



The Association of American University Presses, Inc.

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AAUP ANNUAL MEETING  
MAY 1981  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

SPEAKER  
DONALD R. ELLEGOOD, PRESIDENT-ELECT  
MAY 30, 1981

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am greatly honored to succeed Morris Philipson and so many other distinguished colleagues as President of this Association.

If I may, I would like to dedicate my efforts this coming year to the memory of Tom Schmid, my dear friend and colleague from my Baltimore days and this Association's first executive director.

Shortly before our annual meeting two years ago in Salt Lake City, Tom was killed in an unfortunate automobile accident.

Although Tom had left scholarly publishing to become a librarian, he always followed our activities, and read our books, with special perception and interest. In his last letter to me, Tom noted that it was time I paid my dues and did something useful for this Association, which has given me so much.

I promise I will certainly do my best.

This afternoon I hope you will allow me a few reflections about the changing nature of our Association, and a few observations about its future. I preface these remarks by noting that I have been a member of this Association for 30 years, since 1951, and

I have attended all the annual meetings, from then until now, save two or three.

You may well wonder how anyone could attend so many meetings, all devoted, as I recall, to the "crisis in scholarly publishing." I wonder myself.

I think the reason is that, at each year's meeting, I have avoided, as far as possible, the annual business meetings; all seven a.m. breakfast meetings; most 9 a.m. plenary sessions; all speeches by sociologists on the shortcomings of scholarly publishing; all sessions on copyright; and especially all speeches by in-coming presidents.

Instead, I have spent as much time as possible - as I did yesterday - in the bar and at cocktail parties; on the tennis court with Jack Kyle and Bill McClung and George Bauer; playing poker with Jack Schulman, Richard Wentworth, and other cutthroats; and generally having fun.

Despite this frivolous approach, I have learned most of that I know about publishing scholarly books at these meetings, and my impressions of AAUP over the last three decades--which I would like to share with you today-- are as vivid as they are varied.

I first became aware that there was an association of publishers early on in my career as an apprentice to Savoie Lottinville. I was at the time a so-called "fellow in scholarly publishing" at the University of Oklahoma Press, and my duties included learning to copyedit manuscripts from Mary Stith, finding out how books were designed and printed from Will Ranson and Richard Underwood, how books were marketed from Glen Bradley, and, most importantly, learning what I could by assisting Savoie Lottinville--the greatest editor

and list builder of his time.

One day I was in Savoie's office when an urgent long-distance phone call came in from Bill Couch, then director of the University of Chicago Press. Couch, it seems, had just been fired by the then president of the university of Chicago, Robert Maynard Hutchins who, as Morris told us yesterday, had strong feelings about thought control. It transpired that the press director and the university president did not see eye to eye, and the president had given the director two hours to clean out his desk and get out. Couch's call then was, of course, a plea for help, and I learned for the first time that Savoie Lottinville was president of something called the Association of American University Presses. Savoie did his best to help Couch, but one thing AAUP is not is a protective association, and then or now AAUP can do little to protect a press from its own university administration, except--and this is a measurable accomplishment--to educate both press and university administration of their mutual obligations and responsibilities.

My next awareness of AAUP was a far happier one. On completion of my fellowship at Oklahoma I accepted a position at Johns Hopkins as production editor, although (I can now confess) all I really knew about production was what I had learned from Dick Underwood during coffee breaks. No matter: Harold Ingle urged me, before moving to Baltimore, to attend my first meeting of this Association, to see what I could learn. This I did--the meeting was hosted by Toronto--and it was a marvelous experience. I met many good people, I learned a lot, and most importantly for me, at least I made a commitment to scholarly publishing as a career.

Harold Ingle--great manager that he was--recognized full well then the value of such associations for the fledgling publisher; and I submit that the meetings today are, if anything, even more valuable for new personnel as well as for old hands.

At Johns Hopkins, with responsibilities for both editing and production of books (and with all of one year's experience in the business), I naturally called upon--imposed upon would be a more accurate description--many more experienced people in the business. Not one then, or to this day, ever turned down a request for help or advice, which I submit is a remarkable quality of the people in this profession. It has been said that one learns best by example, and there have been, and are, some marvelous exemplars in our midst.

