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IFRT REPORT

From the Chairperson, David W. Brunton

John Phillip Immroth
1936-1976

John Phillip Immroth, Phil to his host of friends, grew up in Colorado. He was born in La Junta in 1936 and attended Pueblo Jr. College. He received his BA and MA degrees from the University of Colorado, and his library degree from the University of Denver. He had been teaching in the library school at the University of Pittsburgh since earning his PhD there in 1968.

Phil was instrumental in organizing the Intellectual Freedom Round Table and was our first chairperson. This past week we were all shocked to learn that Phil had died suddenly while attending a meeting of the Pennsylvania Library Association. He leaves his wife Barbara and two sons, Christopher and Andrew.

I first met Phil at the 1973 Las Vegas conference where IFRT was founded. I wish I had known him longer. He was a good friend and an inspiration. I hope that some fitting memorial can be planned for our business meeting at the Chicago conference.

My IFRT colleagues join me in mourning Phil's death.

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"What's to say? I wept when I heard. Phillip was my friend. He provided the momentum and ideas that started IFRT; it was his creation. I needed him next year, when I am to serve as chairperson, for inspiration and guidance. Now he is gone."--John M. Carter

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"It is always difficult to accept the death of a person who, by any reasonable expectation, should have had many more years of active service yet to come, and it is especially hard when that person was someone as vigorous and stimulating as Phil Immroth. I first got to know him when we were both serving on the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee, where I was always impressed with his ability to get to the heart of every issue and come up with a response that was both faithful to intellectual freedom principles and pragmatically feasible; I am sure that all of us who served with him had our own conception of

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM ROUND TABLE
1975-76

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Jean-Anne South - FTRF

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Janice Beck (1977)

Jeanne S. Bagby (1976)

David Cohen (1977)

Irma Freeman Dillon (1977)

Terry Hubbard (1977)

John Mielke (1977)

Nominating Committee (standing)

Barbara Immroth, Ch.*

Zoia Horn

Susan Kamm

Jane Robbins

Kathleen Wiederholt

*Executive Committee members

The IFRT REPORT is issued irregularly to all members of the Intellectual Freedom Round Table of the American Library Association. All IFRT members are also entitled to order the bimonthly ALA NEWSLETTER ON INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM at the special reduced rate (\$4.00 per year) authorized by the IFRT Executive Committee. Orders for the NEWSLETTER ON INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM should be sent to: IFRT Staff Liaison, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, Ill. 60611. Payment must accompany all orders.

intellectual freedom clarified by the debates in which he was always a forceful and stimulating leader. It was only natural that when he left the Committee he should want to find a way to involve a greater part of the ALA membership in intellectual freedom issues, which led him to become the prime mover in the founding of the Intellectual Freedom Round Table. Now Phil is gone, but the Round Table endures - the best possible memorial to Phil Immroth will be a Round Table that continues to work as vigorously and faithfully as he for the principles that he believed were basic to our profession."--Paul Cors

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"I am grief-stricken at Phil's death, though not only personally, but also because of what he was for all of us. He was a rare and original thinker in so many areas. The idea of the IFRT, as an organization with a popular base and participation, was only one, though an important one of these. What I remember more are the honesty, indeed audacity, with which he supported his positions without compromise, and with a total lack of the cynicism which sometimes accompanies the defense of freedom.

"The intellectual freedom he endorsed was only part of a broad, democratizing process he hoped would pervade the profession. It extended to areas as far removed, substantively, from issues of a free press as the certification of librarians. In all these areas he had developed, with subtlety and sincerity, attitudes that were not antiestablishment, even while they were non-establishment.

"With him we have lost a force that worked quietly and passionately for reform in a manner that was as gentle as it was brave."--Evelyn Geller

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"Phillip was truly an irreplaceable resource and personality for IFRT. His knowledge of ALA policy and intellectual freedom activities within ALA brought IFRT into existence without policy errors and ready to go into action. For those of us lucky enough to have worked with Phillip outside of ALA, we know that his devotion to the principles of intellectual freedom were evident in his role as library educator and active community and church member. Phillip's presence in our world is already missed - and ALA's gala Centennial celebration must be celebrated with extra verve as it will be necessary to work hard to make some impact attempting to replace his fun-loving spirit. He would want us to have a super time!"--Jane Robbins

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"I got to know Phil as more than an ALA colleague when Woodward and Bernstein were too chicken to show up as the chef d'oeuvre of his stint as chairperson of the annual conference program for the newly founded IFRT. He was standing in the lobby of the insensitive New York Hilton looking as if he were ready to bolt. 'I'll buy you a drink,' I said. He smiled in that quick almost apologetic way he had with that facial expression. We sat in a dark recess of the bar and over a long drink we talked to the point that we had become trusting of one another. Phil did not philosophize about intellectual freedom. He knew that it meant the right of the individual to make choices. He knew that without that ability to make choices the individual became less than rational and forgiving. Phil had made choices in his lifetime. He was rational and forgiving. He wanted more people in librarianship to understand intellectual freedom. The existence of the IFRT is his legacy. It would

have been easier on us all if Phil were still with us. It isn't going to be that way. All of us are going to have to try and pick up the sudden slack his death has caused."--Jerry Shields

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"Phil will lodge in my memory as a constant and strong advocate of intellectual freedom, not only as it touched materials, but especially as it was linked with the intellectual life of the individual. He was an intent listener and prober, and always a keen reactor. After the beginning of the IFRT I was very much impressed by his insistence on membership involvement. The IFRT constitution - with its clarity - is a credit to him. He was most recently concerned with deepening grass roots efforts which I hope will keep his memory green."--Clara O. Jackson

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"I just want to say that I had the privilege of working with Phil Immroth over the last six years. He was a fine person and committed to the principles of librarianship. In the area of intellectual freedom, his persistent efforts have contributed much to the development of many successful programs and endeavors."--Jean-Anne South

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"John Phillip Immroth will be sorely missed by his friends. Professionally one asks (though it is not in the best taste to do so), Why Phil? Selfishly, I say, the profession needs so desperately the Phil Immroths - men of substance, character, intellect, fortitude and sincerity - who do a job because of belief and commitment, not just give lip service and showmanship. My most sincere condolences are extended to his family."--Ella G. Yates

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"Contrary to those whose views of society are tempered by cynicism, I believe the integrity of our social fabric depends on certain strong cords of noble purpose. We need those who are devoted to tolerance, and to the achievement of our social goals within a matrix of freedom and decency. Thus are we all diminished by the sudden passing of John Phillip Immroth. I was honored to count him my friend."--Roger Funk



I.F. Stone to Speak at IFRT Program

I.F. "Izzy" Stone has accepted an invitation to speak at the Intellectual Freedom Round Table program to be presented during the 1976 Annual Conference on Wednesday, July 21. In a letter to R. Dean Galloway, program committee chairperson, the indefatigable author and social critic promised to cover "the Jeffersonian waterfront" in remarks on the First Amendment as the foundation of the republic.

Now a contributing editor of the New York Review of Books, Mr. Stone is one of America's foremost proponents of intellectual freedom. His singular--and too often single-handed--opposition to governmental suppression of information made his famous Weekly one of the most remarkable commentaries ever published on machinations in Washington.

On Monday morning, July 19, at 10:00 a.m., the Children's Services Division's Intellectual Freedom Committee and National Planning of Special Collections Committee will present a program on intellectual freedom in children's services which will be co-sponsored by the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee and the IFRT. Speakers for "Intellectual Freedom and Children: 1876-1976" will include Mary Cable and Margaret Coughlan.

On Monday afternoon at 2:00 p.m., the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee will present "Freedom in America: The Two-Century Record." This program will explore--through multimedia and live presentations--the history of the First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and the press and librarians' defense of intellectual freedom in their institutions.

A complete listing of intellectual freedom programs and committee meetings at the Centennial Conference will be mailed to IFRT members in June.



FTRF Takes "Community Standards" Case to High Court

On April 10 the Freedom to Read Foundation filed a petition with the U.S. Supreme Court asking the high bench to review the "local community standards" case of Iowan Jerry Lee Smith, who was convicted in federal court in 1975 after he mailed sexually explicit materials from his firm in Des Moines to an Iowa postal drop used by federal inspectors.

The Foundation, which also supported Smith's appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, believes the trial court erred in failing to instruct the jurors to use the "community standards" established by the state legislature in 1974 when it decriminalized so-called obscenity for adults.

In its famous Miller decisions of 1973, the Supreme Court declared that there are no "national" First Amendment standards on sexually frank fare, and in effect said that states could be tough or ignore the "problem" altogether, depending on "local standards."

