

Sept. 11, 1967

46th St. Theater  
N.Y.C., N.Y.

ROBERT PRESTON

Dear E.J.

This is just a continuation of the conversation we were having in my dressing room a few short weeks ago. It has to be. I'm not able at this age and with another name to talk about what Dr. Andrus meant to me. Notice the date up there on the letter-head. It's the first day of school back here in New York and a black-letter day it is. The pressure of these times upon those who want to learn and those who want to teach them is something about which I know much, much too little. I have a good reason for not knowing, though. I was spoiled. And so were a great many of us potential hoodlums from Lincoln Heights, spoiled. When I saw you last you were on your way to Washington, D.C. where they ~~were~~ were going to recognize Dr. Andrus, posthumously, for some of her contributions to your fellows, which, parenthetically, means us all, but Washington, D.C. is a place of landmarks and statues, and recognition that comes always too little and almost always too late. -- Well, now you're back where I can see you better, and know that you're among friends who share the same pride of ownership that I have in my memories of Ethel Percy Andrus.... Remember the message I sent to those in charge in Washington? It went somrthing like this-"I've always been disappointed that our large, agglomerate, multi-racial world couldn't function as happily and as well as our small, agglomerate, multi-racial high school on the east side of Los Angeles, but then, our poor world had no Dr. Andrus to run it."

Clive Saenz, you were the darkest man I have ever seen wearing a Beef-Eater's costume, and I don't know to this day if you were a negro, a mexican, an indian or a very tanned Scandinavian, but no one cared very much. Espécially with that spear in youghand, you aborigine!

My Student Body Presidents - Walter Dunbar - Santo Guidera - William Schmidt - Ed Bosio - I've seen you all after the fact, and Dr. Andrus' trust and friendship shone through all your faces, though we never mentioned it.

The big iron scroll on the gate through which we passed, seldom looking up, read - OPPORTUNITY - Kenny Washington, Frankie, my young brother, Johnny Lunetta, Merle Mays, Ernie Sarracino, John Conte, Paul Bennett, Tony Mondello, and all my friends. Isn't it amazing that we didn't know until we walked out - OPPORTUNITY HAD RED HAIR.

Read this well E.J. We're all listening as best we can.

Love  
Robert Preston