Rep. Rooney Named To Board of Regents

By Tom Harney

Congressman John J. Rooney (D-N.Y.) has been named a Regent of the Smithsonian.

The appointment by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, John W. McCormack, puts on the 14-man governing body of the Smithsonian that occupies a seat with the death of Rep. Michael J. Kirwan.

Rep. Rooney, of Brooklyn, is an attorney who has been in the House from the 78th through 91st Congresses, the ranking Democrat on the House Committee on Appropriations and is chairman of its Subcommittee on Justice, Commerce, the Judiciary and Related Agencies.

Rep. Rooney grew up in the neighborhood he now represents, New York's 4th Congressional District, which encompasses a large portion of Brooklyn. He attended St. Francis College from 1930 to 1932 and then took a law degree, history and the University. To help meet his expenses, he played the cornet, "blowing cheap jazz joints," as he once put it, in his spare time.

After a law career devoted to real estate titles and fields, dealing pains-taking attention to detail, he was appointed assistant district attorney of New York County in 1936.

He has a reputation as a tough but fair prosecutor. In 1944 he won election to the House.

Rep. Rooney, now 66, is described in Current Biography as "an arresting figure: short, compact, nearly bald, and so strong in his fervent energy that he reads, talks, dictates letters and even entertains visitors standing up. He rarely takes a vacation or weekend off, and has no hobby except the following fights on TV and second-guessing the announcer."

He is married to the former Catherine Cunningham of Carteret, New Jersey, and has four sons, James Jr., Edward Patrick, Arthur Patrick and William Edward Meehan.


We believe that our first responsibility is to continue the general lines of endeavor to which my predecessors, with the support of the Congress, have dedicated the Institution's efforts within the Smithsonian and, I cannot through exhibitions, and related activities.

It was once suggested that the Smithsonian...


Reflections on the Smithsonian

Bradley Summarizes Recent SI Growth

WheelerBradley Discusses
GAO, Handling of Funds

Mr. Brademas. Is there any difference in the way the GAO responds to the Smithsonian [General Accounting Office] with us? Other than the fact that they may have made them to you?

Mr. Bradley. Yes, sir. The principal office for the GAO work was the Congress, where the GAO suggested we take up with the Congress related to the use of some, speaking from memory, $5 million appropriated for the Smithsonian for restoration of the American Art Gallery and the Natural History Building which happened some years ago but the final expenditures were made this fiscal year and the interior under their purview. Their point was that they would normally appropriate restoration construction shall not be used for anything that is not attached to the building. We have consistently and so have other agencies—ought to produce a turnkey operation, which totalized almost $20 million in all, an amount for furnishings from excess inventory along with a lot of things—light bulbs, landscaping, and so on. We detailed that and once the budgetary justifications, and we showed that to the General Accounting Office. And they have assumed there is any question about the expenditure of funds justified for furniture and furnishings, for example, to be very purpose for which you justified it to us.

Mr. Brademas. I do not mean to pursue this particular question in great detail. It is one that it is important for it is fund, always to be on the side of expending funds for which they were intended, but I must say I see at first the GAO response as a bit of a surprise. In the sentence under "Findings and Conclusions," it states, "The Smithsonian used $3,835, and GAO is upset about that, when I think we have explained that the Smithsonian's finances the accounting of the Institution's financial affairs should be explic- itly. We operate, in effect, with six different kinds of money, namely: Federal funds for current operating purposes; general funds for construction projects; Private unrestricted funds; Private restricted funds; Grant and contract monies; Foreign currencies.

At the same time, our activities are spread over some 40 different bureaus, offices and activities of the Institution. . . . Many of the bureaus classified as independent agencies have been coming into being in fairly recent years. The result from a financial and accounting standpoint is that we have our previous relatively simple accounting system.

To meet this situation the Smithsonian has been striving with the utmost vigor in the last two years or more to develop its financial and accounting methods so as to meet the modern needs of infor- mation and control system needed to give proper guidance for the direction of this diversified Institution.

In summary, then, it can fairly be said that the need for economic and accounting improvements have been adequate to prevent overpend- ing or mispending of the Institution's funds, and such dispositions have been independently audited each year, and approved fully to the Smithsonian Board of Regents at the Board's regular meetings, with further annual disclosure to the public through the Smithsonian Yearbook. At the same time, it has been fully recognized that because of the rapid growth of the Institu- tion, improvements were needed both in our accounting operations and in our codification of internal procedures. Stren- ous efforts to achieve these improvements have been underway for over two years, major segments of the program already accomplished and the remaining funds scheduled to be used in a rapid as possible in the next year or so.

The Magazine:

Link to SI

Mr. Bingham. Would you tell us a little bit about the publication that you inaugurated this year, and what the status of the publication is?

Mr. Ripley. This is a magazine which has been developed as an effort to reach people at a high professional level or even more, I would hope that its nature would be a first link between someone living more than 50 miles from Washington and the Smithsonian.

