John T. Conway
(b)(6)

May 18, 2009

National Medal of Technology and Innovation
Nomination Evaluation Committee
c/o The United States Patent and Trademark Office
Attention: Jennifer Lo, Program Manager
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Re: Nomination of Zalman Shapiro

Dear NMTI Committee Members:

For a thirteen-year period I was on the staff of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy of the U.S.Congress, most of which time I was Staff Director with oversight responsibility of the U.S. Government's authorization and appropriation of funds for both civilian and military applications of atomic energy. My responsibilities included oversight of the U.S. Naval Reactor Program involving personal observation of the Bettis Laboratory and other U.S. contractors working in the atomic field. I first knew of Zalman Shapiro's work when he was in charge of Physical Chemistry at the Bettis Laboratory and subsequently when he was President of Nuclear Materials and Equipment Corporation (NUMEC). I personally met with him on more than one occasion.

I am pleased to join others in recommending Zalman Shapiro to receive the National Medal of Technology and Innovation for his many contributions in science. I make this recommednation on the basis of my more than fifty years of experience in both civilian and military phases of nuclear energy beginning in the early 1950s.

During my career I interfaced with most of the early pioneers in the field including Drs. Oppenheimer, Seaborg, McMillan and Admiral Rickover. If Admiral Rickover were alive today, I am certain he would also be among those recommending Zalman Shapiro for the award.

It was Zalman Shapiro who made a major contribution to the Naval nuclear program in his successful breakthrough in the purification of zirconium which made it practical and economically possible to produce fuel rods for the Naval Reactor Program. His breakthrough work in no small measure helped make for the early success of the U.S. Nautilus, the world's first nuclear-powered vessel.

His research and development of pure zirconium during the 1950s while in charge of physical chemistry at the Bettis Laboratory and subsequently in the production of zirconium cladding for Admiral Rickover's program when Zelman Shapiro was President of Nuclear Materials and Equipment Corporation (NUMEC) was instrumental in the success of the Naval Reactor Program. Our Nation owes a debt of gratitude to Zelman Shapiro for his contribution to our national defense.

Sincerely,

John T. Conway

John T. Conway
Chairman Emeritus
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Committee
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