

57 Class Parkinson Hall PROPOSAL DRAFT

Formal Naming Proposal

Proposal to Add the Name of Dr. Bradford W. Parkinson '57 to Michelson Hall, United States Naval Academy

Submitted by:

The United States Naval Academy Class of 1957
VADM D,L, Cooper, USN (Ret.), President

Proposed Name:

Michelson–Parkinson Hall

Purpose:

To recognize the extraordinary, globally transformative contributions of Dr. Bradford W. Parkinson '57, whose leadership in creating the Global Positioning System (GPS) stands as one of the most significant scientific and engineering achievements of the modern era.

Rationale:

Michelson Hall is named for **Albert A. Michelson**, the first American Nobel laureate, whose measurement of the speed of light revolutionized physics and navigation. Dr. Parkinson's creation of GPS represents a similarly foundational breakthrough — one that reshaped navigation, timing, communications, and global security.

Adding Dr. Parkinson's name to Michelson Hall would honor two USNA-connected scientific giants whose work fundamentally changed how humanity understands and navigates the world.

2. Justification Narrative

A. Extraordinary National and Global Impact

Dr. Bradford Parkinson is universally recognized as the **“Father of GPS.”**

His leadership as the first Program Manager of NAVSTAR GPS transformed a theoretical concept into a functioning global system that now underpins:

- Maritime navigation
- Aviation
- Space operations
- Precision warfare
- Global commerce

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- Telecommunications
- Emergency response
- Scientific research
- Agriculture
- Everyday civilian life

GPS is arguably the most widely used military-origin technology in the world.

B. Alignment with Naval Academy Values

Dr. Parkinson exemplifies:

- Honor
- Courage
- Commitment
- Intellectual rigor
- Service to the nation

His work directly enhances the safety and effectiveness of every Navy ship, aircraft, and Marine unit.

C. Distinguished Graduate of the Naval Academy

Dr. Parkinson is a **Distinguished Graduate of USNA**, placing him among the Academy's most accomplished alumni.

D. Recipient of the 2019 Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering

This award — often called the “Nobel Prize of Engineering” — recognized his foundational role in creating GPS.

E. Precedent for Naming After Living Individuals

The Navy has named ships and facilities after:

- Senators
- Members of Congress
- Presidents
- Scientists

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- Medal of Honor recipients
- Army and Air Force personnel

Living honorees are permitted and have been approved by the Secretary of the Navy.

F. Parallel to Albert A. Michelson

Michelson measured the speed of light — a discovery that transformed physics and navigation.

Parkinson created GPS — a discovery that transformed global navigation and timing.

Both achievements:

- Redefined scientific understanding
- Revolutionized navigation
- Serve as pillars of modern technology
- Reflect the Academy’s commitment to excellence in science and engineering

Adding Parkinson’s name to Michelson Hall creates a powerful, historically coherent pairing.

3. Letter from the Class of 1957

To:

Superintendent, United States Naval Academy
121 Blake Road
Annapolis, MD 21402

Subject: Proposal to Add the Name of Dr. Bradford W. Parkinson '57 to Michelson Hall

Dear Lt-Gen Borgschulte,

We, the undersigned members of the United States Naval Academy Class of 1957, respectfully submit this proposal to add the name of our classmate, **Dr. Bradford W. Parkinson**, to **Michelson Hall**.

Dr. Parkinson is internationally recognized as the **“Father of GPS.”** His leadership in developing the Global Positioning System has transformed navigation, timing, communications, and global security. His contributions have benefitted every Navy ship, aircraft, and Marine unit, as well as the entire world.

Michelson Hall honors **Albert A. Michelson**, whose measurement of the speed of light revolutionized science and navigation. Dr. Parkinson’s leadership of the team that

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succeeded in developing GPS represents a similarly transformative achievement. Adding his name to Michelson Hall would honor two scientific pioneers whose work fundamentally reshaped humanity's understanding of the world.

Dr. Parkinson is a **Distinguished Graduate of the Naval Academy**, a recipient of the **2019 Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering**, and a man of impeccable character whose life exemplifies the values of honor, courage, and commitment.

We respectfully request that the U.S. Navy consider naming the Naval Academy building **Michelson-Parkinson Hall** in recognition of these two extraordinary figures.

