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JOHN HAY WHITNEY ACCEPTS HONOR FOR MUSEUM OF MODERN ART FILM LIBRARY

"The appointment of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library as agent of the Library of Congress in recommending motion pictures for preservation in the national collections is a matter of deep satisfaction to the Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art", said John Hay Whitney, President of the Museum and of its Film Library, to the press today following the announcement by Librarian of Congress, Archibald MacLeish, that all films will in future be reviewed for the Library of Congress and the best of them selected for addition to its archives.

"This appointment is the culmination of seven years work", continued Mr. Whitney, "for the Museum of Modern Art Film Library was founded in 1936 to collect and preserve the outstanding motion pictures of the past so that this typically twentieth-century and typically American art might for the first time be studied, as literature or the drama have long been studied. Today the Film Library's collection of 17,100,000 feet of film contains virtually all motion pictures of historic importance produced here or abroad from 1895 to 1936. This success owes much to the fact that the motion picture industry, educators throughout the country and the general public alike have welcomed and supported the idea that the film as a new means of communication truly deserves preservation, revaluation and study. That the work has progressed so well, however, is due to the enterprise of Iris Barry, Curator of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library. Her reputation as expert in the field of the motion picture is world-wide, but I welcome this opportunity to pay tribute to the tireless devotion and the imagination with which she has worked for the recognition of motion pictures as a real force in our present society and as a great and living art.

"The work of reviewing all the new films will be carried out by a special staff under the Curator's direction: Margaret Jones and Barbara Symmes, film analysts and reviewers, Norbert Lusk, former New York film critic of the Los Angeles Times who was for many years editor of Picture Play, and Philip Hartung, until recently film critic of The Commonwealth, have already been appointed to carry out the new activities the cost of which has been subscribed by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Museum of Modern Art jointly. The Film Library will, of course,

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continue all its former activities and will especially concern itself with supplementing and increasing its existing collection of outstanding American films of the past as well as of foreign films of all kinds.

"That the Library of Congress now accords to the motion picture a status and dignity hitherto often denied it by taking steps to preserve films in the national collections is excellent news. The Librarian is to be congratulated on taking this far-sighted step which will guarantee for posterity the opportunity to see and study the living world of today through the most popular of all forms of contemporary expression. 85,000,000 people attend movies every week in the United States. The influence of films is incalculable and merits this recognition, for few would deny that films like The Great Train Robbery, The Jazz Singer, The Plainsman, Sergeant York or the first Mickey Mouse are as much a part of our national background as are Mark Twain's stories, baseball, the songs of Stephen Foster or the assembly line."