

100 NORTH EUCLID AVENUE

SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI 63108

EUGENE M. BRICKER, M. D.

FOREST 6-1385

April 26, 1966

Michael Ellis DeBakey, M.D.
1200 M.D. Anderson Boulevard
Houston, Texas

Dear Mike:

I am sorry I feel compelled to write this letter, but I must do so. I have talked to quite a few of our colleagues since the advent of your last splurge of publicity and I find that the reaction is pretty much the same, though with varying degrees of intensity. You are held in high regard by most people in your profession, by those who know you well and those who know you only by name. You are admired for your accomplishments and for your contributions to surgery and to medicine. No one doubts your ability, your sincerity, your energy or your dedication. In view of all this it is hard to understand why you will participate in the promotion of a public spectacle that, in my opinion, is an exhibition of extreme poor taste, is not in the best interest of surgery, and does not serve the best interest of your patient or his family. What is your aim? If it is to justify the expenditure of huge sums of grant money, this is something I can understand but would vehemently protest that the end does not justify the means. I cannot imagine any other reason. To me and to those of our colleagues with whom I have discussed this matter the whole episode has been distasteful and embarrassing. It seems also to be unfair to the many other people who are working in the same field, but without the fan-fare you are capable of engendering.

As one of your friends who has known and admired you for years I am taking the liberty of saying that this incident was handled in a way that I consider to be unethical and a discredit to the profession of surgery. These are strong words and I regret feeling forced to say them.

I also feel that your actions should not go unnoticed by the official representatives of surgery of this country. To condone this type of conduct on your part would open the door to similar activities by others whose aims might not be as altruistic as I trust yours are. My first reaction was to send a copy of this letter to those official agencies that might be in a position to take some type of action. This I have decided not to do. I am satisfied to make a vigorous personal protest and to urge you to desist from this type of publicity promoting activity before you lose your friends and the admiration and respect of the rest of the profession.

Sincerely yours,


Eugene M. Bricker, M.D.

EMB:krm