Personal Memo from
JOSHUA LEDERBERG

Mrs. Muriel Beadle

JUN 17 1989

Dear Mrs. Beadle

Beets' death is the close of a fabulous era in the history of biology, the premonitor of the age of molecular biology.

I have not been very close to either of you during the past 30 years; but I know what a trial the last decade has been, and I do want to offer my sympathies and condolences.

The APS has asked if I would write a brief memoir – as I did after Ed Tatum died. I am sure there are carefully preserved archives at Pasadena and Chicago; and I trust others are reminding you, praying that you will deposit any further of Beets' papers there or with the Genetics collections of the APS. (If I can be of any guidance please call on me, as I have become a history buff and have the stewardship of the Rockefeller Archive Center as one of my lighter responsibilities.) In any case it may be some time before such materials are processed and released for scholarly use. They will be invaluable for the full biography that

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I hope will be forthcoming eventually.

That is not my task, which is that of a brief memoir. I do ask whether you have any account of Beets' activities after he retired from the U. of Chicago that I should know about.

But I apologize for this extra burden at a difficult time.

There remains only a small handful of us who can remember the excitement of the first discoveries 1937-1948 and I want to be able to inscribe my own testimony while that remains possible.

Yours sincerely
Jim Lederberg

P.S. I will be retiring as president here next year but will then have another 5 years again as professor.

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