

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
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Department of Genetics
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

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Department of Medical Genetics
School of Medicine

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
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Dear Josh:

I was glad to see your refutation of Wyatt's absurd statement that Avery's work was ignored by geneticists for a decade. I did not see Wyatt's paper but have seen the same statement elsewhere.

I referred to Avery's results not only in the 1945 paper which you cite, but also in my introductory remarks (published in Amer. Nat. 79, 289-303, 1945) for a symposium of the American Society of Zoology in September, 1944, which I had organized as President.

As well as I can remember, I first learned about it at Princeton in talking with Stanley. Dr. Opie, Little and I had been asked by Gasser to pass on whether a certain project should be continued or not by the Rockefeller Institute.

I certainly discussed it at length in my course, "Physiological Genetics," at Chicago that year and stressed it from then on. Jim Watson audited it a few years later as an undergraduate. I doubt whether there was a lag of more than one or two years after 1944 before it was common knowledge among geneticists in general. Some lag is not surprising in view of the difference in field. Not many geneticists read the Journal of Experimental Medicine.

With best regards,

Sewall Wright
Emeritus Professor of Genetics

SW:gjw

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