

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE CREATION OF NATIONALITY ROOMS

From the inception of the Nationality Rooms Program in 1926 until the completion of the Irish Classroom in 1957, the following principles governed the creation of the rooms, assuring a basic commonality of purpose, authenticity, and cultural, non-political emphasis:

A Nationality Room must illustrate one of the outstanding architectural or design traditions of a nation that is recognized as such by the United States Department of State. *

The design of a given historical period must be cultural and aesthetic; not political. The period depicted should be prior to 1787, the date of the United States Constitution and the founding of the University of Pittsburgh, with emphasis on cultural roots.

To avoid political implications in the room, no political symbol is permitted in the decorations, not a portrait or likeness of any living person.

The only place a political symbol may be used is in the corridor stone above the room's entrance.

No donor recognition may appear in the rooms except in a Donor Book.

Most architects and designers of the rooms have been born and educated abroad. This has been instrumental in insuring authenticity of design.

*In the 1970s, policy revisions were implemented which, while retaining most of the earlier principles, utilized the broader definition of nation, i.e., a body of people associated with a particular territory and possessing a distinctive cultural and social way of life.

Adoption of this non-political terminology enabled the community to undertake creation of an African Heritage Classroom and Latin American/Caribbean Heritage Room, which represent a continent. It also opened the way for the Armenians and Ukrainians to build rooms their unique cultures.

Prepared by: E. Maxine Bruhns, Director
Based on an excerpt from "Nationality Rooms Book" -1975
Revised June, 2001
(2/97)