In its ruling on Smith's case, the Court of Appeals said that in federal prosecutions, federal law alone applies, and that federal obscenity law permits jurors to use their "inborn" and "often undefinable" notion of community standards. This ruling, the Foundation told the Supreme Court, denies Smith due process of law.



From the OIF MEMO

The following items have been excerpted from the monthly OIF MEMORANDUM, which the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom sends to members of the intellectual freedom committees of the 50 state library associations.

1976 Midwinter Meeting: ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee

International concerns. Meeting with representatives of the International Relations Committee, the IFC considered the U.S. government's denial of a visa to Hugo Blanco, a Peruvian author. Blanco applied for a visa in July 1975 in order to visit the U.S. for a speaking tour. In November, the State Department denied Blanco's request, citing "his previous terrorist activities and his affiliation with certain communist organizations." The visa denial was protested by a wide variety of citizens and politicians for its violation of the Helsinki Agreement and the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

After discussing the matter, the IFC determined that the State Department's allegations regarding Blanco's background were undocumented, and it was the consensus of the Committee and the IRC representatives that the visa denial was clearly an infringement of Blanco's rights and the rights of American citizens. A joint IFC-IRC resolution protesting the State Department's decision was adopted by the ALA Council on January 23.

Federal Legislation. In July, a subcommittee of the IFC was appointed to study the implications of S. 2 and H.R. 2189, introduced in the current Congress to repeal the so-called Fairness Doctrine. The subcommittee's findings regarding the First Amendment implications of the proposed repeal were reported to the IFC at Midwinter. After considerable discussion, the Committee decided that the questions raised were too complex and the implications too contradictory for a quick decision. The subcommittee will investigate the bills further, and it is hoped the IFC will be able to present a position statement at the 1976 Annual Conference.

The Committee also reviewed the status of S. 1, the highly controversial bill to revise and codify the federal criminal code. The Committee learned that Representatives Kastenmeier, Mikva and Edwards had introduced an alternative bill in the House, H.R. 10850, which departs from the repressive pattern of S. 1 in two areas of concern to the ALA: obscenity and espionage. H.R. 10850 would eliminate all federal obscenity statutes and retain current espionage law.

[Shortly after ALA's Midwinter sessions, Senator McClellan, sponsor of S. 1, announced he was willing to withdraw S. 1's troublesome sections on government secrets in order to move the measure along.]

Council on Interracial Books for Children. A special issue of the Council on Interracial Books for Children Bulletin distributed at the 1975 Annual Conference in San Francisco described ALA intellectual freedom policies as "pro-racist, pro-sexist, and pro-censorship." The Committee discussed the implications of the Bulletin's charge at some length. It was the belief of the Committee members that the IFC should respond by reaffirming ALA's stand against the infringement of First Amendment freedoms and the Association's

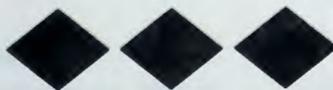
encouragement of minority views. [The IFC's response to CIBC appears as Exhibit VIII in the minutes of the IFRT Executive Committee's 1976 Midwinter sessions.]

Privacy. A matter of considerable discussion by the IFC - and the Board of Trustees of the Freedom to Read Foundation - was the possible effect of the Privacy Act of 1974 on intellectual freedom and libraries. The right to privacy is an emerging area of law. Although it is not specifically granted in the Bill of Rights, many lawyers, citizens, and judges feel that it is a corollary right. As early as 1928, Justice Brandeis recognized privacy as one of the rights which should be most cherished. However, until recently there has been little judicial recognition of it. The Committee's discussion of privacy will be resumed this summer at the 1976 Annual Conference. (From the OIF MEMO, February 1976.)

Freedom of Information

The public's right to know and the individual's right to privacy are values highly prized in our society, but the conflicts inherent in these principles have generated a great deal of public and legislative interest. Following Congress' enactments of the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act of 1974, many states adopted similar measures regulating information dissemination--and collection--on the local level. Access Reports, "a biweekly newsletter on freedom of information and privacy," has issued a report on state legislation in these areas. The report includes a state-by-state run-down of freedom of information and privacy acts and includes complete summaries of each bill's regulations.

Copies of "A Summary of Freedom of Information and Privacy Laws of the Fifty States" are available at \$9.00 each (\$6.00 for subscribers to Access Reports). Orders should be accompanied by a check payable to Plus Publications Inc., and sent to 2814 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007. (From the OIF MEMO, March 1976.)



Your comments and contributions should be sent to: IFRT REPORT,
American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611.