

United States Congress, Senate. 1973. *Hearings, Reports, and Prints of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare*. U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., pg. 490.

Historical Note

In June 1973, a conference was held at the Winterthur Museum in Delaware. It was called primarily to attempt to quantify the known conservation training needs in the United States as a whole and to compare those needs with currently available capability for training. At the conference were directors of the then-existing training programs, representatives of public and private agencies potentially capable of proving financial support for conservation programs, and individuals with wide-ranging concerns about the nation's need for more and better conservation work.

Conference attendees recommended the establishment of an advisory council to provide a forum for coordinated planning and voluntary cooperation among existing and projected conservation training programs. Initial funding for the expenses of the organization was obtained from the National Museum Act. The group held its organizational meeting in November 1973 at the Arts and Industries Building in Washington, D.C. to develop further its structure and purpose and to adopt by-laws. The organization was named the National Conservation Advisory Council (NCAC), and its purpose was stated to be the provision of a national forum for planning and cooperation among institutions and programs concerned with the conservation of cultural property in museums, historic properties, libraries, archives, and other types of collections in the United States.

Its first efforts included assessing national Conservation needs in training, research, and publications; seeking ways to meet these needs; and studying the advisability of creating a national institute for conservation, including such laboratory facilities, training programs and other activities on a national basis as might be found to be appropriate.

The executive committee of the NCAC included: Chairman, Edward R. Gilbert, Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum; Vice Chairman, Charles Van Ravenswaay, Winterthur Museum; Executive Secretary, Gretchen Gayle, Smithsonian Institution; and members, Norbert S. Baer, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, Robert L. Feller, National Gallery of Art Research Project, Mellon Institute, Sheldon Keck, Cooperstown Graduate Programs.

After these initial efforts, NCAC evolved to become a nonprofit, independent, public policy organization dedicated to preserving the cultural, historic, and scientific heritage of the United States. The organization has identified threats to collections and has responded with practical and pioneering solutions. Its special initiatives, reports, and programs have made decision makers, conservation professionals, and the general public aware of the immediate attention required to reduce the risks of losing America's cultural heritage. NCAC later became known as the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property (NIC), and then ultimately became Heritage Preservation in 1997.