I will relate only one more anecdote, as by now I am sure you take my point. One of the reasons I joined the Hopkins Press (or so I thought at the time) was that it gave me an opportunity to attend each year the national tennis tournament then held at Forest Hills--as a spectator, I hasten to add--not, alas, as a player.

My pilgrimage to Forest Hills was always accompanied by an alleged business trip to New York, and it is true that I usually lunched the book review editor of the New York Times who was also a tennis buff. Following Forest Hills one year there was a particularly good party which ended up, as it happened, in Boston. Never one to shirk my duty, the next morning when I sobered up I called on the Harvard University Press, without an appointment, of course, and asked to see the director of the press. A secretary took my name, went into an office, and I will never forget Tom Wilson's booming voice, a moment later saying, "Don who?"

But shortly Tom appeared, invited me in, arranged for me to lunch with several Harvard editors, and asked me to join him and his wife, Phoebe, who was also an editor, that evening for cocktails. Over drinks that evening Tom and Phoebe flattered me immensely by asking my opinion on everything from book design to book pricing to the quality of the Harvard list! I answered every question with all the assurance of a sophomore publisher, and left feeling what bright people Tom and Phoebe were.

It was Tom Wilson who said, some years later in an address to the Association of Princeton University Press: "I cannot conceive of a time when there will be no need for an AAUP with a strong central organization; nor can I imagine the possibility of university presses attempting to get along without regular concerted action and exchange of information."

Tom also coined the famous dictum in our profession that "It is the purpose of a university press to publish as many good books as possible this side of bankruptcy."

I would like now to explore briefly the relationship between publishing "as many good scholarly books as possible" and "an AAUP with a strong central organization."

In his essay "The Two Worlds of University Publishing," Roger Shugg, our foremost historian, notes that "In the short history of American university presses," we have gone through three or four phases--first, the pioneer of the early presses (to whom we all still owe a great deal), who mostly came into publishing from a background in teaching or printing; next, those presses which multiplied rapidly in the 1930's and 40's, directed and staffed by people who recognized their limitations in the craft of publishing,

who sought eagerly to acquire more professional expertise, and who gained it largely by teaching one another. A third phase, which began after World War II, was marked by a steady increase in the number of books published, and a growing concern for the art of bookmaking.

A fourth phase, Roger felt, would be distinguished by "genuine acceptance of the necessity for supporting a university press on the part of administrative officers and the board of trustees or legislative committee who must meet its deficits."

And during the 60's it appeared that we were well into this fourth phase, in which the academic enterprises of which we are part could and would adequately capitalize our publishing programs. But then came Viet Nam, and inflation, and increasingly hard times for higher education, and a new phase during which "the crisis in scholarly publishing" became a way of life. In retrospect, the the crisis of the 1970's actually made better publishers of most of us, by forcing us to establish higher editorial standards, develop greater fiscal expertise, and generally tighten up our respective operations. But already the problems of the past decade, the 70's, now seem almost benign in comparison to those confronting us in the 80's. I will return to these problems in a moment.

Over the same period of time--roughly the last three decades--we've struggled mightily to develop that "strong central organization" which Tom Wilson called for but which--in my opinion--for a number of reasons we have not yet achieved. This is not to deprecate the splendid efforts made on our behalf by many talented and dedicated people in the central office since its establishment in the mid-1950's. It has been my good fortune to know well, and

to count among, my best friends, the several executive directors of our Association. Tom Schmid as I have said, was my colleague and close friend during my years at Johns Hopkins: Dana Pratt and I started in publishing about the same time and our paths continue to cross to this day; I served on the board of directors during Hod Clark's too brief tenure as our leader, and Jack Putnam and I have been good friends for many, many years. We owe them all, and other dedicated staffers such as Carol Franz and Florence Cohn, more than you may think. Their accomplishments have been real and substantial and we have all benefited considerably.

