

Jet Propulsion Laboratory  
California Institute of Technology  
4800 Oak Grove Drive  
Pasadena, California 91109-8099  
(818) 354-4321



September 23, 1996

Dr. Michael A. Minovitch  
Phaser Telepropulsion Inc  
1888 Century Park East, Suite 1900  
Los Angeles, CA 90067

Dear Michael:

I was surprised to receive your letter of 9/4/96, in which you misinterpreted the elements of a telephone conversation you had with Rex Ridenoure a short while ago. I had merely asked Rex if you had previously received a NASA medal, as I had only recently learned that Gary Flandro had never received any type of medal from NASA. That was the sole reason for my question to Rex.

It is my understanding that you did receive the NASA Exceptional Service Medal in 1972, for "The first extensive development of the concept of gravity thrust trajectories for interplanetary flight. This work involved the basic numerical techniques for analyzing such trajectories and identified multi-planet flight opportunities for Venus, Mercury, and Mars." This may or may not have been the citation you would have wished, but it is nonetheless one for which you should be very proud.

I know how much you have wanted a special medal and citation for the "invention of gravity-propelled space travel", but I have never personally taken a stand (nor do I want to) on that particular matter. It is true that I did submit award recommendations for both yourself and Flandro to an awards committee in 1991, but they disapproved both of these submittals for reasons known only to the board members. Even so, that citation read "For the highly creative development of the concept and solution procedures for gravity-assisted space flight, thereby enabling a manyfold increase in mission opportunity possibilities."

If you wish, I will hang on to your large collection of papers and historical data in the event that someone else should submit a recommendation for a second award for your work. In the meantime, I hope you are happy in both your professional and personal lives. In the event there is a 20th anniversary celebration of the Voyager launches next summer, I look forward to seeing you there if you are able to come.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles E. Kohlhasse".

Charles E. Kohlhasse  
Science & Mission Design  
The Cassini Program

cc: Rex W. Ridenoure