

Dear colleagues,

I am grateful for your participation in the Department gathering last Friday. You braved the heat in great spirits. I also want to thank you for understanding my health condition that kept me from being more social.

It has been a long journey for a humble boy growing up in the depths of Siberia's frozen wilderness to become a prominent American researcher. In the US, I received uninterrupted grant support from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for 40 years. I secured millions of dollars for my research program and the universities with which I collaborated. With this generous support, my research team, among others, has made significant contributions to the study of mosquito molecular biology, and the yellow fever mosquito, *Aedes aegypti*, has become the best-studied insect after the fruit fly, *Drosophila*.

These were wonderful 22-plus years since I arrived at UCR. I enjoyed being part of the Entomology Department, its faculty collegiality, and the friendly atmosphere. I will never forget my first visit to Riverside and the UCR. During the post-seminar lunch at Mission Inn, Peter Atkinson, whom I had met during my sabbatical in Australia, asked me if I would be interested in relocating to UCR. I looked around me: it was a gorgeous sunny day at the beginning of March, and I arrived from cold Michigan, where it was freezing rain. I felt that I was ready to move. Of course, the reputation of UCR Entomology as one of the premier departments in the country played a crucial role in my decision to come here.

My years spent at the Department have been highly productive and gratifying in my professional life. I had substantial NIH grant support, which was highlighted by the 10-year-long Merit Award for distinguished achievements in vector biology. My laboratory has been highly productive over these years in the areas of mosquito genetic engineering, hormonal regulation of reproduction, immunity, and metabolism. Among the numerous publications we produced during our time at UCR, there were 32 papers in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), several in Science, and Nature.

The election to the National Academy of Sciences in 2009 was a memorable event that marked a significant milestone in my life. I am happy and proud that this event happened during my time at UCR and the Entomology Department.

My successful scientific career would not have been possible without an outstanding and dedicated team of scientists, graduate students, undergraduates, and postdoctoral researchers,

to whom I am eternally grateful. They were with me throughout my long career, sharing research challenges and the joy of discovery.

With my gratitude, *Alexander Raikhel*

Alexander Raikhel,

Distinguished Professor