

April 15, 1967

Katharine R. Boucot, M.D., Chief Editor
Archives of Environmental Health
Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania
3300 Henry Avenue
Philadelphia, Pa. 19129

Dear Katharine:

Having returned from the Industrial Health Conference in New York last night, I hasten to reply to your letter of April fifth which I find on my desk this morning.

I would not have you think for a moment longer than can be avoided, that what you may have thought and said about lead is a barrier to our friendship. The matter is not in that realm of our mutual relationship. Some of the severest criticisms that I have had directed at me, professionally and scientifically, have come from friends. I have listened to them and have weighed them for what they have seemed to be worth. I have assumed, and have been right usually in so doing, that they were not assaults on my character or personal behavior, but critiques of my scientific work, views or statements. In like attitude, I have responded to criticism. I hope I can take deserved criticism with a reasonable degree of objectivity and profit. I have done so on at least some occasions. On the other hand, I have never hesitated to protest against undeserved criticism, and with such vigor as the nature of the occasion has seemed to demand, quite apart from the source of the criticism.

But these concerns, within the somewhat limited hygienic field in which I've had both the opportunity and responsibility to acquire a reasonable understanding, have little to do with friendship and affection; these arise out of many diverse qualities of mind and heart and character. I should feel very sad indeed if my friendships within and beyond the profession could not survive the differences in opinions and viewpoints that are so obviously inevitable among persons of varied social and educational background and experience. I hope, therefore, that you will not hesitate to speak out through any fear of my reaction. If I disagree, I shall say so, if the occasion calls for it.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.
Professor Emeritus of
Occupational Medicine

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