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November 5, 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 pleased to add a strong second to the nomination of Mr. Norman J. Latker for an honorary degree from the University of Illinois. I first turned to him for help in September, 1977, on the basis of his strong record of accomplishment in transferring federally developed technology to the private sector.

He was then the Patent Counsel for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare where he had developed the Institutional Patent Agreement. These agreements established the rights of universities to any inventions that might result from Department funding. Negotiated once for each university, they applied to all Department research grants and contracts on a blanket basis.

These agreements provided the uniformity and certainty that all parties need if an investment is to be made to convert an idea into a useful product. The agreements replaced an older, innovation killing process of Government ownership and case-by-case determining what rights a university might have in specific inventions after the inventions were made. The process had led the Government to be the country's largest patent-owner with a portfolio of 28,000 patents, almost none of which were being used to benefit the economy.

As a result of these agreements, more than 75 lifesaving inventions funded by HEW had been brought to the public market. The General Accounting Office had documented that prior to the Institutional Patent Agreement, virtually no inventions could be traced to any HEW R&D effort. The National Science Foundation had picked up the idea and was also using similar agreements.

Mr. Latker's concepts became a basis for Public Law 96-517, that I introduced along with Senator Birch Bayh and 14 others of my colleagues in September, 1978. This law extends the principle of contract ownership to small businesses,

universities and other nonprofit organizations on a Government-wide basis. These novel concepts were seen as a threat by many members of the Government patent attorney community and the Act would probably not have been used effectively had Mr. Latker not taken a strong stand in developing and implementing the Office of Management and Budget implementing regulations.

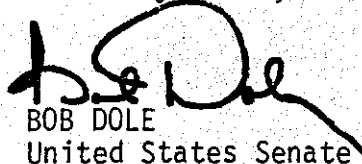
Thanks in large part to his continued efforts, the Act has been successful and has served as the basis for continued improvements in Government patent policy. President Reagan issued a Memorandum extending its principles to nearly all Government R&D contractors. The past Congress passed and the President has just signed an act that I introduced, improving P. L. 96-517 and codifying major elements of the OMB implementing regulations. My staff and I continued to rely on counsel in developing this legislation.

Mr. Latker is recognized through the research and legal communities as a leader in the field of patent law and technology transfer. He is often consulted in his role as expert by agencies and research institutions throughout the world. His list of publications and presentations testify to his leadership in the field. He has spent his career instituting successful approaches to the transferring of federally-supported inventions to the public.

In addition to his vision and professional expertise, Mr. Latker's integrity and loyalty to the principles of our Government that he has shown as a public servant have made him an outstanding citizen. He has made a truly major contribution but in a field that few people know even exists. In my remarks during the recent Senate hearings on my legislation, I pointed out that with the Federal investment in research and development as great as it is, how well the results of the research are used must have a major effect on the national well being. Mr. Latker saw this and started acting on it over fifteen years ago. At that time, the use of Government-funded inventions was very poor. As a result of his efforts, the use has improved continuously.

Consistent with his professionalism, he has not tried to make himself into the public figure that his accomplishments might warrant. As a result, I believe it is particularly appropriate for the University of Illinois to recognize his work with an honorary degree.

Sincerely yours,



BOB DOLE
United States Senate

BD:dcp