

It was, on motion,

RESOLVED that the sum of One hundred fifty thousand dollars  
RF 64084 (\$150,000), or as much thereof as may be necessary, be,  
and it hereby is, appropriated for allocation by the  
officers in support of a program in creative writing,  
this sum to be available for allocation during the  
period ending December 31, 1965.

The above action was taken after an oral presentation of the  
project by Dr. Davidson and following discussion.

Among the considerations presented were:

Humanities and Social Sciences: Cultural Development

Previous Interest: The Rockefeller Foundation has had an interest  
in the field of creative writing and criticism since 1944 and a  
number of small grants in aid have been provided through institu-  
tions to individual writers and critics. By far the most ambitious  
effort in this area was made through grants for The Kenyon Review,  
The Sewanee Review, The Hudson Review, the Partisan Review, and the  
State University of Iowa which totaled \$385,300 and provided fellow-  
ships in creative writing to 58 persons during 1947-1957. Since  
1957 two grants totaling \$55,600 have been approved for the develop-  
ment of the Poetry Center at the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew  
Association in New York. A grant of \$100,000 to Princeton University  
in 1952 supported seminars in criticism for a five-year period.

General Description: Acting on the belief that creative writing and  
literary scholarship are fundamental to the humanities, Foundation  
officers in recent months have consulted with leading professional  
writers, educators, and scholars concerning opportunities and needs  
in the writing field. This survey was prompted in part by the  
strongly expressed view of Trustees and officers that no aspect of  
cultural development and of the humanities was more deserving of  
attention than better writing. While a variety of suggestions

were made, including university- and college-centered activities which are receiving attention, the consultants for all practical purposes without exception have urged that highest priority in this field be given to a program of modest awards to the ablest writers of the novel, poetry, the literary essay, and criticism. Although several institutions currently sponsor prize and grant programs for writers, the men and women who have been advising the Foundation, including such eminent writers as Robert Lowell (who has been appointed Consultant in Creative Writing and Literature to the Foundation), Saul Bellow, Robert Penn Warren, Archibald MacLeish, Wallace Stegner, and Marianne Moore, have pointed out that the existing programs do not adequately serve the needs of the best creative writers in particular age and experience groups, ranging from the accomplished senior writer to young men and women of outstanding potential.

The Foundation's advisors believe that the best known existing programs tend to concentrate their assistance on help to already established writers primarily in the middle-range age bracket. Furthermore, existing sponsoring bodies commonly tend to limit their support to writers in a particular part of the country or to those of a particular outlook, style, or school of thought. Too often they have adopted application and selection procedures which result in awards to the lowest-common-denominator applicants on whom committees can reach a consensus. Moreover, there is no program that considers the student-age writers of outstanding potential even though their needs for developing and testing skills may be, as President Richard Sullivan of Reed College recently said, even more pressing than those of writers who are further along in their careers. For want of encouragement the recent graduate may abandon a partly completed novel or unfinished book of essays. Those who have been consulted by the officers have stated their conviction that The Rockefeller Foundation, by virtue of its previous experience in supporting selected writers and critics and its wide range of contacts with writers and the universities and colleges where

they are increasingly located, would provide the appropriate auspices for what might become the most significant program of its kind in the United States. The Foundation could adopt selection procedures calculated to identify and to give full-time writing and appropriate travel opportunities to the most outstanding of the needful writing talent in the country. Initially support might be given to about five carefully selected writers in each of the major categories of writing.

To ensure the establishment of the highest standards, the officers, in consultation with Robert Lowell and others, have given thoughtful study to alternative procedures for the proposed program. The system agreed upon calls for the identification of selected nominators in various parts of the country from among mature writers, scholars, and educators who are in the best position to identify outstanding creative writers and young men and women of outstanding writing potential. The officers would then solicit applications from the best qualified of the nominees, who would also be interviewed whenever possible. Writers invited to apply would present their published and unpublished writings and names of referees who would be consulted along with additional qualified experts selected by the officers. By the spring of 1965 it is expected that a short list of the poet, novelist, essayist, and critic applicants could be the subject of a discussion meeting for the purpose of ranking them. Those attending this meeting would include Foundation officers, Robert Lowell, and two additional eminent writers who are in close touch with the mainstream and trends of American literature - probably the novelist Saul Bellow of the University of Chicago and the poet and critic Stanley Kunitz of Columbia University. The officers would then be responsible for reaching final decisions on recommendations and for negotiating with the writers the amounts and precise purposes of awards.

Finances: The proposed grant of \$150,000 would be available for allocation by the officers during the period ending December 31, 1965,

CREATIVE  
WRITING  
(Continued)

and would be used for the support of individual writers and for the travel, per diem, and related costs of the three professional consultants. The awards, which wherever possible would be made to institutions for administration on behalf of the individual writers, would vary in size according to the writers' needs and approved activities. It is anticipated that a young writer without family obligations could carry on his or her work with \$4,000 or less for a year, whereas a senior writer with family responsibilities would require a larger sum. No grant would exceed \$15,000, and the average would be substantially less.

Comment: The strengthening of the fundamental art form of creative writing is a major objective of the Humanities and Social Sciences program in its contribution to the Foundation's overall program in Cultural Development. This activity will be closely related to the support of literary scholarship and other liberal arts disciplines in selected U.S. universities and colleges. It is expected that many of the grantees will be affiliated with academic institutions and that they, as well as unaffiliated writers who may be recipients of awards, will be enabled to make more substantial contributions to both the humanistic activities at centers of learning and to the body of outstanding writing in the United States.

Future Implications: The officers regard this program as experimental and will thoroughly evaluate procedures and results prior to recommending its modification or continuation. They are also exploring and may wish to recommend assistance to one or more institutional programs for specialized creative writing activities. These might include programs of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, of the "little magazines," and others located at specific colleges, such as the one previously supported at Kenyon College.

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