

# THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

*pro bono humani generis*

1230 YORK AVENUE - NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10021-6399

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

August 7, 1989

Dr. Elizabeth Sherman  
Office of the Home Secretary  
National Academy of Sciences  
Washington

Dear Dr. Sherman

It is a pleasure to endorse Dr. Paul Berg's nomination of Arnold O. Beckman for the National Academy of Sciences Public Welfare Medal. His services to the Academy need no further documentation on my part. Dr. Beckman's career as an inventor and entrepreneur, civic leader and philanthropist are equally worthy of the Academy's recognition. The Beckman Instruments Company which is so much his personal creation has become a formidable part of U.S. technology, a worthy exemplar from both an economic and technological standpoint. Those instruments are truly indispensable both to the conduct of biomedical and chemical research, and to life-saving medical diagnostic procedures; and they are also widely used in process control in a wide range of manufacturing industries. We give great credit to scientists for their creative accomplishment, and tend to neglect those who have developed the instrumentation that is so often crucial for those advances.

His leadership as Chairman of Caltech's Board of Trustees on which he served for over twenty years and chaired for ten was an important supporting function for one of the world's premier scientific institutions. More recently he has engaged in a program of philanthropic support for scientific research at a range of academic institutions which is notable not only for its breathtaking magnitude but for the good taste and intensity of discriminating judgment that Dr. Beckman has exercised in a very personal way.

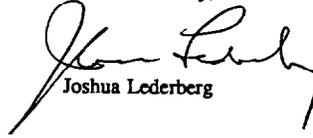
Dr. Beckman has remarked to me what a difficult choice he faced as between an entrepreneurial and an academic career shortly after his invention and marketing of the first electronic pH meter. My response, at a symposium held here in honor of his 85th birthday was:

"The news of science usually concerns what results a scientist has achieved, not how he has found them. The methods and instruments used and developed in the course of a scientist's research are rarely considered news. All too often, the role of instrumentation -- from the tedious steps in design, to commercial production, to routine maintenance -- is taken for granted in the conduct of a scientific life. Yet, scientific progress continues to depend on the invention and refinement of tools and techniques."

It is hard for me to imagine a worthier candidate for the Public Welfare Medal of Science, speaking both to his accomplishment and to his qualities as an extraordinarily public

spirited and generous citizen.

Yours sincerely,

  
Joshua Lederberg

REF/bedzeman.vas