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May 20, 2009

National Medal of Technology and Innovation  
Attn: Jennifer Lo, Program Manager  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

RE: Nomination of Zalman M. Shapiro


Dear NMTI Committee Members:

I became acquainted with Zalman Shapiro approximately 25 years ago. We served together on a committee to raise funds for environmental projects in Israel. Several things about Zalman impressed me. He makes everyone with whom he has contact feel that they are an important person for him to know. This is true whether he is speaking to a restaurant waiter or a corporate CEO. His inquisitive mind, attention to detail, gentle manner, and zest for whatever project happens to be before him create a unique and irresistible persona. He can control a conversation while making everyone in his presence feel that they are "in charge." He has the power to motivate by deed and through logic. Simply put - he is brilliant, modest, generous, kind, and one of the most pleasant and pleasing persons I have ever known.

After meeting Zalman, I begin to inquire about his background. I fully expected to learn that he was some kindly university professor who wrote books about ancient philosophy. Imagine my surprise when I discovered the details of his distinguished career as a scientist and prolific inventor.

Others will opine upon his professional achievements. While I am in awe of what he has accomplished, my focus and purpose for writing this letter of recommendation for the National Medal of Technology and Innovation is to give testimony to Zalman's importance to his (and my) community. As I reflect on his many contributions to society, I am led to the conclusion that if there were more people like Zalman Shapiro, the world would be an infinitely better place. He is most deserving of this most prestigious honor.

Respectfully,

  
James C. Roddey

Senior Consultant  
Allegheny County Chief Executive, 2000-2004

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Attachment