

June 23, 1992

Arnold J. Friedhoff, M.D.
Chair, Lieber Prize Advisory Panel
Department of Psychiatry
NYU School of Medicine
550 First Avenue
New York City 10016

Dear Arnie,

I would like to suggest that MICHAEL ALLEN TAYLOR, M.D. be considered for the Lieber Prize. Mickey is Professor & Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at UHS/Chicago Medical School. I have known him since his residency days, and was his mentor when he received the A.E. Bennett award of the Society of Biological Psychiatry in 1969.

He has been an avid student of the psychopathology of schizophrenia. His major contribution has been to provide important criteria to subdivide and identify populations of patients with schizophrenia for family, genetic, and biological studies.

In studies from 1972 to 1980, he and his colleagues examined the validity of the diagnosis of schizophrenia and manic-depressive illness by examining the clinical phenomenology of these diagnostic groups to demographic, family illness, neuropsychological and treatment response variables. They demonstrated that catatonia was more prominent in patients with affective disorders than in those with schizophrenia. They carried out prospective studies to classify patients using cross-sectional criteria and developed an objective basis for classifying patients with the major functional psychoses.

Their studies suggested that the diagnosis of schizophrenia was being made too often, with a low degree of validity for the diagnosis of acute, paranoid, good prognosis, catatonic and schizo-affective schizophrenia. His studies demonstrated that if a patient satisfied the diagnostic criteria for affective disorder, a good prognosis was the rule, despite the additional presence of first rank symptoms of schizophrenia [Schneider], formal thought disorder, or catatonia.

In the past decade, Mickey has developed rigorous, validated diagnostic criteria to establish homogeneous patient samples for schizophrenia research; focussed studies on the functional relationships between neuronal groups and behavior, using neuropsychological techniques; and regional cortical functioning in patients with major psychoses. He is carrying out independent studies of family illness data to define subgroups of schizophrenic and affective disorder patients, relating these data to biologic and clinical variables and comparing various models of genetic transmission of illness.

Mickey has written a classical analysis of catatonia which is the basis of the separation of this disorder, with defined treatment and prognostic criteria, from schizophrenia in DSM-IV.

He is among the most innovative of the present generation of research leaders in schizophrenia. He is an eminent teacher and scholar, editor, and administrative leader.

I commend him for your consideration for the Lieber Prize.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry