



STANFORD UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

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Mrs. Ruth Sternfeld
The Rockefeller University
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Mrs. Sternfeld,

Dr. David Goddard, Home Secretary of the National Academy of Sciences, has asked me to prepare a biographical memoir on the late Professor Edward L. Tatum for publication in that Academy's series. I have regarded it as a privilege to accept that task, in small measure to repay my very large debt to Professor Tatum as my teacher, colleague and close friend.

During the course of my labors, I have collected a variety of documents that I will be happy to share with you for the archives if they should be of interest to you.

Dr. Ray Barratt of Humboldt State University, also a former student of Professor Tatum, told me that shortly after Professor Tatum's death, he had deposited a collection of laboratory notebooks and similar documentation, which I believe has also found its way into your archives. There are still a number of questions that may be very difficult to resolve about the details of Tatum and Beadle's central discovery without better archival documentation than I have so far been able to retrieve. It would be invaluable to be able to pin down some details with respect to dates and experimental plans if the notebooks are still available for the period from about 1939 to 1942. The most critical interval would be approximately January to February 1941. Dr. Barratt was not sure whether this material was included in the collection that he had transmitted, and this is what I am now writing about.

From what Professor Tatum had told me personally, before his death, it is most unlikely that there is any other correspondence or records that would go back to that time, when he was here at Stanford as a research associate and assistant professor. My rather diligent efforts at excavation here at Stanford have also been largely unrewarding. So it is not with any great expectation of a positive answer that I also raise the question whether there are any other papers of that vintage in the archives.

I am enclosing one or two pieces of paper from my current activity that may help to illuminate what I'm looking for.

I expect to be in New York for a week or so early in July, and if the outlook is at all promising, I hope that it might be possible for me to visit both the center and the archives as part of this quest.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg, Professor of Genetics

LT. J. P. KENNEDY, JR. LABORATORIES FOR MOLECULAR MEDICINE, DEDICATED TO RESEARCH IN MENTAL RETARDATION