

April 18, 1988

Norman R. Alpert, Ph.D.
Chairman, Search Comm. for Psychiatry
Dept. Physiology & Biophysics
Given Building
University of Vermont School of Medicine
Burlington, VT 05405

Dear Dr. Alpert,

I am pleased to submit this letter of recommendation on behalf of Professor Michael A. Taylor, who is being considered for the position of chairman of the Department of Psychiatry. He is ably qualified and fully capable of accepting the responsibilities outlined in the job description sent to me.

I have known Mickey Taylor for more than two decades, since his residency training at the New York Medical College. Among a group of excellent students, he was outstanding, an independent thinker, and a careful worker. Taking an idea from a single report from Michigan, he examined the incidence of male and female offspring born to psychotic mothers in the State hospitals in New York, mothers who were psychotic at the time of conception. He found a higher incidence of female infants born to such mothers. He then examined the impact that medication may have had on the gender advantage for female infants. Such innovative studies were awarded the prestigious A.E. Bennett award of the Society of Biological Psychiatry.

After a tour in the U.S. Navy, where he also published clinical research studies, he returned to join our faculty at Stony Brook. He took over a routine state hospital ward without a single distinguishing or redeeming feature. Within a year, it became an outstanding study and research unit, indeed, the premier unit of the many at the hospital. He was rapidly promoted to Associate Professor and was under consideration for promotion to Professor when he was invited to the chair in Chicago where he became Professor and Chairman.

In research, Mickey is an outstanding clinician and phenomenologist. He and his associate, Richard Abrams have led a re-assessment of the genetic and familial contributions to clinical phenomenology; the classification of schizophrenia and catatonia; and the neuropsychological consequences of subtle brain damage, both generalized and localized. Their independent thinking and data-based studies are outstanding.

In teaching, his texts are excellent. Both his Neuropsychiatric Mental Status Examination and General Hospital Psychiatry are innovative and important texts, widely used in teaching psychiatric residents. He is an outstanding lecturer.

Based on his record of contributions in neuroscience and neuropsychology, he was invited to become the founding editor of a new scientific journal, "Neuropsychology, Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Neurology", published by Raven Press of New York.

His administrative abilities are also excellent. I watched the development of the teaching unit at the Central Islip Psychiatric Center. I have visited his units in Chicago, where he not only has developed a productive Department of Psychiatry, but established such fine relationships with the Department of Psychology that I believe he has been acting chairman for an interim period. And, I am amazed by the continued productivity of his students and associates.

I can think of few psychiatrists in the U.S. who match Mickey's talents as a clinician, researcher, and teacher, and I recommend him heartily for the chairmanship. Mickey is an avid fisherman, and I am confident that the waters of Lake Champlain and the many lakes of the Adirondack Mountains will be a positive attraction. I hope that you can attract a man of his experience and talent. Good luck.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry