



The Association of American University Presses, Inc.
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Acceptance Address by

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as President of the Association of American University Presses

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Lest any of you feel that the affairs of the Association have reached a sufficient degree of impasse to require that the presiding officer next year have the impartiality of a visitor from outer space, I can at least assure you that I bring to this organization for the first time an objectivity that will be truly Marshian in origin. In fact I've been on and off the Board and its committees frequently enough during the past seventeen years to understand what my late father meant when, upon being elected to the Chancellorship of the University of Toronto following his academic retirement, he opened his inaugural address by observing that his being there only went to prove that anything can happen if you hang around long enough.

Let me open the serious portion of my remarks by voicing an emotion which I believe is really felt deeply by the vast majority of my fellow Canadians. It is an emotion which we are too reluctant to admit openly, no doubt because we are overly anxious to persuade our neighbours to take us more seriously than we deserve to be taken. Very simply, I believe there is hardly a Canadian who at heart is not a fervent admirer of United States leadership and accomplishment in his own field of endeavour, whatever that field may be, and who is not really measuring his own achievement by standards which you in this country have established. Scholarly publishing is certainly no exception to this rule.

As I have already admitted, it is seventeen years since I was seduced into joining my university press from commercial publishing, where I had been fully occupied for over fifteen years before that. What made the switch appeal to me then, and what has kept me from regretting it since, was partly the magic of such lists as those of Chicago and Yale and Columbia and the rest of you, but even more it was an awareness that university presses - unlike other publishers in my country at least - were actually striving to co-operate professionally with one another in pursuit of a common public purpose. I had had a little experience then, and I have had much more since,

with publishers' associations, and it is true that the trade interests which commercial publishers have in common quite often lead to meaningful co-operation among them. But professional co-operation is, as a rule, a somewhat different matter. Yet it is the very spirit of willingness to share and discuss every professional phase of our work which has made university press publishing so infinitely satisfying to me and, I am sure, to all of you as well. If this were not so, none of us would have come to Madison this year, or in the past to Ithaca, or Princeton, or Toronto. I am sure it was a sense of dedication to the interests of scholarly research in its broadest sense, not mere generosity (which would itself have been a sufficient virtue) that prompted Victor Reynolds to sign over to my press the Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill, already delivered in manuscript and about to be published by him at Cornell, in order that it could be included as the first volume in a Collected Works of Mill which otherwise could hardly have gone ahead. Barely one year ago Colin Roberts gave us free access to the Allen edition in Latin, published by Clarendon, of the letters of Erasmus when being granted such access was a condition of our being able to proceed with the Works of Erasmus in English, which will keep my press busy for at least another fifteen years.

I quickly learned that university presses thrive not only on comparing their dilemmas, but their disasters as well, and that when they meet together they do not do this for recreational purposes but first and last for the professional betterment of one another. May I say to every press employee in this room today that I hold no higher ambition for the Association during the next year than that it should continue as precisely as possible along the path that has thus been marked out.

Let me say here, for what I intend should be the first and last time, that I am keenly sensitive to the fact that, in addition to doing my press and my country a great honour by entrusting this office to a Canadian, you have placed me personally in a position of extraordinary delicacy respecting many matters. In some of them I shall not be free to give you the leadership you have come to expect from your president in the manner of the contributions of my distinguished predecessors. It is likely that the La Guardia-Dulles International shuttle, for example, will be patronized more often during the next twelve months by your Executive Director and by others of my colleagues on the Board than it will by your president. Just as Canadian presses have understandably not been privileged to share in much of the assistance you have received from your federal agencies in the past (and nor have they had any right to, of course), so I am not allowed to act for you in the future when we are seeking more of this particular kind of assistance or when we have other representations to make in Washington. But be assured that your association interests there will continue to be served as actively as ever before, and by some of the

most respected press officials among us, although I will be there too in spirit at least.

