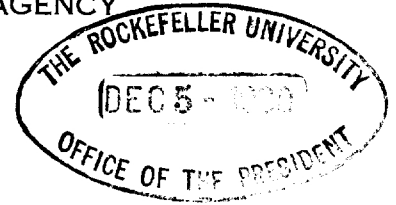




UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460



OFFICE OF PUBLIC AWARENESS

Mr. Joshua Lederberg
President
The Rockefeller University
New York, New York 10021

Dear Joshua:

Thank you very much for your note on my retirement as a full-time civil servant and for the attached American Journal of Medicine editorial, with which I agree absolutely.

While I am not retiring from concern with environmental issues, I have taken all I can of the slings and arrows of the outrageous politization of the information apparatus of the Executive Branch of government brought about by Nixon and continued by Carter.

At the moment, I am still working as a part-time retired annuitant in EPA's Office of Public Affairs. Now that the Republicans have won everything I hope to stick around just long enough to try to keep the predictably hostile and ignorant political appointee who will soon arrive to head this office from utterly ruining the few things that I have had some opportunity to help set right in the last 3 1/2 years. EPA, despite its rather bloated reputation as a relatively progressive organization, has always been inferior to any old line agency you can name when it comes to carrying out reasonably effective public information and participation work.

Your editorial reminds me of one of the major areas of frustration that I have experienced since EPA was created. For the first few years of its existence public support for environmental control was so high that the Agency flourished despite the fact that none of Nixon's political appointees really understood its role and purpose. As for the public health implications, it ran for a while on the lean fuel that had already been produced by the major components of the Agency which came from HEW, and when that ran out, there was nothing. It was not until after Carter became President that an administrator would admit in public that we were an agency basically involved in public health -- a most

amazing revelation. But the institution still suffers from the vacuous traditions of its founders -- lawyers and economists who had gained the upper hand over the handful of scientists and the few literate engineers who had worked in these programs in HEW.

Enough of all that. All I meant to say is that I was greatly pleased to hear from you, and wish you continued success in everything you do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom".

Thomas F. Williams



Enc: October 30, 1980 speech before
the League of Women Voters

AMA Conference agenda