

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
JANUARY 29, 2018
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
HDP-2017-0707
4305 FARHILLS DRIVE

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1966 house.

ARCHITECTURE

The house is two-stories, although it appears as a one-story house from the street; it is designed in the mid-century Modern style with low horizontal lines, walls of glass, and cantilevered sections over sloping terrain. The house has board-and-batten siding, a metal roof, and decorative vertical wood panels in an undulating pattern. The garage, which is the primary view from the street, has a rock wall facing the street; the entry is around the side. From the garage/driveway, there is a wood gangplank across a steeply-sloped ravine between the driveway and the house. The front door is deeply recessed; the front wall of the house is composed principally of glass across the low-horizontal section of the principal structure.

RESEARCH

The house was built in 1966 by Darden Construction (Sidney Darden, principal) of Austin for Chester M. McKinney and his wife, Linda. Sidney Darden was a well-known builder in Austin in the late 1950s through the early 1970s; his custom-built homes were frequently featured in the Austin Parade of Homes. Darden also served as president of the Austin Association of Home Builders in the 1960s. However, it is not clear whether this house was the product of an outside architectural designer, or whether Darden used in-house architects for designers for this house. Other Darden houses that staff has been able to locate show later houses that are more traditional in style than this one.

Chester M. McKinney, Jr., the first owner of this house, lived here until he and his wife Linda moved to a retirement community in Westlake Hills in 2003. McKinney was a very prominent scientist at the University of Texas, working primarily with the Navy and other military contracts, including the development of a sonar system to detect undersea mines. From 1965, the year before he built this house, until his retirement in 1980, McKinney was the head of the Applied Research Laboratory at the University of Texas, which grew out of the Defense Research Laboratory. He was also a founder of Texas Research Associates, which merged with Textran, and later became Tracor, the first high-tech business in Austin. A wing of the Applied Research Laboratory building at UT's Pickle Research Center was named for him in 2000.

STAFF COMMENTS

The house is beyond the bounds of any City survey to date.

Staff believes that the house may meet the criteria for designation as a historic landmark:

- a. **Architecture.** The house is a 1966 house that exhibits what is likely a vernacular adaptation of the mid-century Modern style with its long and low profile, wide expanses of glass, use of native materials, such as the limestone on the garage, and an overall composition that blends the interior of the house with its external environment.
- b. **Historical association.** The house is primarily associated with Chester M. McKinney, Jr., a prominent scientist at the University of Texas, who developed a sonar system for detecting undersea mines and pioneered the

study of acoustics at the University of Texas' Pickle Research Campus. A wing of the main Applied Research Laboratory was named for McKinney in 2000.

- c. **Archaeology.** The house was not evaluated for its potential to yield significant data concerning the human history or prehistory of the region.
- d. **Community value.** The house does not possess a unique location, physical characteristic, or significant feature that contributes to the character, image, or cultural identity of the city, the neighborhood, or a particular demographic group.
- e. **Landscape feature.** The property is not a significant natural or designed landscape with artistic, aesthetic, cultural, or historical value to the city.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive re-use, and either postpone to February 26, 2018 or initiate a historic zoning case to evaluate alternatives to demolition of this house and to ascertain which portions of the house are original, as well as the structural soundness of the building. If the Commission votes to release the demolition permit, then staff recommends completion of a City of Austin Documentation Package, consisting of photographs of all elevations, a dimensioned sketch plan, and a narrative history, for archiving at the Austin History Center.

LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

1" = 167'

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: HDP-2017-0707
4305 FARHILLS DR

This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries.

This product has been produced by CTM for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.



4605 Farhills Drive
ca. 1966





Realtor's photo of the entry to the house









OCCUPANCY HISTORY
4605 Farhills Drive

By City Historic Preservation Office
December, 2017

- 1992 Chester M., Jr. and Linda H. McKinney, owners
Retired
- 1985-86 Chester M., Jr. and Linda H. McKinney, owners
Retired
- 1981 Chester M. Jr., and Linda H. McKinney, owners
Scientist, University of Texas
- 1977 Chester M., Jr. and Linda H. McKinney, owners
Director, University of Texas
- 1973 Chester M., Jr. and Linda H. McKinney, owners
Department director, University of Texas
- 1968 Chester M., Jr. and Linda H. McKinney, owners
Department director, University of Texas
- 1967 Chester M., Jr. and Linda McKinney, owners
Associate director, University of Texas
- 1966 The address is not listed in the directory.
NOTE: Chester M., Jr. and Linda McKinney are listed at 2614 Fiset Drive; he was an associate director at the University of Texas.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:

Chester M., Jr. and Linda H. McKinney (ca. 1966 – ca. 2003)

AUSTIN, Texas—A formal dedication ceremony will be held at 4 p.m. Thursday (Nov. 9) to mark the naming of the McKinney Wing of the Applied Research Laboratories (ARL). ARL is located at the J.J. Pickle Research Campus of The University of Texas at Austin, 10100 Burnet Road.