But the problem has been and remains in the peculiar nature of our Association. AAUP, from its inception in 1937 as an informal organization of "pure tobacco growers" down to the present day, has remained basically a maverick organization made up allegedly of presses but actually of fiercely independent individuals ("pesky critters" Frank Wardlaw called them). George Taylor's classic description of the academic rat race applies equally well to AAUP. "Competition among academics is so fierce," George said, "because the stakes are so low."

As an association our greatest weakness has been a lack of consistency in direction. Our earliest elected leaders--from Victor Reynolds to Chester Kerr, rugged individualists all--tended to emphasize their personal interests and characteristics and tried with varying degrees of success to stamp their personal imprint on Association activities. In some measure to counteract this, the board of directors in the mid 1960's was more than doubled in size, and presidential tenure was reduced to one year. But with one-year presidencies, and with the entire board of directors turning

over completely every two years, consistency of policy and stability in direction left (and still leaves) much to be desired. Policies established by one board can be--and on some occasions have been--totally reversed by a subsequent board. No overall strategy, no long-range game plan, if you will, to my knowledge has ever been devised.

Now, all this does pose a real problem for our central organization and especially the executive director, namely, how in the world to accommodate, much less reconcile, so many different viewpoints and desires. The answer is, as every surviving former executive director from Dana Pratt to Jack Putnam will testify: it can't be done. If we really want a strong central organization, we must give the executive director and his staff the authority to take some chances, to make some mistakes, "to initiate as well as respond," as Dick Koffler put it in a recent interview. In past years we have in opinion--and I share the blame as much as anyone--made unwarranted demands, mostly "small matters," on the central office and its staff, to the ultimate detriment of our own best interests.

At this critical juncture in our Association's history, we can no longer afford to do so. As Jack Goellner said two years ago, it is time "to decide who and what we really are as an association, and where we ought to go as an association." As Jack Putnam said only last year, what do we want from the Association and how much are we willing to pay for it?

My own feeling is that the time is ripe for a rather fundamental change in our activities. External as well as internal circumstances demand it. Among the press directors, the old guard have nearly



all retired. Throughout our ranks there's been a healthy infusion of new faces from trade, text, and commercial publishing. After falling on hard times last year the Educational Directory--our only real financial asset--is now hopefully back on track. Most important, we have in Dick Koffler an energetic new executive director who has already demonstrated what he can do for us if we will give him the opportunity and our fullest cooperation.

Our single greatest need is for a strong central organization which can represent our interests effectively to foundations and other funding agencies and to government at all levels. We need to analyze and reassess our relationship with these agencies, and above all we need to develop a long-range strategy for strengthening the financial base of scholarly publishing.

Our needs are great and our sources of support are few. In recent years public support of higher education has greatly diminished, and our parent institutions are less able to support us financially. Inflation and all costs associated with publishing scholarly books continues apace, and interest rates remain impossibly high. Library budgets are strained, sales are down for most of us, and returns are up. The independent bookstores are in decline, and the chains--which won't stock our books--are more powerful. The Reagan Administration is dismantling or eliminating most book and library programs, and has embarked on an arms race which can only lead, at best, to increased inflation, and at worst, to nuclear catastrophe.

We have seen what sustained inflation has already done to the British publishing industry, and if we don't know what is in the offing for us, we need merely consult Christopher Hurst and our

other British colleagues who are here.

Under these circumstances, our best hope is early recognition of our present situation on the part of a large number of foundations, as recommended by the National Enquiry, and dramatic assistance-- that is, massive financial aid, increased capitalization, more money to innovate--to deserving presses. We will be in a better position to persuade future grantors of our cause if we have a master plan for coordinated results and a definite framework showing how each program would benefit the world of scholarship.

In this context, it is instructive to review briefly the most notable past programs of foundation and federal assistance to scholarly publishing.

In 1956 the Ford Foundation granted \$1,700,000 to 35 university presses to increase publication of books by younger scholars in the humanities and social sciences. Four years later, in 1960 a second grant of \$1,000,000 was given to 34 presses for the same purpose. An estimated 900 titles were published with support from this program.

