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To: jebennet@indiana.edu
Cc: ybrun@indiana.edu
Subject: Letter of reference for Eric Stewart
From: "Richard D'Ari" <dari@ijm.jussieu.fr>
Date: Wed, 2 Nov 2005 15:40:51 +0100
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Dear Dr Bennet,

I just returned from a trip and found your e-mail (and one from Eric Stewart) requesting a letter of recommendation. I am sending it by e-mail to gain time; if you also need a signed paper copy of the letter, don't hesitate to ask.

I have known Dr Eric Stewart since he joined Prof. Miroslav Radman's laboratory and have followed his work with great interest, often discussing it with him. Eric is a deep thinker and a very thorough analyst. He reads widely and knows the relevant literature extremely well. His decision to embark on the project of ageing in *Escherichia coli* was a courageous one. There very well might have been no phenomenon to study. And the technical problems were enormous – setting up the microscopy, finding suitable labelling, creating proper software for counting cells, analysing the data,... Very few post-docs are willing to face such difficulties.

Dr Stewart's work has already produced striking results: *E. coli*, against all expectations, seems to exhibit ageing: cells that inherit the old pole grow more slowly than their sister cells, and the growth rate of the "old cell" line decreases with each additional generation. The publication of these results last February created quite a stir in the biological community, with comments on the paper in many of the major journals.

Dr Stewart intends to continue this line of research, examining physiological and genetic contexts that affect ageing and death in *E. coli*. His plans are ambitious and should produce highly interesting results.

Eric is an outstanding microbiologist, with excellent computer skills as well, and I am convinced he would be a strong positive element in your department. I unhesitatingly recommend him.

Richard D'Ari, Directeur de Recherche 1ère classe (C.N.R.S.)