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Betsy ANCKER-JOHNSON, Ph.D.
Vice President

November 9, 1984

Dr. John F. Due
Chair, Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees
University of Illinois
496 Commerce West
1206 South Sixth Street
Champaign, Illinois 61820

Dear Dr. Due:

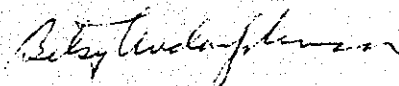
I am delighted to learn that Norm Latker is among the candidates being considered for the award of an honorary degree. I am no less pleased to find myself numbered among those who, because of their long acquaintance with Norm, have been asked to share such personal observations and insights as may be of assistance to your committee in the course of its deliberations.

Norm first came to my attention more than a decade ago when he was the Patent Counsel to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. My position as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Science and Technology carried with it the obligation to chair an interagency committee known as the Committee on Government Patent Policy. Norm was already a member of this committee; indeed, he chaired a subcommittee dealing with university affairs. Almost from the very first moment of my tenure I began to hear about IPA's, short for Institutional Patent Agreements. IPA's were contractual arrangements which Norm had worked out between HEW on the one hand, and a number of research-oriented universities on the other. Each university which entered into an IPA with HEW obligated itself to establish a technology transfer mechanism; in return, the university became eligible to retain title to inventions which it made in the course of HEW-funded research, subject to a royalty-free license in the government.

The success of Norm's program in bringing the fruits of government-funded research to the marketplace was impressive: so impressive, in fact, that the concept underlying the IPA became the cornerstone for a legislative initiative which I sponsored on behalf of the Government Patent Policy Committee. Our first victory came in the form of the government patent policy provision of the Non-nuclear Energy Research & Development Act of 1974. The importance of this achievement resides in the fact that it reversed a thirty-year tradition of increasing governmental control over federally-funded proprietary technology. Norm's contribution to this endeavour was explicitly recognized by President Ford in a congratulatory letter which drew attention to Norm's role as legislative draftsman.

Since that time Norm has gone on to author, as well as to engineer the enactment of, the University and Small Business Patent Act of 1980, as well as the Government Research & Development Patent Policy Act which President Reagan has signed into law today. These accomplishments testify eloquently to Norm's perspicacity, his dedication, and most importantly to his skills as a lawyer and public administrator. What is not obvious is the fact that Norm carried on this struggle in the face of enormous personal risk. Rather than recount the extent of this risk in agonizing detail, I have elected to append to this letter a brief excerpt from a talk which I gave in 1982 to the Society of University Patent Administrators. I do this only to dispel any notion that I have inadvertently exaggerated the travail which Norm endured. His courage in the face of adversity, more than any other quality, entitles Norm to the unmatched esteem in which he is held by his friends, one of which I most certainly am.

Very truly yours,



Enclosure

EXCERPT FROM TALK GIVEN BY BETSY ANCKER-JOHNSON AT THE
SOCIETY OF UNIVERSITY PATENT ADMINISTRATORS ANNUAL MEETING
ON FEBRUARY 2, 1982

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It is a tradition among employes everywhere, and among federal employes certainly, for a departing worker to be escorted to lunch on his final day by a coterie of his friends and office mates. Such occasions can range from the simply bittersweet to the hilarious. And sometimes, very rarely, they can be poignant beyond description. Norm Latker had been fired by Joe Califano and December 12, 1978 was his last day on the job. After 22 plus years of federal service he was being terminated without separation pay for alleged departures from official DHEW policy. I was working at Argonne National Laboratories during this period but arranged to be in Washington on that final day. There were just three of us for lunch, Norm, myself, and Dave Eden, my former special assistant at Commerce who was then with the Department of Energy. Our purpose, Dave's and mine, was to assure Norm of our continuing commitment to the joint undertaking, and more especially to one another. It was not a sad meeting, though the situation itself was grim. We were sustained by the conviction that the Civil Service Commission would ultimately set aside Norm's dismissal as illegal, restoring him to his post with full back pay. This eventually transpired, except that Norm got no back pay since his income as a private patent attorney during the layoff period far exceeded what he would have earned as a civil servant.

It would have helped had we known then that Califano himself would soon be dismissed by the President, and that the President would prove willing to sign into law a policy which Califano had dismissed Norm Latker for espousing.

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