



Item: Vc. SPAS: A-2

Wednesday, May 26, 2010

**SUBJECT: APPROVAL TO REDEDICATE THE LINK BUILDING AS THE "EDWIN A. LINK BUILDING" ON THE HARBOR BRANCH OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE CAMPUS.**

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**PROPOSED BOARD ACTION**

Approval to rededicate the Link Building as the Edwin A. Link Building.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Harbor Branch Advisory Council is requesting that the Link Building at HBOI be rededicated as the "Edwin A. Link Building" in honor of Mr. Edwin A. Link. In his early years, Mr. Link pioneered the field of flight simulation and global aviation, the significance of which was internationally recognized by numerous aeronautical institutes and societies. In his later years, Mr. Link's interests turned to undersea exploration and he joined forces with Seward Johnson, Sr. to create a new class of submersible human-occupied vehicle, the Johnson SeaLink. Known for its use in recovery of the Civil War ironclad, USS Monitor, and the damaged Challenger Space Shuttle booster rockets, the submersible has been used to discover, observe and collect thousands of biological samples from ocean reefs, previously unknown to the marine science world.

The timing of this building rededication coincides with the building's extensive renovation as part of the Harbor Branch capital plan, which has a scheduled completion of February 2011. Over the years the designation "Link Building" has since lost its specificity of Mr. Link's significant contributions. The HBOI Advisory Council is requesting that the designation be clarified by including Mr. Link's full name in its title so that the building will be known as the "Edwin A. Link Building." This will restore the level of recognition that Mr. Link richly deserves for his major contributions to ocean science and to the advancement of Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution and is a fitting memorial to this extraordinary individual.

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/DATE**

Upon approval of the Board of Trustees.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

Not Applicable.

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**Supporting Documentation:** Request from the Chair, Harbor Branch Advisory Council, February 15, 2010.

**Presented by:** Dr. John Wiesenfeld, Chair, Harbor Branch Advisory Council

**Phone:** 561-297-3450



John R. Wiesenfeld  
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Chair, Harbor Branch Advisory Council

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. John Pritchett  
Interim President

FROM: John Wiesenfeld  
Chair, Harbor Branch Advisory Council

SUBJECT: Link Building Renaming

DATE: February 15, 2010

This memorandum requests that Florida Atlantic University clarify the naming of the structure at Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution known as the "Link Engineering Building and High Bay" (FAU building HB-18) by refining its official designation to the "Edwin A. Link Building" in honor of a true American hero of science, Mr. Edwin A. Link. As you know, this structure is currently undergoing an extensive renovation as part of the Harbor Branch capital plan, with scheduled completion by February 2011. The rededication of this building offers FAU a wonderful opportunity to simultaneously rededicate the institution to a new era of ocean exploration and scientific achievement, a fitting memorial to this extraordinary individual and his vision of technological excellence.

Mr. Link was born in 1904. Shortly thereafter, his family moved to upstate New York, where he eventually founded the Link Company in Binghamton. Here he pioneered the field of flight simulation, eventually creating by the early 1930s, a prototype of the Link Trainer, a device that would revolutionize the training of pilots in instrument flying techniques. We cannot begin to estimate the number of lives that the Link Trainer saved over the years, nor could we reliably assess the enormous impact that it would have on the training of thousands of Allied military pilots during World War II. However, the significance of this technological achievement has been widely recognized by the engineering community. Mr. Link has received the following awards: Howard N. Potts Medal of the Franklin Institute; Wakefield Gold Medal from the Royal Aeronautical Society in London; Matthew Fontaine Maury Medal from the Smithsonian Institution; OX5 Club Aviation Hall of Fame; and the Lindbergh Award.

The economic impact of the Link Company on its home community has also been recognized; the airfield at Binghamton's regional airport is named after Edwin Link.

Important as the invention and mass production of the Link Trainer were to the development of global aviation, that is not the rationale for the designation of the Edwin A. Link Building at Harbor Branch. After the sale of the Link Company in the 1950s (it is now part of L-3 Communications), Mr. Link's interests turned to undersea exploration, and he joined forces with the founder of Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution, Seward Johnson, Sr., to create a new class of submersible human occupied vehicle, the Johnson SeaLink, the first of which was completed in 1971. A second JSL was constructed within a decade. These two extraordinary scientific instruments can operate at depths approaching 3,000 feet, and to date have undertaken over 9,000 dives. Among their more publicized achievements were the recovery both of the Civil War ironclad, *USS Monitor* and of the damaged *Challenger* Space Shuttle booster rockets, the malfunction of which led to the tragic loss of that spacecraft. The two JSL submersibles were used to discover and characterize previously unknown deep ocean reefs off the southeastern coast of the United States, and their unmatched ability to observe and collect biological samples led to the collection of untold thousands of marine organisms of astonishing biodiversity and importance.

Not only did Edwin Link provide innovation and leadership at Harbor Branch, he also was mindful of the need to create educational programs for those who would become the next generation of ocean engineers. To this end, in 1965, the Link Foundation provided support to Florida Atlantic University to establish the first ocean engineering program. To this day, the Link Foundation provides funding for research and education in ocean science and ocean engineering.

In October, 1975,, the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution's Board of Directors decided to honor Ed Link in the following way

"In tribute to his imaginative genius and contributions in ocean engineering research and development, the Trustees and Board of Directors of Harbor Branch Foundation, Inc. dedicated to Edwin A. Link the Link Engineering Laboratory and General Office Building on January 16, 1976."

Over the years the designation "Link Building" came into general use, but it has since lost its specificity. I am requesting that FAU remove any ambiguity in the building's designation by including Mr. Link's full name in its title so that it reads as "Edwin A. Link Building". That act would restore the level of recognition that he so richly deserves for his major contributions to ocean science and to the advancement of Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution. We will be hard pressed to find such visionary leadership in the future, but with his inspiration we can certainly dedicate ourselves to that noble purpose.