

The Rensselaer Color Measurement Laboratory

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April 5, 1977

Miss Dorothy Nickerson
Goodwin House, Apt. 450
4800 Fillmore Avenue
Alexandria, Virginia 22311

Dear Dorothy:

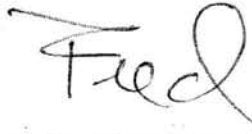
The Department of Chemistry at Rensselaer is now considering long-range planning for the period through 1984, when I will reach mandatory retirement age. To me, of course, a major decision which the Department must reach is whether the program in color science, which I now operate alone except for the help of Adjunct Professors, will be continued. To do so will mean that the Department must decide and budget to hire from the outside, probably at an advanced level, a professor knowledgeable and enthusiastic about color science, with the proper academic credentials, who will be able to share in other Departmental activities such as teaching analytical chemistry. Such a new appointment will undoubtedly receive intense opposition from many other groups who want their own programs continued and expanded instead. If it is not made, color science at Rensselaer will inevitably cease irrevocably in 1984.

I am receiving great opposition even in the preliminary discussions on continuing the color science program, and I need your help and support. I can provide a good, documented story on the value of our research and teaching to industry, the relative ease with which our students get jobs, the contributions they make afterwards, the reputation of our publications, the money I have brought into the school, and other evidences of success. But I have had virtually no luck at all in convincing skeptical colleagues with no knowledge of the color field that color science is an appropriate topic to be taught in a university, or that the nature and quality of our research is deserving of the Ph.D. degree, or that it is even possible to do "academic quality" research in the field (whatever that means). Strongly expressed supporting opinions from outside Rensselaer may provide the key to the continuation of this program, and I earnestly ask you to consider whether you could provide part of this support, in the form of a letter directed to Professor Kevin T. Potts, Chairman, Department of Chemistry, at Rensselaer. The timing is unfortunately critical, and if you wish to write Dr. Potts, please do it so that he has your letter by April 25.

I have asked you to help because of your position, because you know our program well, and because I feel your opinion on the matters in question would be respected. It's unlikely I will see your letter or even know you wrote (unless you want to send me a copy), so speak as freely as you like. On the other hand I'll say bluntly that if I have misjudged and you don't feel you can support me, I would rather you didn't write at all.

My sincerest thanks for considering my request.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fred". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Fred W. Billmeyer, Jr.

FWB;dg