In 1959 the Rockefeller Foundation granted \$225,000 to help publish translations of Latin American studies in English, and about 2 dozen presses received nearly 100 grants resulting in about 75 books published. A request in 1966 for a renewal grant of \$240,000 was turned down, however.

In 1972 the Ford Foundation offered a grant of \$250,000 over 5 years for publication of dissertations on ethnic subjects, but only about 10 books resulted and the program was discontinued after expenditure of only \$75,000. It is not to our credit, or the Foundation's, that this poorly conceived program was an almost total

bust. Is it significant that this is the last grant received from Ford? The Chrysler Corporation has done better.

In 1972 and 1975 the Mellon Foundation made grants totalling \$4,000,000 in support of publications in the humanities and social sciences--far and away the single most effective program to date. An estimated 1,000 books have been published with support from this program.

Since 1977 NEH has allocated about \$300,000 yearly, initially for the publication of NEH-supported research and later for other books as well--for a total of an estimated \$1,500,000 to date. Future prospects for this long-overdue program, which was really just getting underway, are presently in doubt beyond fiscal 1981, as you all know.

That's the end of the large grants. Recent grants, along with the dollar, have shrunken considerably. Last year our greatest supporter, the Mellon Foundation, provided \$100,000 for international mailings of cooperative advertising supplements, \$150,000 for cooperative ventures, and \$100,000 for alternative and innovative composition--all 3 grants following the recommendations of the National Enquiry. A careful analysis of the results of these 3 grants--which we should undertake this coming year--will reveal much about the validity of the National Enquiry's recommendations. I confess I have some doubts about these 3 programs.

Most recently, as you know, the association has received 3 grants totalling \$165,000 from the Hewlett Foundation, located here in San Francisco, to send people to management seminars (\$5,000), to take the 1980 finances workshop to 3 regional meetings (\$10,000), and to compile a university press data base.

That brings us up to date.

Now let me summarize. Altogether these grants total less than \$10 million over 25 years; an extremely modest investment, I am tempted to say in relation to the body of scholarship we have helped create with the publication of 70,000 books, of which an estimated 50,000 are still in print. In today's economy, \$10 million will buy less than one-half of a military helicopter, or, in terms of the current national defense budget, will cover the operating costs of about a half an hour. Are our works really of so little value to society? How can we change this deplorable situation?

I believe this should be our major goal for the coming year: we need to create a master plan, framework, and progression, so that future fundraising efforts may be more comprehensive and persuasive to grantors. If we can demonstrate that we know what we are doing and why, where we want to go, how long it is going to take to get there, and how much it is going to cost, we can expect broader participation of foundations in the support of scholarly publishing.

We must convince many foundations of what we know full well, that the task of research has not been completed until the results of research have been made accessible, and that it is pennywise but pound foolish to support research without a commitment in principle to support publication, if deserved.

As we move into the 1980's our most urgent collective need is for a stronger financial base, increased capitalization, more money to innovate and to grow. But for it, we need to know what we now have available in terms of general and restricted endowment,

lines of credit, and both general and specific operating grant support. I am accordingly charging the Committee on Government, Foundation, Professional, and Institutional Relations--which has been greatly enlarged and which is chaired by Herb Bailey--to review and critically analyze past programs of assistance to scholarly publishing, from whatever source, and together with Dick Koffler and his staff, to develop a well-constructed, confidential survey of all member presses which will give us collective information on our present capital structure, its strengths and weaknesses, and to project estimates of future capital needs between now and 1985 for our financial security, growth, and prosperity.

It is clear to me that without a greatly expanded base of financial support, fewer and fewer specialized scholarly books will be published. With our own resources--and those of our parent institutions--we have gone about as far as we can go. If my vision is cloudy, or unduly pessimistic--and I hope it is--I will rely on you to tell me so.

