



THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

1230 YORK AVENUE

NEW YORK, NY 10021

May 4, 1981

JOSHUA LEDERBERG

PRESIDENT

Dr. Derek H. Willard
Presidential Candidate
Screening Committee
The University of Iowa
Jessup Hall, Room 102
Iowa City, Iowa 52242

Dear Dr. Willard:

I was very glad to have your letter of April 22nd mentioning the name of Dr. Margery W. Shaw as a nominee for the position of President at your university.

As you doubtless know, the demands of a university presidency are so different from any other stage of academic experience that it is difficult to find either prior training or screening tests that will assure successful performance in that complicated, stressful, and multi-faceted role. Having known Dr. Shaw now for at least 35 years, and followed her scientific and professional careers with great interest and admiration, I think I can give you a reading and believe it will be a very positive one.

Dr. Shaw is one of the most accomplished and notable women scientists that we have in America today. She has been very widely recognized as one of the pioneers of human cytogenetic research: which has required the most deft combination of clinical insight and laboratory analysis. Her bibliography speaks for itself and I have no doubt that she would be found to be one of the most distinguished scientists and scholars to occupy a university presidency anywhere in the country.

Add to that her energy and a sense of responsibility that were reflected in her undertaking a program of legal education and teaching, and then upon that her administrative role at the University of Texas Graduate School at Houston; and it seems to me you will be hard put to find anyone who could have matching credentials in any of the relevant spheres of thought and action. She is also unflappable under stress and a cool-headed moderator of difficult interpersonal situations.

Dr. Derek H. Willard
May 4, 1981

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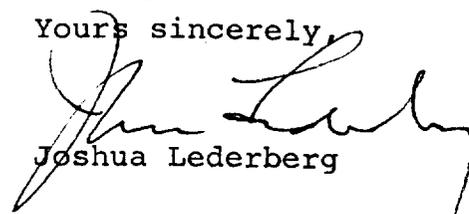
I do not know whether the task would actually be to her own edification, particularly with all of the further political complexities that are involved in a state university today at a time of increasing budgetary and other pressures on support for higher education. She is certainly an eloquent exponent of the whole range of values in higher education; but having had no experience myself in dealing with legislators on crucial budgetary matters, it is a bit difficult for me to project what talents are most required for that role. She does have a beguilingly modest and unassuming manner which should not deceive you as to her decisiveness of purpose; and it just may be that that could be the most successful combination for those particular purposes.

If the detailed texture of the responsibilities of your task are such as to attract her interest after the kind of careful consideration that I know she would give to this as to all other problems, she surely would be among the most highly qualified and eventually successful candidates that you could hope to find.

I would strongly urge that you give her the most serious consideration; and then that you make further inquiries among those who have worked in her immediate ambience for a more detailed assessment of the way she functions in an academic administrative setting, which I can know about only at second hand.

I do not know of another person that I would regard as preferable as a candidate, but without a more material list in front of me it is very difficult for me to make a more concrete assessment.

Yours sincerely,



Joshua Lederberg