



Milton Stover Eisenhower

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MILTON STOVER EISENHOWER

(1899 – 1985)

Much has been said and written about Milton Eisenhower's legacy, about his splendid presidencies at three great universities, about the difficult assignment from President Johnson to head the President's Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, about setting the stage for President Kennedy's Alliance for Progress through his trips as Special Ambassador to Latin America, and about the perceptive recommendations he made to his brother in the White House. We at Hopkins remember his deep interest in students and his warm relationships with Boards of Trustees and contributors to the establishments he served so well.

... There is a peculiar bond between a President and his Board. A kind of chemistry works between them. When the chemical reactions are positive and working well, all sorts of positive things seem to follow. Not only is there a sense of momentum of creativity, of stability, and of high morale among members of the Board, but these qualities seem to flow beyond the board room. They permeate the entire University.

Such was the case with Milton Eisenhower and his Board. The harmony, the cooperation and the productivity, which existed were wonderful to be a part of.

Robert D. H. Harvey
Chairman of the Board of Trustees (1979)

What were his interactions with the Applied Physics Laboratory? How did he handle this large establishment, forged in the heat of World War II by Merle A. Tuve? In contrast to his predecessors at The Johns Hopkins University who preferred to keep their distance, Eisenhower's vision was one of rapprochement, of unity, and of cohesion between APL and the other divisions of the University. He cemented policies that laid the basis for a contractual relationship between the University and the Navy that identified APL as a national resource dedicated to public service and the highest standards of professional excellence and that provided the legal and financial means for its continuity. He was supported in this by R. E. Gibson who, having preserved APL as an effective institution after the war's end, nurtured his own plans for closer integration.

Coincident with Eisenhower's presidency at Hopkins, the period from the mid-nineteen fifties through the sixties was one of unusual creativity and expansion at APL, each new venture helping to make stronger and lasting ties with other parts of the University.

... It was a glorious era for all at Johns Hopkins. Milton Eisenhower brought to its presidency a lifelong dedication and belief in public service, a profound knowledge of the ways of men and organizations, and personal warmth and enthusiasm that drew out the best in everyone.

Alexander Kossiakoff
Director, Applied Physics Laboratory (1979)

The satellite navigation program, begun in 1957 and brilliantly carried into practice within a few years, expanded almost by necessity into a space science program that led to close working relations with NASA and the Department of Physics at Homewood and served as a major factor several years later in bringing the Space Telescope Institute to Hopkins. When Eisenhower first heard of the Transit concept, his response was characteristically enthusiastic and supportive. He wanted to discuss it with interested people at the earliest opportunity in order to give it a good start. He never failed to mention Transit and its commercial promise when speaking to alumni and benefactors about University accomplishments.

He took a keen interest in the APL graduate teaching effort. Starting with a few courses sponsored by the JHU Evening College for APL staff members, the doors were opened in 1963 to the technical community in the Washington-Baltimore area. Growth was spectacular, both in student body and in number of courses. As a part of the University's Whiting School of Engineering, it is now the largest part-time graduate-level study program in engineering offered anywhere in the United States.

Among Eisenhower's greatest contributions to APL was his strong support for the creation of a joint biomedical engineering program with the JHU Medical Institutions. He approved a plan, first formulated in 1965 by Frank T. McClure, chairman of the APL Research Center, to move a massive 60-inch cyclotron from the Carnegie Institution of Washington to APL to produce pharmaceuticals containing short-lived radioisotopes of carbon, nitrogen, and oxygen for clinical use at the Hospital. Eisenhower wrote to the president of the Carnegie Institution, Caryl P. Haskins:

... I should note that the University is attempting to produce closer collaboration efforts between physical scientists and engineers on the one hand and medical scientists on the other. There is a strong feeling here that the University, through its resources in the Med-

ical School and the Applied Physics Laboratory, can make a significant contribution by bringing the modern technology of the physical sciences into the medical field. It is possible that this may lead to the establishment of a Medical Physics Center at Howard County jointly sponsored by the Medical School and APL. . . .

Although this bold proposal did not bear fruit, he supported the vigorous expansion of contacts between APL and several departments of the Medical School (most notably with the Department of Ophthalmology under Professor A. E. Maumenee) to carry out investigations that would benefit from the pooling of medical and engineering physics resources. He was amused by the difficulties encountered in early group meetings where much time was spent in overcoming linguistic hurdles caused by the specialized verbiage used by the various groups attempting to solve problems of mutual interest.

Eisenhower foresaw clearly that biomedical engineering would lead to the fashioning of fruitful interdepartmental and cross-disciplinary ties where close cooperation among persons with different backgrounds would be possible. It provided an outlet for a deeply held belief that he expressed in response to a draft of an article ("Is There an Alternative to the Arms Race?") sent to him for comments. He wrote:

. . . Quite a different aspect of the armaments problem bothers me. . . we are neglecting aspects of national life which threaten the moral, intellectual, and economic power of the nation. It is *total* strength that must concern us. I honestly believe that we will be more secure if we divert some of our efforts to problems of crime, juvenile delinquency, education, health, and so on.

As his successor Steven Muller said at the dedication ceremony of the Applied Physics Laboratory's Milton S. Eisenhower Research Center in 1979:

. . . One of the great achievements of Hopkins as a university is that over the administration of ten different presidents and over the succession of faculties and deans and students, the University has remained true to the notion of being primarily committed to advanced teaching and research.

How wonderful then that the commitment is reflected in this laboratory in its Research Center. And how wonderfully fitting that this Research Center should bear the name of Milton Stover Eisenhower who symbolized the traditions which have blended here. . . .

A belief in total strength was Milton Eisenhower's special gift. It worked magic at Hopkins. It will long be treasured.

WALTER G. BERL