

Corres - Howell, Doris



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
TWIN CITIES

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Doris A. Howell, M.D.  
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Dear Dr. Howell:

This is in response to your September 23rd letter concerning recommendations for a merit increase for Joseph Stokes III, M.D. I am enchanted to see that full professors can continue to advance - or be passed by. It doesn't happen in our system here.

You have asked for specifics rather than generalities about Dr. Stokes. I do have a few specifics but his career must also be evaluated in terms of generalities, bold strokes, maturity, and overall contribution, influence and credibility. He has been centrally involved in a number of significant movements in American medicine including the Framingham Heart Study, the founding of your medical school, the advancement of cardiovascular epidemiology and prevention programs, innovative approaches to medical student education, patient care and health services. He is consulted at the highest levels of peer review in medicine and public health.

I can say without question that he was the most effective and sound chairman the NIH Study Section on Epidemiology and Disease Control has had. The depth of his scholarship, the objectivity of his evaluations and the fairness of his judgement in every instance elevated the level of scientific criticism and peer review that is so central to the academic process of this country.

I am increasingly amazed to hear of his new projects and continued productivity, after progressively stepping down from higher to lower administrative functions. It has released him for significant innovation rather than coasting down as a "distinguished professor." Thus, I feel he has touched public health and medicine in ways that are uncommon and at a variety of points - beyond the opportunity or potential of most of us.

I realize the old problem of "the appreciation of genius at home" but I can assure you of Dr. Stokes' professional standing and respect nation-wide.

Cordially,

Henry Blackburn, M.D.  
Professor and Director

HB:jml