

Presentation
Of
Congressman John E. Fogarty

At The
Luncheon Session
Of The
"Institute on Education in the Later Years"

Higbee Auditorium
Cleveland, Ohio

January 5, 1967

"The Years Will Be Better"

It was with sincere pleasure that I accepted the gracious invitation of Dr. Long to share in this, your 20th Anniversary Program, and add my wholehearted support to the theme of today's "Institute on Education in the Later Years."

I regret that I was not able to hear Mr. Seltzer this morning updating the subject of the presentation he made 20 years ago as the first speaker for "Live Long and Like It." Certainly his topic, "Your Community Needs You," could not be more timely 20 years later.

We are all grateful to Mrs. Bing who first suggested that the Cleveland Public Library embark on such an educational program and the entire field of aging has been enriched by the imagination and leadership that Dr. Fern Long has given to the "Live Long and Like It" Program from its beginning in 1946. I am told that the program has been widely imitated but never duplicated.

In preparing for today's Institute and knowing of Mr. Seltzer's book, "The Years Were Good," I would like to direct my remarks to "The Years Will Be Better" - with emphasis on the vital role that libraries and programs such as this will play in making them so.

Perhaps you should know that I am speaking also as a "librarian" since I am an honorary member of the Rhode Island Library Association, and last year I was presented

a Lifetime Honorary Membership in the American Library Association. So today I can speak with equal conviction as a member and as a legislator, who has continued to look to the libraries for leadership and who has even more confidence in the stewardship of influence they will exert on the place of education in the lives of today's and tomorrow's older Americans.

Few measures have passed Congress with a greater potential than the Library Service and Construction Act, and few bills have given me the personal satisfaction I received from the support I gave this legislation.

It was clearly evident in the proceedings of the White House Conference on Aging held almost six years ago, that the one recurring theme throughout each of the twenty sections was the need for more education and a better understanding of all of the factors that balance out to make an enjoyable, meaningful and productive use of the later years.

What was not spelled out as clearly as we now believe it should have been is the unique place of the libraries in implementing such programs. This is not a reflection on the fine representation the American Library Association had among the delegates, but a failure on the part of many of the others to know and appreciate the extent of the programs that were being carried out at the community levels.

We can always blame the effectiveness of our channels of communication and perhaps this is no exception. There

is a need to know and be aware of the resource that a library represents in the community for all age groups, but even more so for the mature adult who must continue to be stimulated mentally throughout the added years at the risk of regressing if he does not accept the challenge.

I was sorry the American Library Association discontinued its very effective newsbulletin developed during the White House Conference on Aging. It was extremely well done and if continued might have done the very job of public education so badly needed to give the program its rightful recognition. Perhaps as the new library, education and aging grant programs develop, the newsbulletin may be revived.

I am sure that I do not have to convince this audience, but it has been generally accepted that as a location for programs for adults with differing economic, social and religious backgrounds, the library is regarded as a prestige - neutral setting. It does not have to overcome any of the reservations individuals may have about any of the other locations.

Perhaps my greatest criticism of many of the libraries of the past is their architecture which has created barriers to their use by older or even younger handicapped persons who find it difficult or impossible to climb the steps or make use of their facilities. We are now making every attempt to eliminate these restricting features in all

future buildings as well as developing ways to overcome them in existing structures. I am also very much pleased with the programs that have been created to bring the services to those persons who are unable to come to the library.

I am indebted to Germaine Krettek, the director of the Washington Office of the American Library Association for adding to my knowledge about the libraries' responsibility to the aging. At a meeting in New York, I asked her "what libraries were doing in relation to aging." Needless to add, I received a very impressive documentation of the many areas and activities that adequately answered my question.

As a matter of fact, I would recommend as good reading the text of the inaugural address delivered by Mary V. Gaver at the 85th Annual Conference in New York City last July, and the testimony given by Eleanor Phinney, the Executive Secretary of the Adult Services Division of the American Library Association before the Senate Subcommittee on Aging last May.

In each of these presentations, the place of the library as the center for continuing education was emphasized. I was impressed with the flexibility of library programs and the ease with which they were able to adapt to changing conditions, new social trends and emerging ideas that needed a showcase for experimentation and demonstration.

At the risk of repeating what some of you may know, I would like to share a statement prepared by the Committee on Library Service to an Aging Population, as adopted by their Board of Directors.