Former ARL director Dr. Chester McKinney and his wife, Linda, will be honored at the event and will be joined by family members, friends and colleagues. UT Austin President Larry R. Faulkner and members of The University of Texas System Board of Regents will preside. The public is welcome to attend the ceremony and following reception.

McKinney served as the ARL director from 1965 until his retirement in 1980, leading and overseeing a number of high-profile projects. Many of the projects related to national defense. McKinney was instrumental in establishing the high-resolution sonar program that remains one of the cornerstones of ARL research in acoustics today.

"Chester McKinney's administrative principles continue to guide the center," said Dr. Clark S. Penrod, ARL's executive director. "He fostered an atmosphere in which the laboratories became known for technical excellence and for providing cost-effective solutions to some of the military's most difficult problems."

McKinney, a native of Cooper, Texas, was born Jan. 29, 1920. After his discharge from the U.S. Army Air Corps as a captain in 1946, he worked at the laboratories toward two degrees in physics, an M.S. in 1947 and a Ph.D. 1950. He specialized in radar and sonar research, and his later work was primarily in the field of underwater acoustics. Since retiring from his director's post, he continues to serve as a consultant to ARL.

"We are all in debt to Dr. McKinney for his guiding hand in the Applied Research Laboratories' groundbreaking research," said Faulkner. "I'm delighted to be able to honor him and Mrs. McKinney in this most appropriate way."

In the past 20 years, McKinney has served on several advisory committees to the U.S. Navy, including the Mine Advisory Committee and the Naval Studies Board. He also has served on the Underwater Sound Advisory Group and other similar groups.

McKinney is a fellow of the Acoustical Society of America and served a term as its president. In 1983-84, he served as a liaison scientist with the Office of Naval Research in London. He is an Honorary Fellow of the British Institute of Acoustics.

News release from the University of Texas, November 6, 2000.



McKINNEY, Jr., Chester M.

Chester M. McKinney, Jr., age 96, died in Austin on January 21, 2017 - just 8 days short of his 97th birthday. He was born in Cooper, Texas on January 29, 1920 to Chester M. McKinney and Phoebe Hooper McKinney.

He was preceded in death by his parents, a sister Lillian Pearce (1993), and a brother Hal McKinney (2006). He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Linda Hooten McKinney (whom he had known since her birth), a daughter, Margaret Phoebe McKinney, a daughter Katherine Elizabeth (McKinney) Ward and her husband David Ward, 5 grandchildren: Travis McKinney, Tyson McKinney, Wade McKinney, Cameron Ward, and Hallie Ward; and one great-grandchild - Eva Maria McKinney.

Chester attended public school in Cooper (a small town 80 miles northeast of Dallas), graduating in 1937. He was an Eagle Boy Scout and a licensed Amateur Radio Operator (W5JEP). He then attended East Texas State Teachers College in Commerce, graduating in 1941 with a B.S. degree in physics. Following a year of teaching high school science in Cooper and shortly after the December 7, 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor, he volunteered for the US Army Air Force in March 1942. After attending several service schools (including Harvard and MIT), he served as a radar officer in India, China, and Tinian, as a member of the 58th Bomb Wing, the first B29 wing. After discharge in March 1946 (exit grade captain), he entered graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin, where he received an M.A. degree (Physics) in 1947 (R.B. Watson, supervisor) and a Ph.D. degree (Physics) in 1950 (C W. Horton, supervisor). The research work for both degrees was conducted at the University's Defense Research Laboratory, where he was a part-time employee. While in graduate school, he married Linda Hooten in 1948.

Following graduate school, he served as a Physics Department faculty member at Texas Technological College in Lubbock from 1950 to 1953, when he returned to Austin where he joined the staff of DRL (now Applied Research Laboratories) as a fulltime research scientist. He remained with the same organization for the rest of his professional career, working largely in the field of underwater acoustics, especially in work relating to the development of high frequency, high resolution sonar. He served as Director of DRL/ARL from 1965 until his retirement in 1980, and has continued as an (unpaid) consultant since except for a tour as Liaison Scientist with the Office of Naval Research in London (1983-84). In 2000, he was honored with the dedication of a new wing to the ARL main building - The McKinney Wing. More recently a new UT graduate fellowship in Acoustics bears his name.

Chester has been an active member of the Acoustical Society of America since 1953, serving in many offices, including that of President (1987-88). In 2004, the ASA presented him with its highest award, the Gold Medal, at its New York meeting. Also an Oral History interview conducted by David Blackstone in 2002 is on file in The American Institute of Physics History of Physics Archive.