It had been the intention from the be- ginning to attempt to set up a national organization of Associates. So we started then a year ago, and have for two years now, a National Associates magazine by soliciting member- ship from every one of the National Associates. At the present time we have something over 180,000 members of this National Associ- ation. We have set up a National Board of Regents for the National Associates. The Chairman of that Board is one of our Regents, Mr. Watson.

The magazine has gotten off to an inter- esting start. I think, very early in its development, its circulation, the purpose of the magazine is to create a connection between society, which is a critical, is likely to be found in the uniqueness of persistent things. Therefore, far from being a letter from a woman, the Smithsonian should become an even more determined pack-rat. Further- more, we have the question of whether its nature should be imitated in various parts of the country, and so on. This is an astonishing response so far as the magazine is concerned.

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Mr. Bingham. Would you find that the response to this effort indicates to you that there is a demand for the publication, and do you think that the light of the fact that there are so many publications of various kinds?

Mr. Ripley. We have had a few test mailings on the kinds of people who are interested in the Smithsonian and its activities in various parts of the country. . . .

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Dr. Galler: Dr. William Klein [Director of RBL] is attempting in coordination with the Department of Commerce and the Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of the Budget and the Congress, to develop a system of environmental monitoring in the oceans and atmosphere. This system is designed to monitor events that may have an environmental impact before they occur. Two of the primary issues are addressed by this system: pollution monitoring and biological changes in the environment.

Senator Barry Goldwater brought up several questions about the Smithsonian Institution. He specifically inquired whether the Smithsonian's list of priorities has slipped off course and whether the same level of attention should be given to these areas. He noted that the data being obtained through Dr. Klein's radio astronomy laboratory, the collections of specimens from time to time through the Museum of Natural History, and the studies of the biological distribution over space and time, and the effects on animals through the satellite radio tracking systems.

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Blitz outlines directions of institution art programs

Charles Blitzner, Assistant Secretary:

I have mentioned these themes—American civilization, world art, and human creativity—in order to suggest that the Smithsonian's activities in the humanities and arts represent more than a random collection of separate museums and bureaus pursuing wholly unrelated programs. In doing so, however, I must emphatically do not intend to suggest that these individual museums and bureaus should be viewed as no more than pieces in a larger mosaic. On the contrary, I am absolutely convinced that our major responsibility in this area is to make each museum and each bureau as strong as possible.

I am convinced further that to this end each must maintain its own character, its own identity, its own programs and, to the greatest extent possible, the means to carry them out. And I am also convinced, although it may at first seem paradoxical, that the best way to achieve the kind of cooperation I have been talking about is to ensure that each museum is dedicated to the pursuit of its own objectives in research, education and public enlightenment, and to ensure that such coherence and vitality as can be in it can be in this pursuit.

Freer aim is knowledge of eastern civilizations

John Pope, Freer Director: To maintain the atmosphere that fosters productive research, to continue to add to the sum of knowledge of the civilizations of the East, to publish and make available this information to the interested world, these matters are the concern of those who are responsible for the operation of the Freer Gallery. In an era where the museum is more and more becoming a center for social activities and a place of entertainment, it is ever more important that the Freer Gallery not lose sight of the purposes for which it was founded and the fields in which it has made a unique contribution. The much abused word "relevant" means, upon reflection, connected with something, pertaining to the matter in hand; for us the matter in hand was clearly defined by Mr. Freer. Ever since the start of World War II, the Freer Gallery has participated in the affairs of the Far and Near East has been an imperative that we understand the nature of the mission it was created for, and the fields in which it has made a unique contribution.

Sadik describes 2 NPG projects

Marvin Sadik, NPG Director: Dealing with the announced program first, the Catalogue of American Portraits has thus far acquired documentary information about nearly 20,000 portraits, and photographic records of a major portion of these works. Ultimately, this material will constitute a nationwide union catalogue covering all public and private collection. Data about these portraits is being programmed in such a way that, when computerized, information retrieval will be possible from a number of viewpoints, such as subject, artist, locale, etc. Computer programs also will be devised to provide answers to more complex questions involving combinations of criteria. White major institutions have published their holdings, the gathering of information about portraits traditionally unpublished collections, such as state, county, and local historical societies, colleges, universities, both public and private, and dealers' galleries presents a much more difficult problem. In order to carry out this objective, it will be necessary to send scholar-photographer researcher teams into the field. The Keeper of the Catalogue of American Portraits presently is investigating time-saving automated data-collection devices, portable photographic gear, means of transportation, costs and budgets, and the personnel necessary for the implementation of such a program.

The National Portrait Gallery projects several exhibitions to celebrate bicentennial of the American Revolution. One of these would deal with the portraits of George Washington, an iconographic exhibition of life portraits, political car­toons, and cult images executed during the period of Washington's lifetime and up to the centennial of his birth. In addition to the central exhibition, a number of smaller projects in this exhibition is one which would lend itself particularly well to a film on Wash­ington based primarily on the portraits, but interspersed as well with associative material which might extend the time line. Another exhibition, on the Signs of the Declaration of Independence, would con­tain as many of their portraits as are extant and available and focus on the great diver­sity of background, occupation, and per­sonality among the men involved in the writing and signing of this document.