

## Editor's Corner

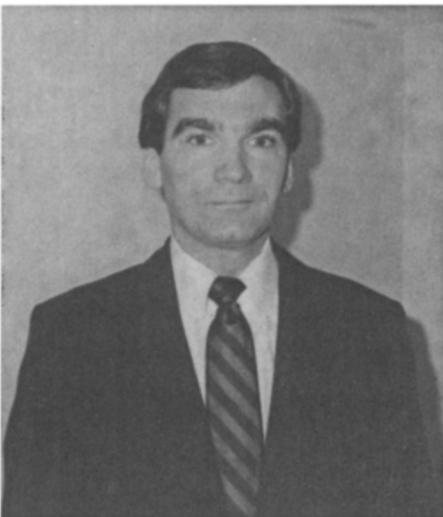
### A Pluralistic Discipline

In the report, "Political Science and the Humanities," in this issue of *PS* the Ad Hoc NEH Liaison Committee delineates the long-standing but sometimes unacknowledged connection between the humanities and political science. As the committee demonstrates, there is no field in political science that is untouched by humanistic concerns.

This point bears repeating for several reasons. In the zeal to be scientific, political scientists may have overstated and overestimated the degree to which fruitful political inquiry can be or ought to be divorced from humanistic traditions. At the same time, however, we seem to have managed to convince others that political science is largely separate from the humanities. The announcement of fellowships awarded by the Rockefeller Foundation or the American Council of

Learned Societies, for example, rarely includes more than one or two political scientists among the award recipients. Yet, as the NEH Liaison Committee documents, much of the work of political scientists is rooted in the humanities.

John Agresto, acting director of the National Endowment for the Humanities, has said in these pages (Summer 1983, pp. 543-545) that what distinguishes the humanities from other disciplines is not methodology but subject matter. I suspect, however, that the methods scholars employ are used as a short-hand way to identify which disciplines fall within the scope of the humanities. As the profession has become more rigorous and systematic in its inquiry and its methods more sophisticated, political science outside the fields of traditional political theory and jurisprudence looks less and less like one of the traditional humanities. To use the mode of inquiry in this way, however, is to misread political science. The discipline is pluralistic in every sense, as are individual political scientists, and it is useful to remind ourselves and others of this fact, as the committee has ably done.



**Gary J. Andres**

### Business and Politics

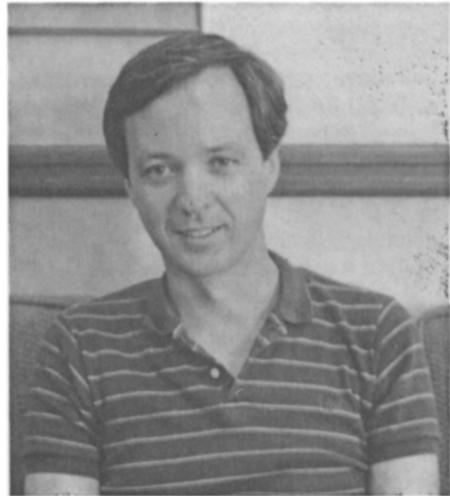
The articles on business and politics in this issue of *PS* underscore this point. David Menninger argues that political scientists ought systematically to study the large corporation. To make his case he raises the kinds of normative questions that should inspire and inform this kind of research: What impact does concentration of corporate wealth have on the ability of a democracy to function? Can dominant corporations "pursue their private interests without forcing significant redefinitions of the public interest"? What are the consequences when private

management is exercised on a public scale, but apart from public values?

Gary Andres reports on his research on corporate political action committees (PACs). He follows Menninger's advice, goes inside the corporation, and looks at decisions made by businesses. Unlike other PAC research, Andres asks why some businesses decide to form PACs and others do not. The key correlates are firm size, industry concentration, and degree of regulation, coupled with perceptions of senior management concerning the usefulness of PACs. Andres concludes by discussing some of the implications, again rooted in humanistic concerns.

### **Annual Meeting**

Annual Meeting Program Chair Joe Cooper of Rice University reported recently to the Council on plans for the annual meeting in New Orleans, Thursday, August 29, through Sunday, September 1. More than 2,000 participants will be serving on 480 panels. The plenary sessions, which will be covered in the Summer issue of *PS*, include the presentation of awards and Richard Fenno's presidential address, a session on reform of the American political system, and one



**David Menninger**

on arms control. The third plenary session will be followed by a jazz concert that promises to knock your socks off.

The concert, organized by Martin Shapiro and Richard Allen, will feature clarinetist Michael White and French jazz musician Jacques Gauthe. To make reservations see the advertisement in the back of this issue of *PS*. See you in New Orleans!

Catherine Rudder