



RAJ SOIN
College of Business

Department of Management
and International Business
3640 Colonel Glenn Hwy.
Dayton, OH 45435-0001
(937) 775-2290
FAX (937) 775-3546

September 8, 2014

To Whom It May Concern,

It is my sincere pleasure to write this letter on behalf of Dr. Mark Light. Mark taught for us for a number of years as an adjunct professor, and his performance was so stellar that we then selected him for a stint as a visiting professor of management. In all positions, in all conditions, I found Dr. Light to be an absolutely superb faculty member, certainly the finest addition to our Department in my five years as Chair.

I was a big fan of Mark Light before either of us had anything to do with Wright State. It was the late 1980's, and I was an active duty Air Force officer stationed here in Dayton. I knew Mark only by his reputation, as the man who had led the supremely successful salvation of the previously moribund Victoria Theater Association, overseeing also the complete reconstruction of the grand old theater itself. Then, before every performance, Mark would stride onto the stage, informing and inspiring the audience, while generating support for his organization in particular, and for the Dayton arts scene in general. As I'm a lifelong studier of great managers and leaders, it was only natural that I began to develop a great admiration for Mark and his work.

But I did not actually meet Mark until almost two decades later, in 2007 or so. By then I had retired from my first career, and become a professor and later the chair of the Department of Management at Wright State. Mark had by then finished his Ph.D at Antioch University, and somehow—I don't recall exactly how--we got in touch. We had a temporary visiting professor position open, to teach courses like leadership, strategic management, conflict resolution, managing change, etc., and of course Mark was a natural choice: He had done all those things--and much more--in his not-for-profit leadership jobs at the Virginia Opera, the Louisville Ballet, and our own Victoria Theater. Furthermore, he'd completed his doctoral work, he'd begun writing regularly as 'Dr. Conflict' for Nonprofit Quarterly, and he had an active consulting practice with not-for-profits through his eponymous 'First Light' organization.

While on our staff here, Dr. Light truly excelled in every aspect of faculty life. He continued his writing and scholarship efforts, and his service—to the community especially—was second to none. He was invariably supportive of all his colleagues, and was the first person I would go to when I needed help with the routine chores of University life. But what was most critical to me was his teaching, and in that he was simply brilliant. I placed him in mostly graduate classes, generally related to leadership, change, conflict, and org behavior. His students consistently reported that he had inspired them, and he'd changed the way they saw the world. Probably the biggest



concern I had was that once students had Mark in class, they didn't want anyone else, and would wait—sometimes for more than a year-- until they could get him again.

During my time as Chair, I made it a point to read every student evaluation of every teacher, and Mark's were uniformly outstanding. His students regularly reported that he had changed their lives, and descriptors like 'Amazing' and 'Awesome'—generally garnished with a liberal number of exclamation points—vied for the most commonly used adjectives in the various narratives. He earned top marks not only for teaching quality, but also for accessibility, helpfulness, and clarity. He was also seen as challenging, and he kept his classes fully engaged: His students worked hard, and his popularity here was never due to 'dumbing down' his courses, nor by being known as 'an easy A.'

I think Mark was happy with us here, and I know we were delighted with him. But he was on a temporary position, and I could give him no guarantee that there would be an extension of that. (Indeed, the position did go away, as I feared it would.) So when he had the chance to take a visiting professor position at DePaul, the bright lights of Chicago and the possibility of teaching for them in Europe were powerful incentives for him and for his family. I understood that, and I always felt that he made a good choice by leaving for DePaul.

There is rarely a day that I don't think of Mark Light, usually in the context of how much I wish he was still here with us. But our loss can be your gain: If you meet with him, I think you will find the same thing that we did: In hiring Mark Light, you could make no finer choice.

Sincerely,



Dr. Bud Baker
Professor of Management
Former Chair, Department of Management and Intl Business
Raj Soin College of Business
Wright State University
Dayton, OH 45435
(937) 775-3030
bud.baker@wright.edu