



Indiana Humanities Council

Think. Read. Talk.

HISTORY OF THE COUNCIL

In 1965 the enabling legislation establishing the National Endowment for the Humanities was passed. One of the major authors of that bill was Indiana Congressman John Brademas.

The Council traces its roots to 1972, when the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) asked a group of five energetic Indiana citizens to form a statewide grant-making agency. The group was comprised of Dr. Marvin E. Hartig, Mrs. Edmund F. (Virginia) Ball, Dr. Robert E. Burns, Mr. Edward N. Howard, and Dr. Robert W. Richey. Their goal was to focus federal dollars on more local, grassroots initiatives.

Here are some highlights of the past 38 years.

September 1972: Indiana Humanities Council (at that time known as the Indiana Committee for the Humanities) is formed officially. The first grants are awarded in November 1972.

1976: *Humanities To Go*, IHC's video & exhibit lending library is formed.

1979: The first *Business/Humanities Seminar* is organized by IHC. Featured speaker is *Harvard Business Review* editor Kenneth Andrews.

1982: *This Far By Faith: Black Hoosier Heritage*, a traveling exhibit about African-American history, begins a statewide tour. The exhibit is named the best humanities program in the nation, winning the Schwartz Prize (named for Martin and Helen Schwartz, founders of the IHC and Muncie residents).

1984: George Orwell's book inspires an annual essay contest for high school students.

1985: Council purchases the historic four-story Georgian Revival home of Indiana author Meredith Nicholson, located in Indianapolis' Old Northside Historic District.

1986: IHC launches partnership with the Indiana Historical Society to award grants to unearth and preserve important documents, images, artifacts, and stories that have shaped life in Indiana. Over \$1 million in grants is awarded in the 16 years of the program's operation.

1987: The Council carries out two years of programming in observance of the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution at dozens of libraries, courthouses, schools and universities.

1988: On November 1, the Indiana Committee for the Humanities changes its name to the Indiana Humanities Council.

1990: *History Alive!*, featuring theatrical portrayals of famous figures in history, is launched. Within the decade, IHC will conduct up to 80 programs per year in Indiana schools.

1991: *Wordstruck*, IHC's Festival of Books, is inaugurated. Readers meet writers such as Indiana native son Kurt Vonnegut, historian Stephen Ambrose, and novelist Tom Wolfe in this and subsequent *Wordstruck* festivals.

1991: *Always A River*, a museum on a barge, floats 981 miles down the Ohio reaching 200,000 people in six states with exhibits about the river's history, commerce, geology, and art.

1991: With funding from Lilly Endowment, Inc., the Council convenes a statewide International Issues Task Force, spurring an ongoing series of international programs, including the International School in Indianapolis.

1995: *Mexico in the 20th Century*, a series of displays, performances, lectures and films, tours the state.

1996: *Asia in US* becomes the second statewide international program, eventually reaching 2.2 million people through its centerpiece exhibit and complementary programs.

1997: IHC celebrates 25 years of building community in Indiana and the ceremonial burning of the mortgage of the Council headquarters.

1999: IHC receives over \$2 million from Lilly Endowment, Inc. to conduct a project to develop youth leadership in philanthropy. Habits of the Heart grew out of this initiative.

2000: Through collaboration with the Indiana Learning Collaborative, IHC begins work on the IHC smartDESKTOP[®] initiative.

2001: Through a collaborative effort with the Stanley K. Lacy Leadership Association, IHC presents the Indiana Leadership Summit, a statewide event convening more than 300 leaders from around the state to discuss issues affecting Indiana in the areas of leadership, education and culture. James Billington, Librarian of Congress, Robert McNulty of Partners for Livable Communities, eight university Presidents, and Tom Friedman of the *New York Times* are among the distinguished speakers.

2001: IHC hosts the annual national conference of the Federation of State Humanities Councils.

2002: A statewide tour of the Smithsonian Institution exhibit, "Barn Again: Celebrating an American Icon," sponsored by IHC, is launched with a reception at the Statehouse; the featured

speaker is Indiana's First Lady, Judy O'Bannon, who presents the Council with the Governor's proclamation of "The Year of the Barn."

2003: The second Indiana Leadership Summit follows on the success of the first event. Keynote speakers Michael E. Porter of the Harvard Business School and S. Frederick Starr of Johns Hopkins University are among the 20 distinguished speakers. The Summit luncheon on the closing day of the three-day event features the inaugural presentation of the Governor's Award for Tomorrow's Leaders to 12 recipients.

2003: The Lilly Endowment awards grants totaling \$4 million to support the leadership and education efforts of the Council, enabling programs in those areas to move forward. The Learning Collaborative is formed, and its board of directors oversees the activities of the IHC smartDESKTOP initiative.

2004: IHC hosts two summits during this year—the third Indiana Leadership Summit, now known as the Summit on the Circle, and the Aspen Summit. Regional forums prepare leaders around the state for discussions at the Summit. In October the Council sponsors the Aspen Summit on Rethinking the Public Humanities, bringing national leaders together to create a new vision of the humanities in society.

2005: The Resource Connection launches on Feb. 1, and the IHC smartDESKTOP launches on Mar. 1, completing the first phase of development for the education portal.

2005 & 2006: IHC hosts two additional Indiana Leadership Summits, as well as Regional Forums leading up to the statewide event.

2007: The IHC smartDESKTOP is transferred to the Indiana Department of Education where it becomes the precursor to the DOE's collaborative portal, the Learning Connection.

2008: IHC's 5th President and CEO, Keira Amstutz, takes over the leadership of the Council and initiates a new strategic planning process, leading to the current set of initiatives.