This document was actually prepared by the Adult Services Division two years ago - but I cannot find anything in its wording that has or will change - except to expand.

THE LIBRARY'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE AGING

"Aging is a life-long attribute of man which consequently has daily, personal implications for each person in our society. The social, economic, and biologic problems resulting from the process of aging place a responsibility on every school, public and academic library, and every special library having a general education function, as well as those libraries with a specific concern for the problems and needs of the aging and the aged.

These libraries serve their communities by:

1. contributing to a positive, wholesome attitude toward aging and the aged
2. providing information and education on the subject and its problems for the professional and the layman who work with this group, for those who are aging, and for those who are retired
3. demonstrating by example in the library profession and in the use of volunteers the potential contribution to society of the retired or eligible to retire.
4. facilitating the use of library service by the aged
5. providing library service appropriate to the special needs of this group
6. working with other institutions and groups concerned with these problems and needs
7. continually exploring ways of making these services more effective

Such service should respect the existing philosophy of library service, should use the traditional library materials and services, should maintain adequate standards, and unless the library is a specialized library serving the aging or the aged, should serve the aging and the aged as a part of integrated adult services."

As we prepare for Congress to reconvene, many of the items demanding immediate attention may not at first glance appear to be library - or educationally related - and yet they should be.

In spite of all the publicity given to Medicare preceding its enactment, there is widespread misunderstanding that only education and experience can eliminate. That is why I would hope for a dynamic public informational program to relate the legislation that I introduced last year, known as Livingcare or the Health Education Act of 1966 and the Social Security Amendments of 1966 which I plan to introduce again.

It is urgent that the elderly as well as others understand the full intent of such programs so they might react intelligently on an informed basis.

One is to meet and fill a void untouched by the Medicare program to authorize grants for planning, establishing and operating regional health and community protection centers for persons attaining age 50 who requests the services and resides within the geographic area served by the center.

The Social Security Amendments are again focused on

correcting and improving some of the provisions that are inequitable and out-dated in today's economy.

An increase in benefits related to the Consumer Price Index with retirement age for men lowered to 62 and realistic changes being offered in the eligibility requirements for disability benefits are but a few of the recommendations being made.

As part of the over-all program for older persons, it is essential that they be informed of the effects of legislation and they as responsible citizens owe it to their representatives in the Congress to let their reactions be known.

Many other legislative proposals are being made that will also demand the attention of all persons concerned with representing the best interests of the elderly and the national economy.

I do not presume to suggest that all of the present legislation has been implemented and I am especially concerned that the purposes of the Older Americans Act are also understood by the Librarians and the American Library Association. To date, I do not recall many grants that have been made under the various titles of the Older Americans Act that give visibility or demonstrate the expanded role that can be taken by the library and those in a position to cooperate.

I have been very much impressed with a program of continuing adult education in Washington, known as the

Institute of Lifetime Learning. As a pilot program, it has proven the interest of older persons in a curriculum that encompasses 66 courses - and in its last session enrolled 580 mature adults from 55 to 92 years of age.

It would seem to me that a cosponsored Institute of Lifetime Learning might very well be developed in every community that offers an adult service in its library program using the resources of nearby colleges, universities and extension courses.

I believe that the increase in the senior center programs offers a challenge to the local libraries to make certain that something more than recreation is offered to the members.

I am aware that I have charged the libraries with a large share of the responsibility for creating a framework for continuing education for mature adults. I do it knowingly with a feeling the confidence is well placed. There is a sense of pride in carrying out the professional aspects of the work, and a dedication to public service that seems to be a prerequisite for the position.

I was surprised to read that in 1966 there were only 31,000 librarians. I am reminded of the remark made by one of my fellow congressmen about the League of Women Voters who said: "Only 146,000 of them? I thought there were millions."

And so it is with the effectiveness of your group. Over the last twenty years, a truly remarkable program has been achieved with relatively few people.

Today, with legislation authorized to support and expand your facilities and services, the years ahead will be better because we are directing our joint efforts toward implementing, developing and initiating new ways to eliminate poverty; educate the functional illiterate; create opportunities for service; and to establish a climate for high-level wellness and positive living for all ages - that will measure up to the standards and goals that are attainable for all citizens in our society - regardless of age.