

---

## Using White House Conference recommendations



THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON  
LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES  
1991

By Patricia A. Wand

*Chair, ACRL Task Force on WHCLIS  
and University Librarian  
The American University*

and Lynn Scott Cochrane

*WHCLIS Delegate, Virginia  
and Reference Librarian  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and  
State University*

*Just when I thought the momentum of the White House Conference was subsiding, I learned of two specific events that convinced me otherwise. The first event was a Public Roundtable sponsored by Hilda Mason, councilwoman for the District of Columbia and chair of the Committee on Education and Libraries.*

*On November 18, 1991, in the City Council chamber, Mason brought together interested citizens who spoke in favor of specific agenda items that emerged from the Mayor's Pre-White House Conference on Library and Information Services. Witnesses were grouped by interests such as public library issues, academic library concerns, preservation priorities, etc.*

*Four academic librarians spoke, offering the perspectives of public and private institutions as well as the needs in both the District of Columbia and the nation. The librarians were Albert Casciero, director, and John Page, deputy director of the Learning Resource Center, University of the District of Columbia; and George Arnold, university archivist and head, special collections, and Patricia Wand, university librarian, the American University. They were asked to cite and discuss specific recommendations that need attention by local and national governments.*

*The second event that reminded me of the significance and momentum of the White House Conference is recounted below by Lynn Scott Cochrane:*

Recently I had a chance to take my own advice, which appeared in last month's *C&RL News* (December 1991) and utilize the White House Conference recommendations in quite a unique forum.

Through the good auspices of a friend, I attended the First Amendment Congress in Richmond, Vir-

ginia. Little did I realize that I would put to use so soon the recommendations from the White House Conference on Library and Information Services (WHCLISII).

The First Amendment Congress was founded in 1979 to foster and sponsor unique programs, called "congresses," where citizens examine critical issues affecting freedom of religion, speech, press, petition, and assembly. Many groups support the work of the congress through associate membership, and ALA is one such group. Resolutions from the congresses are widely disseminated to decision makers in government, business, media, and education.

The 1991 First Amendment Congress convened at the Virginia State Capitol Building on Sunday October 27, 1991, in the very rooms where the Bill of Rights was adopted in December 1791. Most speakers also served as facilitators for topic group sessions, where resolutions were written.

The conference attracted several hundred participants, many of them journalists and lawyers. Librarians numbered four, all from Virginia and representing the Virginia Library Association and ALA.

Included among attendees were retired Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Warren E. Burger; Robert O'Neil, director of the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression and former president of the University of Virginia; Hodding Carter III, president of MainStreet and former assistant secretary of state for public affairs; Suzanne Schafer, military affairs correspondent for the Associated Press; and others.

*(Cont. on page 25)*

**When your automation plans call for**

**MARC conversion**

LC or Sears

**Marcive/PAC**

PAC/Editor

**Authorities processing**

Notification service

Library of Congress

Medical headings (MeSH)

**Shipping List Service (SLS)**

To process GPO shipments

**GPO Depository Service**

Most accurate database

Matching authorities

**GPO CAT/PAC**

Gov docs catalog on CD-ROM

Includes newly shipped titles

**Come see us at ACRL in Salt Lake City, booth 624!**

**Marcive®**

P.O. Box 47508

San Antonio, TX 78265

(512) 646-6161

**1-800-531-7678**

FAX (512) 646-0167

FINAL FUNDING LEVELS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1992

PROGRAM	FY 91 FUNDING	FY 92 FUNDING
GPO SuDocs	\$25,745,000	\$26,327,000
HEA II-B lib. training	651,000	5,000,000
II-B lib. research	325,000	325,000
II-C research libraries	5,855,000	5,855,000
II-D college lib. tech.	3,904,000	6,404,000
IV-C college work study	594,681,000	615,000,000
VI international educ.	28,669,000	34,000,000
VI-A, Sec. 607 foreign jrls.	0	500,000
Library of Congress	305,071,000	322,228,000
LSCA I public library services	83,898,000	83,898,000
II pub. lib. construction	19,218,000	16,718,000
III interlibrary cooperation	19,908,000	19,908,000
V for. lang. mtrls. pub. libs.	976,000	976,000
VI library literacy	8,163,000	8,163,000
National Agricultural Library	16,798,000	17,715,000
National Archives	126,969,000	146,143,000
Natl. Ctr. for Educ. Statistics	63,524,000	77,213,000
NCLIS	732,000	831,000
Natl. Endowment for Humanities	170,005,000	175,955,000
Natl. Historical Pubs. & Records Com.	5,250,000	5,400,000
National Library of Medicine & MLAA	91,408,000	100,303,000
Postal revenue forgone subsidy	472,592,000	470,000,000

(WHCLIS cont. from page 22)

When I attended the first group meeting on "Access to Government Information in the Electronic Age," I took along a copy of the WHCLISII recommendations. It turned out that the members were thrilled to have language already written upon which we could draw for resolutions. In particular, WHCLISII Recommendation No: ACC04-1, which calls for Congress to amend the Freedom of Information Act, was used as a prototype for one of the First Amendment Congress resolutions.

The resolution on amending the Freedom of Information Act calls for a national conference to draft strategies for addressing the complex problems of electronic access to government information at all levels. Library associations, including ALA, will be invited to participate in the national conference, and the WHCLISII recommendations will undoubtedly be useful once again.

Other WHCLISII recommendations that were useful in our discussions include those regarding open access to government information regardless of format (NIP03-1) and inappropriate classification of public information (NIP03-4).

I was somewhat surprised by the praise heaped on librarians by almost everyone I met. The lawyers and journalists voiced sincere appreciation for the resources and services they find in libraries, as well as for the librarians they encounter. I heard many comments about what great lobbyists librarians are, and how we can get the ear of politicians when others cannot. It seems librarians have a reputation for being politically neutral and primarily concerned with the public interest and ethical issues such as unrestricted access to public information, privacy protection for library users, fundamental principles of the Freedom of Information Act, and intellectual freedom. One law professor from the University of Florida said some of his profession's causes would have been lost over the past four years if it had not been for the support of librarians.

I hope other ALA and ACRL members will find similar opportunities to utilize WHCLISII recommendations. Only through promoting the recommendations and maintaining the network of those interested in public policy as it relates to library issues can the work of WHCLISII continue to be effective. ■ ■