

BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY

LEWISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17837

March 26, 1965

The President
Hammermill Paper Company
Erie, Pennsylvania

Dear Sir:

I have been approached by a representative of a student group interested in the Civil Rights movement with the request that Bucknell University stop purchasing Hammermill paper. This request was based upon a vitriolic and unreasoned letter purported to have been received from a national Civil Rights organization which made what I assume to have been unjust charges against your company. I can find no basis for such charges other than the fact that your company has elected to erect a new plant in Selma, Alabama, and that the company issued statements with respect thereto which seem to have been extremely naive in the light of recent events.

I responded to the request with a statement that Bucknell would not terminate a satisfactory source of supply simply because the supplier had elected to build a plant in Selma, but that, on the contrary, it was possible that the supplier should be applauded for investing its money in the construction of a new plant in an area in need of industrial development and economic growth if the problem of the negro is indeed to be solved.

I am aware that your decision to build in Selma must have been made well in advance of the current tragic events in that city and that it is possible that your company now finds itself caught in a public relations snare. Any statement which might justify your position to those concerned with Civil Rights would complicate your working relationships with the "white power structure" of Selma with which you must deal. On the other hand, the development of routine and working relationships with city and state officials in Selma are interpreted as an endorsement of racist philosophy by those who want to punish Alabama for its Civil Rights sins.

The President
Hammermill Paper Company

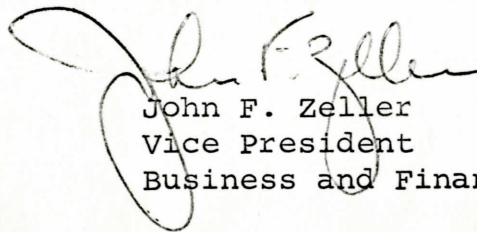
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This is an overly long way of saying that those of us who use your product and who have been satisfied with it have some understanding of your problem and are reluctant to make a judgment other than on the basis of the quality of the product and the integrity of the business relationship. Nonetheless, it would help us to deal with those sincere and concerned students who have raised this question if we could have from your company an assurance that the new plant in Selma will indeed be operated without discrimination, that it will provide new job opportunities for all citizens of Selma without regard to color, and that it is not the purpose of your company to interfere with the civil rights of any citizen or to strengthen or encourage those who would do so.

A prompt response to this letter would be very helpful to me in dealing with the students who have brought this matter to my attention. While I am confident that the broad charges made against your company are unjustified, I need your help in convincing my undergraduate friends that this is in fact the case.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John F. Zeller". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

John F. Zeller
Vice President
Business and Finance

JFZ:ag