

IWLSP MEETING 11/12/65 - SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW MEMBERS OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SB: I would not trust many people to be fair-minded and impartial enough to serve in my place - they would have to be able to vote for their enemies on a basis of merit. Named WRIGHT MORRIS

RL: William Styron

SB: He is in a "gang."

JEB: Wallace Stegner could represent university-connected writers.
RL and SK: NO!

SK: George P. Elliot

SB: He would be fair

RL: Robert Penn Warren

SB: He has excellent judgment. He is a little too tolerant, though. *(further discussion - see next page)*

NL: How about critics?

SB: They have so much influence already -

RL: There don't seem to be many writer-critics now like Blackmur

SK: Alfred Kazin. He is not one with an axe to grind

RL: Agrees

SB: Agrees - he is writer, critic, and historian as well

SK: He is a little overenthusiastic

JEB: Any poets?

RL: There are few good poets in our generation

SK: They all seem to be closed into one esthetic position. I don't see any open and generous minds among them - this is very, very rare

SB: Berryman is good

RL: He's too chaotic

SB: He's very, very fair

RL: He is brilliant if he's sober

SK: But he carries his sense of injury to great lengths

SB: I have seen him help people he hated

*more discussion of
Berryman next page*

GF: Allen Tate. Is he poet or critic?

RL: Both

All: He wouldn't do his homework

RL: He wouldn't have a responsible, serious attitude

SK: He wouldn't read the manuscripts

GF: What about artists in other forms who are very well read and have good judgment?

RL: Who have never written a word?

GF: For example, philosophers.

SK: They are not going to read a lot of material

SB: Unless they are in publishing

All: They have a vested interest!

SB: Denver Lindley is about the best in the publishing ~~se~~ world. But I don't think this committee ought to have such people

RL: The publishing people wouldn't have time to do their work if they read all the applicants' samples

~~NL: Hiram Hayden~~

NL Hiram Hayden
RL Awful! Publishers are not men of independent judgment. They don't have time to be interested in writers unless they can get their works for publication. They are also political, used to working for a consensus. They wouldn't come out with a quick, fearless judgment; they would wait until they thought everyone was on their side.

RL John Berryman would be the best person in poetry - but you would certainly have strange meetings!
SB But he has kept a university job for ten years and is utterly reliable at it - he sometimes leaves the hospital to teach a class and returns there immediately after the class.

GF Robert Fitzgerald?
SK I don't know enough about him.
RL He is a man of taste

SB Bernard Malamud
RL } He would be good!
SK }

NL Horace Gregory
SK He is sick - also out of touch
RL He is old.

GF John Crowe Ransom
RL Too old.
SK He is wandering (mentally)

SB Robert Penn Warren would be excellent if he were in a group where he would be restrained from overkindness.
RL He would not back people from friendship. He would be wonderful, I should think.
SK He spreads himself around so much....
SB Warren has been very good to many young writers - myself among them. It took me a while to find that he was also being kind to 20 others, some of whom were not really very good. But he is nice...
RL The limitation of funds solves that - he would be forced to make priority choices.
SB No one here has been afraid to speak his mind. Warren would be like this too.
SK He would be good because he is interested in both poetry and novel. He keeps up, too.

* * * * * (discussion of procedures)

GF Could you suggest some new nominators?
NL Should any present nominators be eliminated because they made outrageous nominations?
SBX There were some, but they should not be taken off. We decided to have a balanced list. We want to have some kooks!
SK Stegner and Sontag were the worst. Stegner nominated former Stegner Fellows and Sontag's nominees weren't up to par with the others, couldn't be taken seriously.
GF Reads names of nominators

SB J. F. Powers
RL Yes

SK R. B. Heilman (?)

SK Donald Stanford, University of Louisiana

SB Eudora Welty

SK Winfield Townley Scott - retired, living in Santa Fe

SB Walter Van Tilburg Clark. He knows the Southwest well.

GF Mark Harris

SB Wright Morris covers his program. They are in the same place

RL Peter Taylor

GF Vladimir Nabokov

ALL NO!

GF Kenneth Rexroth

RL No

SB He's a superannuated Peter Pan

SK Put him on

SB If a tendency is already represented, should it be represented again? (No.)

RL Peter Morgan

GF Would Guerard be better than Stegner?

SK Maybe we should add him

SB They have a stable and will recommend their horses

RL Donald Hall, now at Michigan

KWT Any at liberal arts colleges?

SK Reed Whittemore, Carleton
Chad Walsh

NL William Stafford, at Reed

GF Mark Schorer?

SB ~~x~~ He would be good. He might know some we wouldn't get otherwise. He is very indulgent.

ALL They should only nominate two people.

RL Three is too many

* (Later it was decided that if a nominator seriously thinks and writes letters about people he is convinced are good, he should be allowed to give three names. But this would be the exception to the rule)

SK Tony Ostroff

RL He wrote POETS AT WORK. He would be better than Rexroth, but Rexroth could be on, too

GF Brings up question of direct inquiries

ALL It could so easily get out of hand. In exceptional cases, however, people the officers hear about could be brought to the Committee's attention.