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February 12, 1973

Mr. Robert F. Brownell, Jr.
Director of Admissions
Phillips Exeter Academy
Exeter, New Hampshire

Re: Ivor Muroff

Dear Mr. Brownell,

I have known Ivor Muroff since he was an infant, as I know his father since his father was a child, and his mother since her courtship days. The parents married and settled in Topeka where Melvin Muroff trained in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis.

Ivor's deafness was a crushing awareness for intelligent parents, and after determining that the best schooling and training was available in St. Louis and in New York, they left Topeka for St. Louis, established a home and office, and encouraged Ivor to obtain the training he would need to overcome his handicap and the education he would need to mature. In addition to schooling and medical care, they afforded Ivor the acculturation of travel, sports, hobbies, and pets. When faced with the decision of verbal-aural speech training or manual-visual, the parents encouraged and Ivor labored and mastered the more difficult verbal-aural speech-- an accomplishment which we watched with amazement.

Between 1962 and 1966 we were neighbors in St. Louis, where I developed a research laboratory in experimental psychiatry at the Washington University School of Medicine. In that close association, my family came to know and love Ivor.

From his earliest awareness, Ivor demonstrated an extraordinary intelligence, a dedication to repetitive effort and patience with drudgery. Throughout he exhibited humor, laughter and a warm spirit. His efforts reflected his excellent intellectual endowment and in discussions of scholastic subjects, I found him alert, enthusiastic, and well motivated. He has frequently played chess with me, and early showed an aggressive spirit and a desire to win. Initially his game was untutored and unplanned, but in the last few years his game has matured to a methodical, aggressive, and relentless one.

Despite his handicaps, he is alert and participates actively in social gatherings. Even in the presence of adults, he exhibits a desire and willingness to participate and to be involved.

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He has travelled widely and is conversant with many social and political issues. He is a careful and warm handler of animals and is an enthusiastic reader. Aside from the initial difficulties in communication, he makes friends easily and establishes contact readily.

He is ambitious and has learned that to overcome his handicap he must work ever so much harder than many more fortunate than he. His application to Exeter is the result of an awareness, through his cousin, that Exeter holds a special promise for excellence and a novel opportunity to improve his abilities.

He will make a fine student and should get along with his peers and teachers. I would rate him as an outstanding candidate and anticipate his continuation in graduate education.

February 12, 1973

Max Fink, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry