

a copy, to Ruth
- Al

191 Drury Ln.
West Lafayette IN 47906
Dec. 19, 1987

Dear Paul:

Your 15 December letter says that you are taking off for Maine. Unfortunately your Maine address is not given, but I assume Ruth will forward this. It's OK if she opens & reads it first; I hope she does, so as to understand my position.

Thus, I hope you get the word in time to prevent your getting yourself out on a limb. I've already ordered 70 (and rec'd 20 of them, BW) SLIDES (I'm a fast slider) to give the kind of talk Anderson asked me to give -- the only kind I'm willing to give, actually -- BECAUSE:

(1. By your stated criterion, "scientists on the cutting edge of antarctic science about which he is knowledgeable," I am in this day & age completely unqualified. Not only am I unsharp and not on your cutting-edge, I'm not even on the knife's handle. I've spent the last half-century doing something else entirely. Consequently, it would be one hell of an embarrassment to me (and to you, too, though I suspect you'd deserve it for apparent stubbornness) for me to stand up there and brazenly pretend otherwise.

(2. Sure, I've "met" Admiral Byrd, but not much more. I feel that I don't know him any better than he knew me, which was hardly at all! This is because of a probably perfectly valid, legitimate reason. Paul Siple explained to me one day in our blubber shack why Byrd had changed his leadership style 180° from the first to the second expedition. Paul said that he was easy & casual on BAE I, just "one of the boys." Well, certain of his boys treated him so shabbily (Paul added gruesome details) after BAE I that he vowed never to make that mistake again, but maintain some semblance of "discipline" through a chain-of-command chart. On BAE II, his contact with the hoi-polloi was through a very few intimates (G. Noville, Poulter, Siple, the ship officers, etc.) indirectly, and the rest of us saw surprisingly little of the leader. He lived & ate very separately -- I don't even think that he attended the Christmas dinner & festivities we enjoyed in the Mess Hall. Anyway, you see his method of leadership was a matter of policy, perhaps self-preservation. I was in the Byrd "camp," not the Harold-June Innes-Taylor camp, and I do think Byrd treated all of us well (so far as I know & believe) after our return. But my experience certainly failed to prepare me, either factually or interpretively, nor mood-wise either, for delivering a sincere, positive Memorial address for his 100th, much as I hope someone will. Picking himself for the role, Anderson is probably out of line.

(3. Since the Admiral was, I consider, primarily an aviator, promoter & organizer, certainly NOT a scientist, why not have him memorialized, ~~though~~, by a specialist in polar aviation history.

Whether or not it works out that I am to be present and perhaps also give the talk I'm preparing, I quote Sherman in

since I gather that the Memorial address is clearly a society function.
(Don't quote me!)

stating that if nominated I will not run (into the Mem.
address), and if elected I will not serve. That should
separate Sherman & me from Mario Cuomo, as undersigned.

Sincerely,

Alton G. Lindsey
Al Lindsey