

RT 4 Box 645
Alabaster, AL 35007

June 26, 1985



Dr. Charles McCandless
Office of Vice President for Academic Affairs
Texas A & M University
College Station, Texas 77843

Dear Dr. McCandless,

Dr. W. A. Baker, Jr. suggested that you might have an interest in an ^{unusual} interesting proposition. As you may note from the enclosed curriculum vitae, some 13 years were spent in directing air monitoring, ten years of which was in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) after it was formed and assumed this responsibility. To fill perceived needs, a number of projects were initiated personally and accomplished among which were: the development of specifications for glass-fiber filters; development of specifications and purchase of rain-water reference materials from the National Bureau of Standards for auditing World Meteorological Organization Precipitation Laboratories; development of a precise method for determining mercury^{in air}; development of a method for the determination of the mass of chrysotile asbestos in ambient air; development of a system for ^{the} generation of an air stream containing known amounts of reactive gases (calibrated gravimetrically); and a sampler which obtained sufficient sized particulate matter from ambient air to permit iterative chemical separations and biological assessment to determine compound(s) responsible for mutagenic activity.

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The development of the sampler was in response to a request from Dr. Anthony V. Colucci. Dr. Colucci was then in the Health Effects Research Laboratory of the EPA. He put up the funds and the work was conceptualized and implemented in my spare time. It is of interest that the sampler proved successful and was widely used by EPA in isolating mutagenic compounds from particulate matter from ambient air, diesel and gasoline motor exhausts, and coking oven emissions. It is also of interest that the sampler was designed prior to publication of the Ames test for mutagenicity.

Dr. Colucci is now at R. J. Reynolds Company and is interested in data of demonstrated high quality which bears on indoor air quality and on levels of personal exposure. To this end, he has expressed a willingness to commit a ^{minimum} of a quarter of a million (dollars) a year for seven years, renewable, for a Center of Excellence. It is my understanding that the expectation is that the funding will serve as seed money to permit development of methodologies, instrumentation and monitoring techniques in these rapidly developing areas.

Levels of some pollutants indoors ^{have recently been shown to} exceed those in ambient air by a factor of ten or a hundred. This will force EPA interest since the National Ambient Air Quality Standards are based on potential adverse health effects to humans from ambient levels. Dr. Colucci's confidence in me to bring to fruition quality work in this area is gratifying.

My desire to relocate is based on professional necessity and personal preference. The School of Public Health the University of Alabama at Birmingham created in May 1981 is the smallest and youngest of the twenty-two

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schools of public health in the United States. As such, there is no backlog of laboratory resources and very limited library resources related to environmental sciences. We do not have support personnel or facilities such as electronics or model shops or a formal mechanism for access to those that do exist. There is no glass-blower on campus. We have very little laboratory space, glassware, laboratory equipment and consumable items are in short supply, if existent. There is no dedicated support for laboratory ware or consumables.

The student bodies in almost all schools of public health have been shrinking in recent years. ~~This summer faculty outnumber students.~~ Most of our students are administratively oriented, have aversion to science per se and eschew laboratory work. ~~We have had fellowship money for predoctoral support for laboratory work with no applicants, in spite of advertisements in publications with national distribution.~~ Under these circumstances, it would be doubtful if meaningful ^{laboratory based} work could be done here expeditiously, even with funding considered adequate.

~~When I gave up a tenured position at Texas Tech to join what was then the National Center for Air Pollution Control, I had some seven graduate students. Here, I have one.~~

There are also personal considerations, ^{for wishing to relocate} Almost all of my close kin (except for a son in the Navy) and many friends reside in Texas. Of no small interest to me is my fifteen years in the Texas Teacher's Retirement system at the rates prevailing when I left in 1968. The advantage of retirement in the Texas System would make a considerable, and very favorable, difference in lifestyle.

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Relocation would afford advantages to me and to A & M. The possibility has been discussed with Dr. Andrew R. McFarland. His program would be complimentary to what is proposed, but he was not certain where a person with my background would fit. The aspiration would be to do research and some teaching in an area of competency.

Dr. Colucci is among the references noted; please feel free to contact him and anyone else you wish. I would appreciate it, however, if you would not contact anyone at UAB not on the list and keep inquiries confidential in preliminary stages. Our Dean's reactions to people who considered employment elsewhere *have been* ~~was both~~ adverse and unforgiving.

Your help in trying to locate a place for a Center of Excellence For Personal Exposure Research in which I would work is greatly appreciated. I look forward to meeting you when the opportunity arises.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Thompson

RJT/mla

cc: Dr. W. A. Baker, Jr.

Dr. Anthony V. Colucci

Dr. Andrew R. McFarland

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