Very respectfully,

The United States Naval Academy Class of 1957

VADM Daniel L. Cooper, USN (Ret.)
President

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4. Strategic Plan for Approaching USNA Leadership

Step 1 — Build Class Consensus

- Gather signatures from as many members of the Class of 1957 as possible
- Include family members of deceased classmates

Step 2 — Engage the USNA Alumni Association

- Request formal endorsement
- Provide the justification narrative and biography

Step 3 — Submit Proposal to the Superintendent

- Include:
- Proposal
- Justification narrative
- Biography
- Letters of support

Step 4 — Seek Endorsements from Senior Leaders

Ideal supporters include:

- Former CNOs
- Distinguished Graduates
- Senior flag officers
- Leaders in engineering and navigation

Step 5 — Encourage Review by the CNO and SECNAV

The Superintendent forwards the proposal to:

- Chief of Naval Operations
- Secretary of the Navy

SECNAV is the final approval authority.

5. Biographical Summary of Dr. Bradford W. Parkinson

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Dr. Bradford W. Parkinson '57

- Distinguished Graduate, U.S. Naval Academy
- Ph.D., Stanford University
- Colonel, U.S. Air Force (Ret.)
- First Program Manager, NAVSTAR GPS
- Widely known as the “**Father of GPS**”
- Recipient of the **2019 Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering**
- Member, National Academy of Engineering
- Stanford Professor Emeritus
- Pioneer in navigation, control systems, and aerospace engineering
- His work underpins modern navigation, timing, communications, and global commerce

6. Tailored Recommendation: Add Parkinson’s Name to Michelson Hall

Why Michelson Hall?

Michelson Hall honors **Albert A. Michelson**, whose measurement of the speed of light revolutionized physics and navigation.

Dr. Parkinson’s creation of GPS revolutionized navigation and timing on a global scale.

Both men:

- Transformed scientific understanding
- Advanced navigation in ways that changed the world
- Represent the highest ideals of the Naval Academy
- Made contributions that endure for generations

Recommendation:

Rename the building **Michelson–Parkinson Hall**, honoring two scientific giants whose work reshaped the modern world.

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Executive Summary

Proposal to Add the Name of Dr. Bradford W. Parkinson '57 to Michelson Hall United States Naval Academy

Purpose:

This proposal recommends that the United States Naval Academy rename its principal science and engineering facility **Michelson–Parkinson Hall**, honoring both **Albert A. Michelson** and **Dr. Bradford W. Parkinson '57**, two scientific pioneers whose work fundamentally transformed navigation, physics, and global technology.

Background

Michelson Hall currently honors **Albert A. Michelson**, the first American Nobel laureate, whose measurement of the speed of light revolutionized physics and laid the foundation for modern navigation and scientific precision.

Dr. Bradford W. Parkinson '57, a Distinguished Graduate of the Naval Academy, is internationally recognized as the “**Father of GPS.**” As the first Program Manager of NAVSTAR GPS, he led the development of the Global Positioning System from concept to operational reality. GPS is now indispensable to:

- Maritime and aviation navigation
- Space operations
- Precision warfare
- Telecommunications and timing
- Global commerce and transportation
- Emergency response and scientific research

In 2019, Dr. Parkinson received the **Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering**, the world’s most prestigious engineering honor, recognizing GPS as one of the most transformative technologies of the modern era.

Rationale for Naming

1. Parallel Scientific Impact

Michelson’s measurement of the speed of light and Parkinson’s creation of GPS represent two of the most consequential breakthroughs in the history of navigation and science. Both achievements reshaped humanity’s understanding of the world and directly support the Naval Academy’s mission to advance excellence in science, engineering, and leadership.

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2. Alignment with Navy and USNA Values

Dr. Parkinson's career exemplifies honor, courage, commitment, intellectual rigor, and service to the nation. His work directly enhances the safety and effectiveness of every Navy ship, aircraft, and Marine unit.

3. Distinguished Graduate and National Figure

As a Distinguished Graduate of USNA and a global engineering leader, Dr. Parkinson stands among the Academy's most accomplished alumni.

4. Precedent for Honoring Living Individuals

The Department of the Navy has repeatedly named ships and facilities after living individuals whose contributions are of extraordinary national significance. Dr. Parkinson's achievements clearly meet this standard.

Recommendation

Rename the building as:

Michelson–Parkinson Hall

United States Naval Academy

This dual naming honors two scientific giants whose work transformed navigation and global technology. It reinforces the Academy's commitment to excellence in science and engineering and celebrates one of its most distinguished graduates.