

October 3, 1986

Dr. Brice Corder  
College of Liberal Arts, SS107  
Arizona State University  
Tempe, Arizona 85287

Ref.: Rick D'Ailli

Dear Dr. Corder,

I am pleased to write this letter in support of the application by Mr. Rick D'Ailli for admission to medical school. I first met Rick as a friend to my son, Dr. Jonathan Fink of the ASU Department of Geology. Rick was a science editor for KAET-TV in Tempe.

In 1984, he was asked to develop a science report on depressive illness and its treatment, and he asked for my help. He knew that both in my practice and research at this University, I had an interest in the treatment of depressed patients with drugs and convulsive therapy. Initially I demurred. Such requests are fairly frequent, and my experience with TV and other media reporters has been uniformly unfavorable; too many reporters approached treatment for its sensationalism and in a desire to present a 'balanced' view of a 'controversial' topic, shaded their questions so as to be unfavorable to an effective treatment. I suggested that Rick read some articles first and call me back if he was still interested.

A short while later, he called again and asked questions in a knowledgeable and friendly manner, ensuring my interest and support. He developed a program, agreeing to come to New York to film an interview with me and the treatment of patients. When the report was produced, he sent me a copy. I was surprised by the quality of the tape, the balance in the interviews, and the excellence of the presentation. Some months later, he called to say that a segment of the tape was accepted by the MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour. That viewing was national, and soon thereafter, I understand that the videotape was given a national award for excellence.

We began to use a copy of the MacNeil/Lehrer version of the tape in educating our patients and their families about depression and its treatment, and found it most helpful. In 1985, I was asked by another scientist whether I would like to make a new tape, specifically for the education of psychiatric trainees as well as patients and their relatives. I agreed and called on Rick to produce two videotapes. These were made and have since been distributed widely. The reviews have been most salutary.

During this time, Rick talked to me about his wish to enter medical school. My first reaction, as a member of the Admissions Committee of this University, was to dissuade him, on the grounds of his age and the long time since he had been a 'student'. He applied, nevertheless, without success. But in his interviews at Stony Brook, he was given high marks. The principal question was his ability to return to the classroom.

I understand that he has attended classes this past year, updating his pre-medical requirements with excellent grades. His MCAT scores have improved.

I believe that Rick is sincere in his desire to become a physician. While I would see him combining his medical skills with those he has in communication, and hoping he would continue to interpret our science to the laity, it is more likely that he will seek a clinical career.

Rick is a delightful human being. He is warm, friendly, considerate, and intelligent. He put my patients, many of whom were quite ill, at ease, and obtained their cooperation for a project which was of little direct benefit to them. He grasped medical terms and concepts quickly; and did not seek to direct the presentation of complex material by his prejudices; rather, he encouraged us, the professional and the patients, to speak openly.

He has broad interests in literature, science, music, and the arts. His wife is mature and on two occasions, discussed the impact of Rick's schooling on their lives. I found her most supportive of his aim to become a physician.

Rick is more mature than most of our candidates. But his maturity is an asset. I believe he is sincere in his desire to practice medicine, and I heartily endorse his wish. I recommend his admission to medical school with much enthusiasm.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.  
Professor of Psychiatry

Attending Psychiatrist  
University Hospital