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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY
DAVIS, CALIFORNIA

March 15, 1962

Prof. Joshua Lederberg
Dep't of Genetics
Stanford Univ. School of Medicine
Palo Alto, California

Dear Prof. Lederberg:

The project which you are directing, aimed at detecting life forms on Mars and Venus, I find to be of tremendous interest. Although I am not a micro-biologist, I have thought for a long time that I would like to push my research interests in the direction of "space biology"; however, there is so little opportunity to exchange information with people pioneering in this field, that the actual stimulus to begin has so far been lacking.

This is my first year with the Univ. of California, and I had the opportunity this semester to invite Dr. Richard Young, of the NASA Ames Research Center, to present a seminar. This gave me the occasion to talk with him at length (yesterday), and opened my eyes to a number of circumstances I had not realized. I had assumed, for instance, that the extra-terrestrial life program was proceeding with as much sophistication in facilities, engineering personnel, etc. as (for instance) the Mercury astronaut program, and in fact, I thought there was much interchange of facilities and personnel in these two programs within NASA. I was surprised to learn that the space biology group is only now planning its first orbital package, and that the Man in Space program is entirely separate.

I am encouraged to believe that there may be room for a novice to "break into" space biological research, and with this in mind, I hope to visit the Ames laboratory later this spring. At the same time, I am most inspired by the Mars-Venus extra-terrestrial life probes, and I would like to have the opportunity to learn where the problems are, what kind of thinking has been done, and whether there is opportunity for me to participate, through facilities available to me here in Davis.

Ideally, I would like to talk to you, or to one of your associates, when I make the trip to Ames. If you would let me know whether I would be welcome, and the most convenient day of the week, I would like to come sometime in mid-April, and will plan the trip to avoid inconvenience to you or your people.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

E. J. DuPraw
E.J. DuPraw
Ass't Professor

Du Praw