

September 16, 1958

Dr. Barton Childs
Department of Pediatrics
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Baltimore 5, Md.

Dear Bart:

We just returned from our tour to Europe and California a few days ago so that I can start answering my mail. Yours of July 25 was waiting on my desk. I'm sorry this wasn't sent directly out to me for an earlier answer.

As far as I could tell a week ago the situation in Pediatrics at Stanford was not quite absolutely settled although it may be by the time this letter reaches you. As I am still not yet a full-fledged member of the faculty and have no right to be immediately involved in these questions I haven't concerned myself with them in the same fashion that I would if I were already on the campus there and I'm afraid it would be inappropriate of me to speak extensively about them. As far as I can judge there is a very firm sentiment on the part of the administration and the important professors for a strict insistence on scientific goals and achievement in the restaffing of the Medical School. I had the feeling that there might be some relaxation from that specific aim in the case of one or two clinical departments in as much as the school also faces very definite problems in the establishment of good working relationships with the potential part time faculty of the nearby community. If and as this precludes the appointment of a first rate scientist to the chair, this may or may not be unfortunate, but I am sure that no one will be under consideration who does not promise in the eyes of the committees to develop a strong scientific program, and this can hardly mean otherwise than that there will be an even stronger emphasis on biochemistry and on genetics. I hope and trust that the same is going to be true in the pending appointments in medicine, psychiatry, and perhaps even surgery.

As I think I need hardly say more to convince you I am most eager to see developed at Stanford a strong representation of physiological genetics in the clinical departments and pediatrics is of course the obvious choice. I am certainly going to do whatever I can to bolster the already good basis of opinion in this direction, but for the time being my influence is necessarily limited. It would delight me no end if the program at Stanford should evolve in such a way as to make it possible for us to work in close collaboration.

Our plans for the Department of Genetics per se are to limit our program to basic science and we would not for the time being contemplate taking over such functions as genetic counseling and so on. You already know all about that. There are two potential vacancies at decent levels of rank for the Department and we are still looking for the most appropriate candidates. I would hope that one of these would be an experimentalist in mammalian genetics

particularly along lines relevant to the cellular genetics of tissues. The second appointment we anticipate will be in or immediately related to human genetics, but we hope to find a rare individual who can combine an effective experimental as well as biometrical approach to this question without leaning too far in clinical directions. For this second post Jim Crow would of course have been quite ideal but as I suspect he has already written you he has decided, at least for the present, to remain at Madison to take over the chair in Medical Genetics and I am sure that this is going to result in the extension of a very strong program here as soon as the Genetics and Medical Genetics Departments can organize themselves for their future activity, especially in physiological research. There is bound to be a great deal of ferment here at Madison and I have every confidence that it is going to result in an even stronger program than has pertained before now, although it will take some time to do this. On behalf of my friends and colleagues here at Wisconsin I hope that you do not discount altogether the possibility of coming here, although I well recognize, from our earlier conversations, that you would be inclined to wait it out until you saw exactly what the basic developments here were going to be like. As to Stanford there is very little more that I can say at this time and from this distance except that I will hope that we can keep in close communication so as to seize on opportunities as they develop.

I'm sorry that my message of July 19 was ambiguous. The fact of my appointment at Stanford was public knowledge at that time and I hope you were not embarrassed by an apparent confidence in the interval.

As you may have heard the move of Stanford University Medical School from San Francisco to the University campus is was to be expected the occasion of a considerable shake-up in the fundamental clinical departments and Dean Alway has only recently announced the resignations of the former heads of medicine and of surgery. At least for my own perspective I would be most interested to have your own views on possible strong candidates for these positions and to that I might add that there has been for some little while a vacancy in psychiatry as well for which there should be a good occasion to make a good scientific appointment as well.

In keeping with the youthful and enthusiastic spirit of our future colleagues at Stanford the building program is getting along very well indeed and the actual construction of the new medical center is a delight to behold. I am going to enclose some propaganda materials in this connection although they do not do justice to the details of the design. Visit us again, and I might add the Stanford campus, whenever you have the chance.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Medical Genetics

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