



The Association of American University Presses, Inc.
One Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 · 212 889-6040

AAUP ANNUAL MEETING, JUNE 1975

Address by Robert G. Barnes, Director, Columbia University Press
and President-Elect (1974-1975) of
The Association of American University Presses

The very few thoughts I have to share with you have all been raised before--many at this meeting--by Miriam Brokaw, by Chester Kerr, and in the Guru Sessions. If I am able to give a new emphasis to some, I shall be satisfied.

My remarks may be divided into three parts: first, a few observations about the strengths of a university press; second, a few questions on which I hope we can focus in the year ahead; and third, a comment or two about committees and their work next year.

Since my first Association meeting in Washington in the winter of 1969, I have been impressed that one of the major strengths of university press publishing is its spirit of "one for all and all for one." This splendid display of cooperation is evidenced over and over again at annual meetings, workshops, guru sessions and regional meetings, and the responses by presses to other presses' request for counsel and advice.

A small example of this occurred yesterday in the "Selling to Libraries" session, when Guru Gary Trim offered to share with all there his list of Chicago's 20 largest accounts. Most of us have grown to take cooperation like this for granted. We should not take it for granted. It should be nurtured and expanded.

In a more personal way this "all for one and one for all" spirit was reflected in my own reception to this fraternity. I have always been grateful to you all for my welcome, and hope that our newest members Brigham Young and New England, will feel as I did.

To ensure that this continues and improves we are forming a new committee of past presidents. All former association presidents, whether active or retired will be members; one of their responsibilities will be to see that "newcomers" become "oldtimers" at their first meeting.

A second strength comes from our origins. Let me quote in part from our By-Laws: "A University Press is hereby defined as the scholarly publishing arm of the university... whose name it bears. Further, it must be an integral part of its parent institution.... Its organization and functions shall lie entirely within the prescription of its parent university...."

This strength resulting from that association is evidenced in several ways. First, we are usually classified as non-profit and therefore tax free. Let's not overlook this strength. George Brockway was certainly quick to point it out this morning.

Second, our "parent" names lend authority to our books, our microfiche, and audio visual products.

Third, our university affiliation opens doors to us: to authors, foundations and governments.

Fourth, and less tangible, though no less real or valuable: our parental name lends prestige to our products and our positions.

In short, I believe we are strengthened by our origins and this suggests to me that we have spent too much time talking about, and writing about, survival--especially in the statement of Reciprocal Responsibilities of a University and Its Press. We have hashed and rehashed self-serving phrases such as, and I quote, "The university should no more require its press to meet all its expenses from sales receipts than it requires other academic departments to meet theirs from tuition receipts."

I cannot believe that the results at Case Western or at Northwestern would have been different had this booklet been read beforehand by those presidents. The sentiments are fine but I feel it is presumptuous for us to state them.

I sense here that Bernard Perry has earned for his press the confidence and treatment we all seek. The evidence has been apparent from Dr. Well's and Dr. Ryan's comments and presence at our dinner.

I raise then the question: How do we grow stronger so that university presidents will wish to publish this kind of statement?

I am confident that we are on the right track in this Association. We need to do more of what we are already doing: cooperating and exchanging ideas--despite George Brockway's message to ignore what others are doing and do it yourself.

Now I should like to repeat some oft-stated questions:

One, how do we make our books more readable--hence more saleable? Should we spend more time and money on rewriting? Should the author pay for this in reduced royalties? We deal with authors, not writers. Certainly some reviewers think this! In a New York Times Book Review recently, a reviewer said "none of the barbed wire of scholarly writing is set in the readers' path."