

October 1, 1970

Mr. Arthur R. Mayer  
Director of Alumni Affairs  
University of Chicago Alumni Office  
5733 University Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60637

Dear Mr. Mayer:

I am replying to your letter of September 29 asking for an evaluation of Matt Meselson who has been nominated for the Professional Achievement Award of your association. In my opinion Meselson is worthy of this award to the highest degree. Two of his scientific papers are classics of molecular genetics: one on the mode of replication of DNA (with Stahl and Vinograd), the other on the mechanism of genetic recombination (with Weigle). I was close to the scene of these two pieces of research and full of admiration for Meselson's contribution. A third classical paper describing the discovery of messenger RNA (with Jacob and Brenner) is also one of the great credits of Meselson, although in this case the other two authors deserve a larger share of the credit.

Meselson's recent effort on behalf of the control of chemical and biological warfare is perhaps his most astounding achievement. It would appear that he succeeded single-handed in very materially influencing our national policy toward a more sane practice.

Sincerely yours,

Max Delbrück

MD:ek