

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI 63130

OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH

EDWARD L. MACCORDY

ASSOCIATE VICE CHANCELLOR  
FOR RESEARCH

TELEPHONE  
(314) 889-5889

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

Dear Dr. Due:

The purpose of this letter is to present to you a strong and enthusiastic recommendation that the University of Illinois give special recognition to one of its most accomplished and deserving alumni, Norman Latker, by the award to him of an honorary degree. By my personal knowledge gained through a long professional association with Norm Latker I can attest to the fact that he is an outstanding and devoted public servant, a loyal alumnus, and a person of the highest moral standard who is, without question, a credit to the University of Illinois.

In his long and honorable career with the United States Government, Norm Latker stands out from his colleagues as a visionary, untiring in his efforts to create a productive relationship among Government agencies, the academic community, and private industry based on mutual respect and cooperation. Early in his professional career he recognized the potential of the research resources of the Nation's universities to make a greater direct and material contribution to the health and welfare of our society. He declined to participate in the prevalent adversarial relationship concerning technology transfer then existing between agencies of the Government and the research universities. Instead, although faced with considerable personal and professional risk and lacking both a solid statutory foundation and strong executive support, as an innovative and dedicated official of the National Institutes of Health, and subsequently of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, he embarked on the establishment of an equitable cooperative relationship with the academic community.

During the early years of this initiative, by his sincere acknowledgement of the interests of academic investigators and their institutions he was able to gain widespread trust and confidence among academic administrators. He provided constant encouragement to these administrators to develop the institutional policies and processes necessary for the effective transfer of new biomedical technology from the university laboratory to industrial firms able to mass produce and distribute it to society through established channels of commerce. He instituted a new concept, the Institutional Patent Agreement, which allowed universities to retain ownership of

Dr. John F. Due

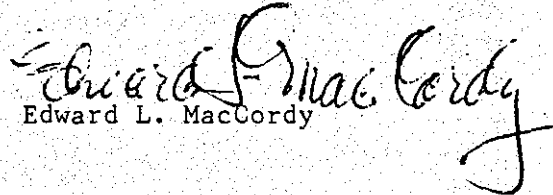
inventions derived from their NIH sponsored research and to manage such inventions with due regard to the interests of the public, the inventor, the university and the Government.

During the 1970's Norm Latker recognized the need for unequivocal statutory authority vesting ownership in the university of university inventions derived from research supported by any agency of the Federal Government. He was instrumental in stimulating Congressional interest in such legislation and provided leadership in organizing university and business support for its passage. After years of untiring efforts and numerous temporary setbacks and disappointments, largely through the initiative and determination of Norm Latker a benchmark law, Public Law 96-517, was enacted. This law, the University Small Business Patent Act, marked the commencement of a new era in the productivity of university technology creation and transfer activities. Norm was instrumental in the drafting and approval by the Office of Management and Budget of strong and implementing regulations which for the first time provided a comprehensive, uniform and productive Government patent policy applicable to universities and small businesses.

As a direct and immediate result of Norman Latker's dedication and devotion to securing the maximum public benefit from the \$5 billion annual Government investment in university research, a productive technology alliance has now been created involving the Federal Government, universities and private industry. We now see an upsurge in cooperative research between industrial and academic scientists and rapidly growing support by private industry of university research. The creativity of university scientists is being stimulated as never before and the benefits of their research are more rapidly and effectively being converted into useful products, processes and services for society. One individual, Norman Latker, can be clearly identified as being primarily responsible for initiating, and successfully pursuing action over the past two decades which has resulted in this new era of cooperation and research productivity. At this writing Norm Latker continues his efforts as an official of the Department of Commerce to prevent erosion of the statutory rights gained by universities and to further improve Government-University-industry cooperation in science and technology.

The University of Illinois has every right to be proud of its illustrious alumnus, Norman Latker. I therefore suggest to you that fitting recognition of his service and accomplishments should be made by the award of an honorary degree. It is extremely well deserved.

Sincerely yours,

  
Edward L. MacCordy