

Memorandum -- Julius Rosenwald Fellowships

What was true of the scientists was true of the promising young artists who, even more than teachers, needed enough secure support to enable them to study and work in a field highly speculative as to early financial rewards. The intangible fields, in fact, have been the most difficult for self-starting, but usually most dramatic in their successes. Fellows of the calibre of Lawrence, Douglass, Woodruff in art; Buggs, Luvalle, Lawson in science; Motley, Bontemps, Hayden and Hughes in literature; Marion Anderson, Kenneth Spencer, Still and Work in music, etc., etc., are brilliant testimony to the value of these awards. Indeed, the level of excellence established by the Fellows themselves soon created an atmosphere in which the award itself was an enviable recognition of merit much to be desired.

The more conspicuous public examples of developed talent at times obscured the fact that equal excellence was being manifested in positions less accessible to public view and recognition. The substantial and mature teachers, the skilled administrators, the rural specialists,

M E M O R A N D U M

RE: Julius Rosenwald Fellowships

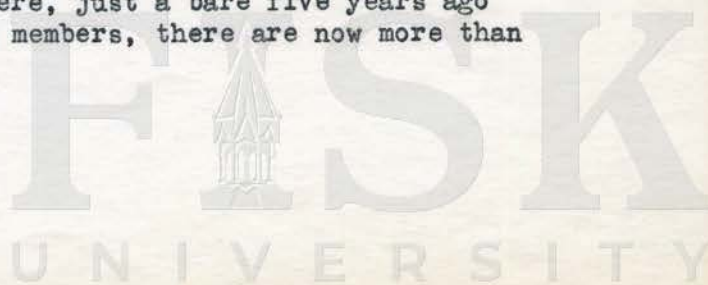
The work of the Fund in progressively improving the schools in the South -- elementary, secondary, etc., would normally expect to reach a limit in available and superiorly trained personnel, unless at the same time such personnel could be developed. The colleges as they existed could provide better teachers for the elementary and secondary schools, but there was little or no provision for providing personnel for colleges, especially when these reached the point, under pressure of necessity, of offering graduate work in selected lines.

The economically exhausting experience of completing college tempted many of the graduates, and paradoxically, the brightest ones, to accept employment on the illusory hope of saving enough to continue graduate work later -- this all too seldom happened.

One of the programs of the Fund that helped to span this gap was the Fellowship program which gave a lift to the brightest of these prospects for graduate work and made it possible for them to continue graduate work and made it possible for them to continue their development before the ennui of hopelessness set in.

The road to specialization is a long and hard and expensive one. Either a student would have to "spot in" graduate work, during summers or on offyear on the meager savings of four or five years of work, or drop out and settle down in the uninspiring routine of a safe job. There are few institutions with competent Ph. D.'s on their faculties who have not had the benefit of some such Fellowship lift.

But the Fellowship as a by-product did even more than improve the educational institutions. By careful selection of candidates for these awards, the program over the years helped to develop a new group of superior mentalities who went far in opening new opportunities for Negroes in hitherto untried fields. The opportunity for advanced study in the fields of physics and chemistry developed advanced specialists, not only for teaching, but for pure research in the larger universities and for advanced posts in industry and government. A battery of young scientific specialists was ready when the demand came for competent mathematicians and physicists for nuclear research, as research and teaching assistants at the universities of the North and West where they prepared, then paved the way for the introduction of Negro scholars to the faculties of these institutions. Where, just a bare five years ago there were but two or three such faculty members, there are now more than 75.



Memorandum -- Julius Rosenwald Fellowships

What was true of the scientists was true of the promising young artists who, even more than teachers, needed enough secure support to enable them to study and work in a field highly speculative as to early financial rewards. The intangible fields, in fact, have been the most difficult for self-starting, but usually most dramatic in their successes. Fellows of the calibre of Lawrence, Douglass, Woodruff in art; Buggs, Luvalle, Lawson in science; Motley, Bontemps, Hayden and Hughes in literature; Marion Anderson, Kenneth Spencer, Still and Work in music, etc., etc., are brilliant testimony to the value of these awards. Indeed, the level of excellence established by the Fellows themselves soon created an atmosphere in which the award itself was an enviable recognition of merit much to be desired.

The more conspicuous public examples of developed talent at times obscured the fact that equal excellence was being manifested in positions less accessible to public view and recognition. The substantial and mature teachers, the skilled administrators, the rural specialists, the college administrators whose frequently unglamorous work makes possible the growth of institutions and extends unnoticed into communities, are results of these Fellowships of which the Fund is as proud as of its shining lights.

The philosophy of the Fellowship program initiated with Negroes logically carried over to white southerners who, despite their somewhat superior position with reference to local opportunities, were nevertheless at a disadvantage in the matter of aid over a period of preparation for social pioneering in the South itself. The pioneering was not necessarily a matter of race relations, but in the fields of regional economics, history, education and free creative expression in literature and art. The results have been equally rewarding in the development of journalists, writers, social scientists, and educational administrators who have contributed to the advancement of their fields, introduced greater insights into the region and extended the range of communication between regions and the peoples of these regions.

CSJ/ila
February 10th, 1948