It will be my intention to offset, as far as I am able, whatever disability I bring to this office on your national front by adding as much as I can to the international dimensions of the scholarly press movement, a movement which is one of the many unique accomplishments of this great nation, and one which is not adequately reflected yet in any other country in the world, including my own. In this and other ways I pledge to do what I can to strengthen further the Association's prestige and influence, and I shall do this not for the sake of adding to its prestige or influence but because I believe in its mission.

It is too early for me to know for certain what options my colleagues on the new Board and I will share in our planning of ways to carry forward the work of those who have gone before us, but I shall hazard one guess, reserving the right to change my mind later. And I mention it in no spirit of dissatisfaction over past efforts, needless to say. Just as I have always believed that every operating breakdown and every operating success can invariably be traced back to bad or good communications, as the case may be, during my period in office I shall do all I am able to do to strengthen further the quality of communications within our association as well as between our association and the scholarly world at large.

I now wish to report to you that my first Presidential act, in fact a pre-Presidential act, has been to fly in the face of the Constitution and by-laws in a fashion that should make both Dick Underwood and Bernard Perry reach for their sidearms. However, what I have done has been to take the first step in what I hope will amount to the democratization of the ancient presidential prerogative to be the exclusive arbiter of who should be appointed to what committee. In point of fact, I have during the past month approached exactly forty-nine members of this Association, in advance of my election, as it were, to invite them to chair or to sit on various committees which the by-laws say it is my responsibility to plan and erect. And I am proud to be able to say that to date I have received precisely forty-nine acceptances, which is I believe a compliment to the spirit of this organization as well as to the Board to whom these individuals will report during the coming year. But the democratic aspect of this exercise is that I reserved a limited number of slots unfilled and I believe I am now extending the first invitation of its kind ever made to the membership at large. Please understand that this is not an SOS - my big difficulty has been to hold some slots open on the various committees while at the same time keeping a balance between rotating the appointments and exploiting the experience available from selected carry-overs from last year's committees. Indeed it has been impossible for me to hold places open on all committees, but I have done the best I could in this direction.

In short, the committees for next year have already been basically structured and all chairmen have been appointed. I thank everyone who has accepted appointment, just as I now thank most heartily those who served last year and are now being allowed to stand aside (perhaps only for a year or so) to let new blood in. At this time therefore I extend an invitation to everyone in the Association, in Madison and at home, to consider whether or not he or she would be interested in some kind of committee responsibility now or later on, and to write to me personally within the next couple of weeks if the answer is yes. Let me say again that I positively cannot promise appointments to all volunteers this year, but it will be invaluable to me and I am sure to my successors to know which willing workers are going unexploited. In making selections for the few posts immediately available, we shall have to take into consideration many different factors, including recency of previous involvement, use being made already of others at the same press, and so on. But please instead of holding back for any reason, leave it to us to make the selections, and help us learn in this way just who is interested in taking part in the administration of the affairs of the Association. I promise to reply to everyone who writes me, even if it ties my secretary up until after the Frankfurt Book Fair. The final composition of the committees will be announced as soon as practicable, and I hope that it will be feasible - with the prompt assistance of every press in nmn the editing - to issue the directory earlier than ever before.

My final vote of thanks is to the Nominating Committee of this past year, although only for the Board they have given me to work with and not for the responsibility they have so unimaginatively thrust upon me simply because I was listed as president-elect. I love them all - I mean the members of my Board - although I have been helped in saying that by the inclusion on it of the very first female board member since the regimes of Porter Cowles, Mary Alexander, and Margaret Harding.

I accept the responsibilities you have given me gratefully, and I hope humbly, and I repeat that I shall try my best not to disappoint you. I shall find my inspiration in my predecessors in this office, although I cannot hope to match their contributions. In particular I shall take my **cue** to a very large extent from our president of this past year, my epigrammatic pal Bill Sloane. I envy him for many things, not least of which is the fact that he is now able to relax in retirement. But particularly do I covet at this moment one of his private possessions, a button he has been wearing throughout this annual meeting. I think its message is for me, not him, because never have I been more overwhelmingly convinced that Chicken Little WAS right!

Madison, Wisconsin
June 16, 1970