" (medal of an officer in the National Order of Arts and Letters) by French Ambassadress Jacques Koechau-Morizet in a ceremony October 7 at the French embassy (shown above).

"By admitting you into this prestigious order which was created to honor individuals who achieve outstanding accomplishments in the intellectual field, the French Government has chosen to recognize the illustrious talents of the eighth Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution," the ambassadress said.

"These talents you started demonstrating very early: higher education in two of the most famous universities in the United States, Yale and Harvard, and then you became a member of the Yale faculty during 18 years. Afterwards, you served as director of Yale University's Peabody Museum of Natural History for four years and finally you were designated to be Leonard Carmichael's successor as the Head of the Smithsonian.

"Internationally well-known as a biologist, an ecologist and even more as an ornithologist — to whom the birds of the Far East have no more secrets — you have been on the staff of a large number of scientific institutions and you are associated with numerous distinguished honorary and professional groups here and overseas.

"Since taking office at the Smithsonian, this large empire which includes both a leading research center and a vast museum complex, your watchword has been 'Increase and Diffusion.' On one hand, emphasis has been placed by you on scholarships and research in accordance with your concept of the Smithsonian as an open university. At the same time, your determination that museums should serve a wide public, in imaginative ways has provided liest exhibits and a greatly expanded range of collections. A museum is but a unit as the Smithsonian Associates with its Smithsonian magazine and the Division of Performing Arts.

"And so, within a decade, you gave evidence that your gifts as a manager and an animator were just as outstanding as those you demonstrated as a scholar and a professor. And no doubt that you can be very satisfied thinking that the institutions within the Smithsonian attract now more than 25 million visitors a year to their Washington facilities with speaking of the diastional millions of museum-goers throughout the Nation with your Traveling Exhibition Service.

"Mr. Secretary, it is indeed a great pleasure for the Secretary General to present you a new honor that you deserve so well. I would like you to consider it as a token of our admiration as well as the expression of the great concern we have for Franco-American cooperation in cultural affairs."

Washington Star-Newspaper photos by Walter Davis

Dr. Buechner, Sc Ecologist, Dies

Dr. Helmut K. Buechner, Senior Scientist at the Smithsonian's National Zoological Park, died October 7.

Before assuming the post of Senior Scientist, Dr. Buechner was head of the Office of Ecology at the Smithsonian Institution. Under his guidance the Smithsonian sponsored many illustrious talents of the eight Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution," the ambassadress said.

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A native of Scotia, New York, Dr. Buechner was a magna cum laude graduate of New York State University. He received an M.S. degree from Texas A&M University and Ph.D. from Oklahoma State University.

He served in the U.S. Air Force from October 1942 to July 1945 and was awarded the Air Medal with five oak leaf clusters and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Before coming to the Smithsonian, Dr. Buechner taught and conducted research at the University of California, Berkeley, and the numerous learned societies, he was especially active in the American Society of Ecologists and the Wildlife Society.

Dr. Buechner retired from the Smithsonian in August 1973 as a Senior Scientist.

Mrs. Buechner has requested that Dr. Buechner's research fund, to be now known as the Helmut K. Buechner Memorial Fund, be used to State University. A monument, research on large mammals at the National Zoological Park. The fund was established from revenues received for his film on the Uganda kob. Contributions will be received by the Office of the Director, National Zoological Park, Washington, D.C. 20090.

SITES Publication Wins Award

A set of three publications produced by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration to commemorate the "International Salute to the States" program has been selected a winner by the American Institute of Graphic Arts in its competition.

The SITES publication, designed by Ashton-Warbright, Inc., was one of 182 pieces selected from more than 10,000 entries.

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Japanese Emperor, Empress Visit Smithsonian

Emperor Hirohito of Japan was welcomed October 2 to the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History by Secretary Ripley (above) and Dr. Porter Kier, Museum Director. While the Emperor was examining marine specimens in the NMNH collections, the Empress was touring the Freer Gallery of Art. The royal couple returned to the Smithsonian the evening of October 3 when the SI Building was the scene of a state dinner.

Empress Nagako was escorted on a tour of the Freer Gallery by Dr. Harold P. Stern, Gallery Director, and Mrs. Mary Ripley, wife of the Secretary. The Empress had asked to see certain items in the Freer collection of Japanese works, as well as Whistler's works.

Secretary and Mrs. Ripley and the Emperor and Empress at the entrance to the SI Building.

The Emperor greeted NMNH staff members inside the building, including James F. Mello, Assistant Director of the Museum (right) and Dr. Frederick M. Bayer, research curator in charge of the NMNH confederate collections. Secretary Ripley and Dr. Porter M. Kier, NMNH Director, are in background.

Secretary Ripley and Dr. Kier conferred with members of the Emperor's staff in the Director's office as the Emperor was engaged in laboratory studies.

The Emperor and Empress and President and Mrs. Ford welcomed guests in a receiving line in the Great Hall of the Smithsonian Institution Building prior to the state dinner held in the SI Commons. Forty Japanese art treasures from the imperial collections, including five paintings by the Empress, were on view in the Great Hall.

