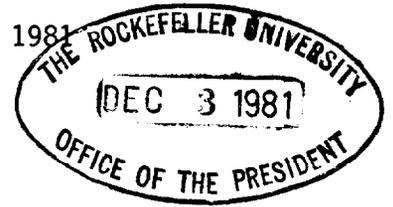


Scientists' Institute for Public Information

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December 2, 1981



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Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Rockefeller University
1230 York Avenue
New York, NY 10021

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

I am writing to you to ask you to participate in the Media Resource Service of the Scientists' Institute for Public Information (SIPI). //

As you may have read in the New York Times, SIPI is currently expanding this program. The Service puts media people in contact with a cross-section of scientists who have agreed to provide responsible information and views on science/social policy issues. The enclosed clippings will give you a fairly good overview of how the Service works as well as an informal progress report on the response we have been getting from the scientific community.

The public's need for such information is abundantly clear. Hardly a day goes by without a front-page story which requires science understanding. Genetic engineering, computer development, toxic wastes, energy options -- the list grows with each day's headlines. Three Mile Island dramatically underscored that need.

Walter Cronkite, speaking at a benefit for the Media Resource Service, put it this way:

"Every science, discipline, and sub-discipline is flooded with new developments daily. Even experts can't keep abreast of the advances within their respective fields. How then are we in the general media to keep up with all that is happening?"

"We are in a crisis of sorts -- damn it, we are in a crisis because of this! How do we inform the electorate? Because a democracy can't function without an informed electorate.

"This organization (SIPI) has the answer: a pool of specialists and scientists to whom journalists can turn. And it's an objective organization, without bias."

For some time, SIPI has been receiving phone calls from the media seeking science sources from whom they can get information and comments. In every case, we refer the journalist to experts reflecting a balance of viewpoints.

The Media Resource Service is a free service available to all media outlets. SIPI is a non-profit organization supported by grants and donations as well as some government contracts. A list of contributors to the Service is enclosed along with the names of The MRS Advisory Committee.

We believe scientists have as much at stake in the success of the Media Resource Service as the public. In the days when science was generally regarded as the goose that lays the golden egg of progress, dealing with the public was relatively easy. But today the eggs are not all golden, and the technological problems of our modern age -- Three Mile Island, DC-10's, toxic wastes -- have fostered a growing attitude that the public can't be reached.

But the need for better public understanding of science is not primarily one of polishing an image or of increasing research funds. It is not primarily for the sake of scientists but for the sake of society. A public cynical today about science is a public cynical tomorrow about history and the entire political process.

SIPI's Media Resource Service will serve as an effective bridge over which the scientific community can bring its knowledge to the media and, through the media, to the public.

The names on file with the Media Resource Service will not be used for advertising or any purpose other than referral to journalists seeking expert information and comment on news and feature articles.

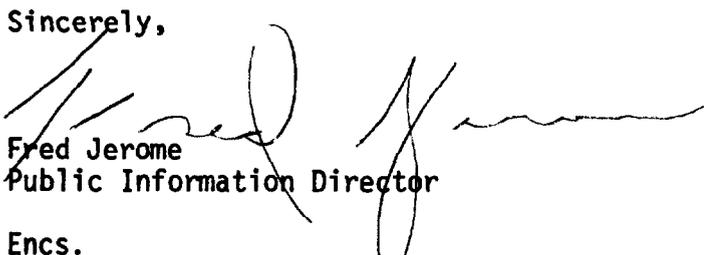
A careful record is kept of every referral of a scientist to a journalist so that no individual will be over-taxed with phone calls. We anticipate, except in the case of some major crisis, that no scientist should receive more than three or four referrals a year.

Would you please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the postage-paid envelope? Your expertise can make a valuable contribution to this much-needed Service.

Walter Cronkite summed up his feelings about the Media Resource Service by stating: "To quote an old saying, if it didn't exist we'd have to invent it."

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Fred Jerome
Public Information Director

Encs.

P.S. Gerald Campbell recommended that I write to you for participation in the service.