There is another major problem confronting this Association I would like to address briefly. Three years ago a new organization, Women in Scholarly Publishing, came into existence. Already WISP is doing an excellent job of looking to its members interests, which to be sure extend well beyond scholarly publishing. But the very existence of such an organization as WISP indicates to me a serious shortcoming on the part of most of us in providing adequate opportunity for training and advancement, not only for women, but also for minorities and junior-level personnel. A number of recent workshops have attempted to deal with this condition, but I think more can and should be done by most of us. To give

emphasis and leadership to this effort, I am establishing a new committee on Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action, chaired by David Bartlett of Temple. I hope you will all support this important committee's efforts.

I have mentioned two committees, and I would like to mention the others which will carry on the work of the association in the coming year and which all deserve our support. I am happy to report that all committees have been appointed, and several committees have already caucused here in San Francisco. The Committee on Admissions and Standards is chaired by Richard Wentworth of Illinois; the new Audit Committee, established last year by Morris Philipson, is co-chaired by Bill Becker of Princeton and Don George, Columbia. The Book Show Committee is chaired by Cameron Poulter, Chicago; Copyright, Sandy Thatcher, Princeton; Education and Training, Steve Cox, Nebraska; International Relations, Jack Kyle, Texas; Marketing, Jean-Sue Johnson, Georgia; the Program Committee, Maud Wilcox, Harvard; Nominating, Frank Urbanowski, MIT; Scholarly Journals, Robert Scherrel, Chicago; and Systems and Technology, Chet Grycz, California. Assisting these chairpersons are about 60 of our finest drawn from all ranks.

So far I have talked mostly about money, but there are other rewards for scholarly publishing which should be recognized. AAP each year presents the Curtis Benjamin Award for creative publishing, and it is surely a source of pride for all of us that three times the Curtis Benjamin Award has gone to the director of a university press--most recently, as you all know, to Arthur Rosenthal at Harvard.

But isn't it about time that this Association offered its own

award? I am pleased to report that your board of directors, in an extraordinary session held in the bar of the beautiful Prince George Hotel, late last spring, conceived of a much-needed and long-overdue symbol of recognition--which has been named the Golden Fluke Award. After intensive research, Carol Orr of Tennessee has provided the following description.

"The Golden Fluke Award recognizes uncreative and non-innovative, but lucrative, publishing. It will be given annually to a university press that has snagged a book of major importance through no effort of its own.

"The GFA will celebrate the quirky. As we flounder in the murky seas of scholarly publishing, struggling to make an exact science of the vicissitudes of the editorial process, the GFA will shine as a symbol of hope that our patient casting about will be rewarded. Recipients of the GFA will want to flaunt it, because it will be a much-coveted award.

"For who among us does not dream of landing a big one as we troll our line behind the Ship of Shortrun Publishing, dragging our bait along the continental shelves of scholarship, hoping to hook a fluke from among the schools of gapfillers nibbling at our lures."

The board had in mind giving GFA this year to a book which shall here remain nameless, a novel published by a well known southern university press. Unfortunately we were pre-empted when this book recently received the Pulitzer Prize, a lucrative contract for mass market paperback rights, and a pending contract with a major Hollywood producer for the film, which will star Orson Welles.

Therefore, there will be no Golden Fluke Award given this year, but exercising my final presidential prerogative, I am appointing an anonymous committee of 200, to be chaired by Carol Orr, to identify

and present the award next year at Spring Lake.

In conclusion, let me read you a description of the Golden Fluke, with apologies to the Encyclopedia Brittanica. "The Golden Fluke (also known as a "summer flounder") is a member of the flatfish order. It differs from all other fishes in having both eyes on one side. During the larval stage, the Golden Fluke swims near the surface of the sea, but after a time one eye moves round over the top of the head to the other side, some of the fins change position, and the fish, leaning over gradually on the eyeless side, sinks slowly to the bottom. The Golden Fluke are remarkable for their power of changing color to resemble the ground on which they lie, and it has been established experimentally that they must see the ground in order to imitate it. The eyes stand out from the head and can be turned independently in different directions looking sideways, or sometimes one looking forward and the other backward."

I submit, dear colleagues, is this not a fair and accurate description of scholarly publishing? May you all find a Golden Fluke in your warehouse.