

STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

STANFORD MEDICAL CENTER
PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA 94304

DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS

August 16, 1967

Area Code 415
311-1200

Dr. Grayson Kirk
President
Columbia University
New York, New York

Dear Dr. Kirk:

Dr. Alan Garen, Professor of Molecular Biophysics at Yale University, has sent me a copy of his letter of August 7 to Dean Merritt of the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

I have to say that the University's participation in the promotion of the Strickmann filter left me with the same odious impression as it did for Dr. Garen, and I have been pondering for some time whether to write you about this. I am sorry to have to say that I was even pleased to see Herblock's cartoon as a more pointed form of criticism than I could possibly produce myself. I believe that these criticisms are entirely justified and I am deeply distressed that the University should have found itself in such an untenable position.

My personal loyalty to Columbia deters me from making such a vehement public protest as is implied by Dr. Garen's boycott of the bi-centennial celebration in October. I realize that it is not possible for you to act on instantaneous notice to reverse a particularly unfortunate decision. It is, therefore, my intention to wait for a reasonable period of time for some more convincing justification of the University's position, or for a reversal of its policy before I address myself publicly to this question.

At this moment I do feel considerably less honored by the prospect of an honorary degree from Columbia than I had before this affair. In the expectation that there may, in the long run, be some better reconciliation, I would not now refuse to accept such an award. However, I believe it important to apprise you, and through you, the Board, of my views on this subject and now that you know my profoundly critical position on it, to give you the opportunity of reconsidering the award of such an honor in that light. I would have to reserve the privilege of expressing my criticism of the University in public ~~time~~ on this issue, in spite of having accepted such an honor, and notwithstanding the added vehemence that might attach to a protest under these circumstances.

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

MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

HEREDITY

NEUROBIOLOGY

DEVELOPMENTAL MEDICINE

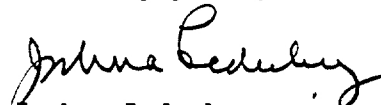
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As a practical matter, and to minimize the irrelevant embarrassment to the University, I would be happy to volunteer my deferral of such a degree if you feel that it would be inappropriate for me to accept it in the light of this controversy.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joshua Lederberg".

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics