



ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING PROGRAM
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90095-1772

June 28, 2006

RE: Letter of Recommendation for Gary Polakovic

To Whom It May Concern:

I write from the perspective of a 25-year professional relationship in strong support of Gary Polakovic's experience, skills and qualifications in communications and management. I have known Gary since the early 1980s when I served as Assistant Director of the Statewide Air Pollution Research Center at UC Riverside to the present time when I am serving as Associate Director of UCLA's Institute of the Environment and Distinguished Professor of Environmental Health Sciences in the UCLA School of Public Health. I have the highest regard for his intelligence, capacity for critical analysis, communication skills, work ethic and professionalism.

For example, I sponsored Gary's application for a John S. Knight Fellowship for advanced training at Stanford University precisely because I knew he is not, and never has been, a run-of-the-mill beat reporter or "just a writer." In contrast to so many of today's journalists, Gary did not cover the environment in California and the West as a dilettante, but rather put down deep roots in science, technology, law and policy out of a belief it is critically important to communicate complex issues to the public in a credible and thorough manner. Thus, Gary's knowledge about the environment approaches that of many experts in the field.

These are some of the reasons Gary majored in environmental science and communications at Cal Poly, sought out myself and other experts such as James Pitts and Nobel Laureate Sherwood Rowland for photochemistry chalkboard sessions and then went to graduate school to study environmental management and finally to Stanford. Building his expertise in this way was essential to Gary's success as one of the top environmental journalists in the country.

Gary's experience covering the environment has been quite remarkable. He and I worked on a wide range of air pollution issues over the years, collaborating on numerous stories concerning photochemical smog. In the last decade or so, apart from journalists representing the New York Times, the Economist and the Christian Science Monitor, Gary was the only journalist I would work with—the only journalist I would trust to get the story right, to be accurate, comprehensive and illuminating in the way he wrote about challenging topics like smog, climate change and ozone depletion.

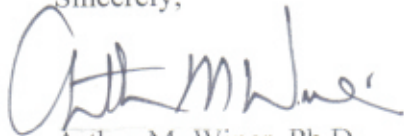
But it is important to emphasize how much broader Gary's expertise is. He covered everything environmental, including nuclear waste, water pollution, toxic waste, wildlife preservation, public lands, earthquakes, water supply, toxic air pollution, climate change, health risk assessment and energy! In short, he has demonstrated a remarkable breadth of knowledge about environmental issues. While he did not earn advanced degrees, covering these issues every day for 20 years at the high level practiced at the L.A. Times, was the equivalent of a never-ending post-college education.

In addition Gary undertook an enormous amount of extracurricular work to promote public understanding of environmental issues. He helped found and then led the Society of Environmental Journalists. I saw his dynamic leadership in this regard first hand when the SEJ held a highly successful National Conference at UCLA in 1999. Further, Gary conducted extensive journalism training and mentoring around the country and organized numerous seminars and conferences.

Finally, I will note that Gary is a team player with excellent interpersonal skills. He is honest, conscientious, disciplined, dedicated and something of a perfectionist. He holds himself and others around him to high standards. Gary has integrity, an increasingly rare commodity in today's world, including the world of communications and journalism.

C. P. Snow once warned of the rise of two cultures—a technically educated elite vs the rest of society that did not understand the complex technological and environmental problems affecting the planet. He warned of the dangers to democracy of such a bimodal society. Gary Polakovic is an example of the type of communications expert we desperately need today to prevent this bifurcation. This is the principal reason he remains one of the few journalists I trust to communicate my research findings to the public. He has my highest and unconditional recommendation in all respects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arthur M. Winer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "W".

Arthur M. Winer, Ph.D.
Distinguished Professor, EHS SPH
Associate Director, UCLA IOE