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Dear Jerry:

For some reason I missed the invitation to send a personal letter on the occasion of the recent delightful StamlerFest. I send along these heartfelt notes that you can include in the volume or just read and throw.

I never knew, at the time you involved me in the Coronary Drug Project, whether you knew how deeply I was in (temporary) disfavor in my beloved Minnesota institution at 'The Lab.' The details are not important now, but I felt I was at a dead end. Getting the ECG Center, and then sitting on the CDP Steering Committee, involved me in an exciting investigation, provided a needed and useful occupation and research experience, and started my education in the design and operation of trials. More important, you provided a model of team research leadership that guided me over the long term at Minnesota (while at the same time the contrast led to my intense dissatisfaction at the early direction of MRFIT!).

When you get back to writing your memoirs, which all your colleagues would love to read, I hope you also will get back to reading mine, if only to see some thoughts about our long association. I quote a segment in my chapter on MRFIT:

“ ... the model I had in mind for such a large and complex project was that of the Coronary Drug Project, which had Stamler in the chair, a trial-experienced Steering Committee, and the savvy University of Maryland Coordinating Center. Few participants will forget the effective and harmonious pursuits of that study, with its knowledgeable national leadership working side by side with a strong steering group and an out-going, involved coordination center. Not seeing these happy parts falling together for MRFIT, I became frustrated and impatient.”

The recent Chicago evening at the ‘working session’ of INTERMAP at Bice Restaurant took me back to those fine times, seeing again the salubrious ambiance you create for a study, the individual contributions, and the cohesion and effectiveness of your far-flung crew. Quite remarkable.

I once rationalized that my energies directed to ‘institution building’ at Minnesota were important, though carried out at much sacrifice of my collaborative researches. Witnessing the fragility of academic institutions nowadays, I find your model of research leadership the more focused, viable, and satisfactory one.

Thanks for the good years. I look forward to your contributions to our present history project in CVD prevention research and to conversations during its several stages of preparation.

With best wishes, regards, and affection,

Henry Blackburn