

NEA GETS A SUPREME WAKE-UP CALL

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled today that there is no constitutional prohibition against Congress setting decency standards for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

Catholic League president William Donohue was delighted with the decision:

“It was due to the elitism and the moral depravity of the artistic community that this issue was raised in the first place.

“Virtually every other segment of the population understands that when the public is forced to pay for goods or services, public accountability is expected to follow in train. Not so with artists. In their supreme arrogance, they believe that they have a right to empty a man’s pockets to pay for their work without ever submitting themselves to public scrutiny. Moreover, the average museum buff comes disproportionately from the ranks of the upper-class, meaning that the poor are coerced into paying for the leisure of the rich. This is a form of classism and privileging that real democrats should abhor. Indeed, in the interest of fairness to the poor, a better case could be made to subsidize professional wrestling than funding the arts.

“The Supreme Court saw through the bogus argument that First Amendment rights are violated when public monies are denied to those who trash the culture. The Karen Finleys of this world who are bent on making a spectacle of themselves have every right to find private sources of funding for their depravity, but they have no constitutional lien on the public purse. In short, this is a victory for common sense, as well as decency, and it does absolutely nothing to endanger freedom of speech.

“The Catholic League will now increase its efforts to halt NEA funding of the Manhattan Theatre Club, the producer of the gay Jesus play, ‘Corpus Christi.’”

SEN. D’AMATO GETS IT WRONG WITH HORMEL NOMINATION

New York Senator Alfonse D’Amato is defending the nomination of James Hormel to be ambassador to Luxembourg, saying that “I fear that Mr. Hormel’s nomination is being obstructed for one reason, and one reason only: the fact that he is gay.” D’Amato added that the future of the Republican Party “depends on tolerance and respect for people’s individual talents.”

William Donohue says Senator D’Amato misses the point:

“The Catholic League agrees with Senator D’Amato that James Hormel should not be denied the post of ambassador to Luxembourg on the basis of his sexual orientation. We also agree that tolerance is a worthy virtue. But we do not agree that this empties the issue.

“When Senator Tim Hutchinson gave James Hormel the opportunity to denounce anti-Catholicism, Hormel refused to do so. The question had to be asked given Hormel’s applause for the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a notorious anti-Catholic gay group in San Francisco. The fact that Hormel laughed at the nun-dressed drag queens when covering a gay pride parade for KOFY-TV in San Francisco in 1996, and showed support for their antics, is something that a) should never have been done and b) should have been quickly and unambiguously retracted once Senator Hutchinson opened the door for him to do so.

"Hormel has chosen to slam the door on Catholics and now wants to be an ambassador to a nation that is 97 percent Catholic. Senator D'Amato, a Catholic himself, has an obligation to confront Hormel on this issue. If he doesn't, it means that all his talk about tolerance is nothing but hot air."