

May 15, 1942

Dear Mr. Davis:

I am delighted to have your letter concerning Blackwell and am asking some of the members of our School of Mathematics to write to you in regard to his technical qualifications.

Blackwell came to us with the highest recommendations from the University of Illinois and I have been delighted by the favorable reports which I have received this year concerning his work here. He is extremely attractive personally and is universally liked and respected here at the Institute. I should say that he would qualify generously for one of the best posts in one of the outstanding Negro colleges or universities.

Yours sincerely,

FRANK AYDELOTTE, Director

Mr. Jackson Davis, Associate Director
General Education Board
49 West 49th Street
New York City

FA/MCE

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May 15, 1942

My dear Dr. Aydelotte:

Thank you very much for your prompt reply
to my inquiry regarding Dr. David Blackwell. I am pleased
to know that he is a man of such outstanding ability and
personality. I am rather hoping that he may be asked to
one of the colleges in the Atlanta University group.

Sincerely yours,

Jackson Davis

Dr. Frank Aydelotte
The Institute for Advanced Study
Princeton, New Jersey

JD:LG

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May 14, 1942

My dear Dr. Aydelotte:

Someone told me the other day that a Mr. David Blackwell,
a mathematician, was now pursuing studies at The Institute for Advanced
Study and that he might be available for a teaching post in an important
Negro institution.

I would appreciate it if you or the member of your staff
best acquainted with Mr. Blackwell could give me any information about
him and his interest in teaching, if he does not already have a post.

Very sincerely yours,

Jackson Davis

Dr. Frank Aydelotte
Institute for Advanced Study
Princeton, New Jersey

JD:KUB

Copy in Martin file

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(IAS) BLACKWELL

May 15, 1942

Dear Mr. Davis:

Dr. Aydelotte asked me to write you concerning Dr. David Blackwell, who was a member of the Institute for Advanced Study during the academic year 1941-42.

I am acquainted at first hand with Dr. Blackwell's work, and particularly concerning his thesis and his further researches in the same direction, about which we had numerous conferences.

On the basis of my contacts with him and of what I have seen of the quality and character of his work, I consider Dr. Blackwell an absolutely first-rate research mathematician, measured by any standards. He has originality, power, and taste, to such an extent that his equals can be found only in the first category.

Dr. Blackwell is not only talented, but also modest and of very agreeable personality. I have no direct information about his teaching, but from his way of presentation of his own and of others' work, and from his general interest in his subject, I would venture to predict that he would be a good teacher.

Very sincerely,

John von Neumann

Mr. Jackson Davis
General Education Board
49 West 49th Street
New York City

September 4, 1941

Dear Embree:

Are you in touch with Blackwell and do you know whether he perseveres in his intention to come to the Institute for Advanced Study this year? I very much hope so but have been a little troubled because of the fact that we have had no word from him. I wrote to him about the matter on May 30 and have never had a reply to my letter. This may be merely an oversight due to the summer vacation, but if you see him or are in touch with him tell him that we hope he is coming and should be glad to know about when he plans to arrive.

With kindest regards, I am

Yours sincerely,

FRANK AYDELOTTE

President Edwin R. Embree
Julius Rosenwald Fund
4901 Ellis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

FA/MCE

COPY

1301 West Clark Street
Urbana, Illinois
May 14, 1941

Professor Oswald Veblen
Institute for Advanced Study
Princeton, New Jersey

My dear Professor Veblen:

I wish to apply for admission to the Institute for the academic year 1941-42. Professor Doob and, I believe, Halmos and Ambrose, have already discussed with you the possibility of my admission, and I was recently notified that I have been awarded a Rosenwald Fellowship for next year, under which I hope to study at the Institute.

I hope that you will find it possible to admit me to the Institute, and that there will be office facilities available for me there.

Sincerely yours,

(s) DAVID BLACKWELL

9.31-
May 30, 1941

Dr. David Blackwell
1301 West Clark Street
Urbana, Illinois

Dear Dr. Blackwell:

We have all of us heard with great interest that you would like to spend next year at the Institute for Advanced Study on your Rosenwald Fellowship. On the recommendation of the School of Mathematics it gives me great pleasure to invite you to membership in the Institute and to say that we look forward with great satisfaction to having you here next year. If I can be of any assistance in the matter of finding you a place to live or in any other way, please do not hesitate to call upon me. Our first term begins on Monday, September 23, but you may wish to arrange for a room by correspondence early in the summer.

With a very hearty welcome to the Institute, I am

Yours sincerely,

FA:ESB

Dr. Aydelotte

May 21, 1941

Dear Blackwell:

The mathematical professors have unanimously recommended your admission to the Institute, and you will undoubtedly hear also from Dr. Aydelotte before long. We all look forward to having you with us next year. I think you will find the library in Fuld Hall a very convenient place for your work.

With best greetings,

Yours sincerely,

Oswald Veblen

Dr. David Blackwell
1301 West Clark Street
Urbana, Illinois
OV:GB

5496

March 5, 1941

Dear Embree:

I am delighted to hear that you have under consideration an appointment for Mr. David Blackwell to work at the School of Mathematics of the Institute for Advanced Study during the academic year 1941-1942. I send you this line to say that it would be a great satisfaction to the members of our School of Mathematics to have Mr. Blackwell in residence here and I hope very much that his grant will go through.

In inviting Blackwell we have made it clear that the invitation comes from the Institute for Advanced Study and not from Princeton University. In many cases men who are working at the Institute find it profitable to attend courses in the Graduate School of Princeton University, and I thought it only fair that Blackwell should know that it is the set policy of the University not to admit Negroes. At the same time we have tried to make him understand very clearly that the Institute for Advanced Study makes no distinction on the basis of race, color, or creed, and that because of his demonstrated ability in mathematics he will be most welcome here.

With kindest regards, I am

Yours sincerely,

FRANK AYDELOTTE

President Edwin R. Embree
Julius Rosenwald Fund
4901 Ellis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

FA/MCE