The Emperor addresses the guests from the head table.
A dinner honoring the Hirshhorn Board of Trustees and Mr. and Mrs. Joseph H. Hirshhorn was held in the Smithsonian Institution Building after the September 30 meeting of the Smithsonian Board of Regents. In commemoration of the first anniversary of the opening of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Mr. Ripley presented to Mr. Hirshhorn a book containing letters from visitors to the Hirshhorn Museum during its first year of operation. Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller and other guests including many of the Regents later toured the Museum with Mr. and Mrs. Hirshhorn and Abram Lerner, Director.

The Hirshhorn: As Seen by Media Critics

The Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden has been the subject of many favorable comments in the nation's media since its opening last October. Following is a sampling of some of the comments from San Francisco, Milwaukee, Baltimore, Los Angeles and New York City as well as "home-town" reviews.

San Francisco Chronicle
By Terrence O'Flaherty, March 22, 1975
"All six thousand of them, I think, has no museum I have ever seen equals it for style and comfort. Even the children who visit here are subdu ed by the surroundings."

Washington Star-News
By Benjamin Forgey, September 28, 1974
"The Hirshhorn: A Connoisseur of Great Art" (Extracted)
"The advent of this exhibition is an arresting assortment of some 900 works selected by Hirshhorn Director Abram Lerner to indicate the nature and scope of one collection in a manner that would delight and inform. The show abundantly delights and informs, albeit sometimes in curious ways.

The New Yorker
By Harold Rosenberg, November 4, 1974
"The Art World" (Extracted)
"The Hirshhor n, a most recent gift to the Nation, has no museum of twentieth-century American painting and sculpture comparable, say, to the museum of modern Italian art in Rome. Gaps granted, the Hirshhorn Collection comes close to supplying this lack; it does all the more successfully because of the unexpected and unorthodoxy of many of its inclinations."

Minneapolis Journal
By James Auer, December 29, 1974
"Hirshhorn: New Jewel in Capital's Crown" (Extracted)
"The Hirshhorn is an 'instant major museum' in which, thanks to the 'inspired greed' of one energetic enthusiast, now 75, virtually all major movements in European and American art over the past 125 years can be traced and studied. It is a collection whose potential, both as an educational tool and a means of inspiring delight among viewers, is only now beginning to be realized." (Extracted)

Los Angeles Times
By Henry J. Seldis, October 6, 1974
"The Hirshhorn Museum: Capital Paints Catch-Up" (Extracted)
"With this week's opening of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Nation's capital has caught up to the country's major art centers. Going back nearly 100 years and encompassing almost every aspect of contemporary American and European art, the 900 works shown in the inaugural exhibition are a tribute not only to Joseph Hirshhorn's lifelong love of art and his creators but also to those who made possible the realization of this magnificent gift to the Nation."

The inaugural exhibition within Bendorf's controversial building opens with some truly outstanding works of the 19th century, including some of the most moving paintings of the museum's unmatched assemblage of paintings and sculptures of Thomas Eakins."

"The show is presented with an incredibly subtle installation of sculpture, ranging from the academic work of 19th century artist Jean Baptiste Carpeaux to pieces by Modigliani and Brancusi."

Wall Street Journal
By Benjamin Stein, October 4, 1974
(Extracted)
"Assessing the Hirshhorn Museum on the Eve of Its Opening" (Extracted)
"Despite the flaws in its collections, and they appear to be significant, the Hirshhorn's holdings are so rich, so eclectic and inclusive, that it ranks, at least in one of the few museums capable of tracing the mainstreams, and the tributaries, of the art of the past century."

"Its construction on the Mall, rather than in a studio, Los Angeles or Florence, and its prominent location, within easy reach of the National Gallery of Art, the Corcoran, the Phillips, the National海洋ional, the National Gallery of Fine Arts and the Library of Congress, makes it one of the most accessible institutions essential to the study of modern art."

"The installation of the first exhibition in the Hirshhorn Museum, both in the painting galleries and in the two inner rings of galleries given over exclusively to sculpture, is likewise superb."

"Mr. Hirshhorn's magnificent gift to the nation is unlikely to be equaled in our lifetime. He deserves, as a great conservator and benefactor, the thanks of the public and the institutions he aided - and the opportunity - with a rare combination of intelligence and vision. Bravo!"

"The Hirshhorn Museum: Capital's Crown" (Extracted)

The Washington Post
By Charles O'Brien, October 5, 1974
"The Hirshhorn Museum has become a mass popular attraction here in the Nation's Capital, defying all expectations for a museum of contemporary art."

"And if the building itself is much better than most of what's already on the Mall: it's an absolute haven in an enormous grid that seems designed to reduce people to the measure of ants; the sculpture garden in particular where so much care has been taken to keep the scale intimate."

The New York Times
By Hilton Kramer, October 2, 1974
"A Collection That Puts Museum in the Select Class" (Extracts)
"The new building, right on the Mall about midway between the Capitol and the Washington Monument, is imposing, even formidable, and the paintings and sculpture on display and stacked away in the cavernous store rooms - about 6,000 works in all - constitute one of the most impressive private collections of art ever to make public."

Evening Sun (Baltimore)
By Leslie Freedman, May 1, 1975
"A Bagful of 'Inspired Greed' " (Extracted)
"Although there are many ways to judge a new building, it has always seemed to me that the most important criterion is its ability to function as intended. Based on such criteria, the Hirshhorn is a success. It is a beautiful museum, and the architecture which houses it deserves acclaim."