In addition to those already mentioned, he received other honors, including the U.S. Navy Distinguished Public Services award (1980), the ADPA Bushnell award (1985), and the IEEE Ocean Engineering Society Distinguished Technical Achievement Award (1988). He was an Honorary Fellow of the British Institute of Acoustics.

Chester greatly enjoyed his long membership in the Town and Gown Club of Austin (since 1983) and served as Secretary-Treasurer for 12 years and later as President.

Chester was the last surviving member of the group of five who formed, in 1955, one of Austin's first high tech companies, Texas Research Associates, a spin-off from DRL, which after merging with Textran (another DRL spin-off) became Tracor.

Chester always felt that he was extremely fortunate to grow up in a small town (with wonderful parents, friends, and teachers), live through the Great Depression, serve in the armed forces in WWII, have a rewarding professional career, and have a wonderful life with his family (wife, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchild), as well as a host of other relatives and close friends. He had a good and happy life.

A celebration of Chester's life will be planned for a future date. Following cremation, his ashes will be interred in the family plot in the Oaklawn Cemetery in Cooper, Texas.

Obituary of Chester M. McKinney, Jr.
Austin American-Statesman, January 27, 2017

McKinney, co-founder of pioneering Austin tech company Tracor, dies at 96

Posted January 30th, 2017



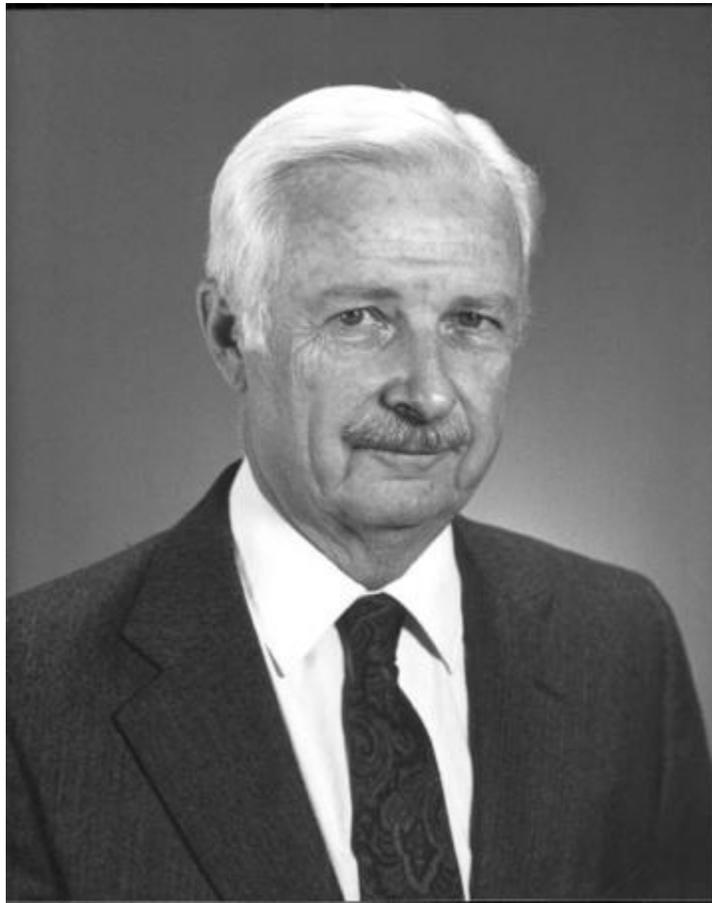
[Ralph K.M. Haurwitz](#) American-Statesman Staff

Chester M. McKinney Jr., who directed the largest research unit at the University of Texas for 15 years and was the last surviving co-founder of one of Austin's first high-tech companies, has died at 96.

He died Jan. 21 of heart failure at Brookdale Westlake Hills, said Margaret McKinney, his daughter

McKinney joined UT's Defense Research Laboratory — now known as the [Applied Research Laboratories](#) — in 1953 and directed the labs, at the university's J.J. Pickle Research Campus in North Austin, from 1965 until he retired in 1980. He continued as an unpaid consultant until his death, except for a stint with the Office of Naval Research in London.

Acoustics-related research, McKinney's stock in trade, has been a mainstay of the labs since World War II, with a special emphasis on developing high-resolution sonar equipment used by the U.S. Navy to detect enemy divers, explosives planted on the hull of a ship and other hazards.



Chester McKinney Jr.

“Chester was both a gifted scientist and a very insightful administrator,” said Clark Penrod, the labs’ current director. “As an administrator, he established a culture and philosophy at ARL that continues to this day. He thought that a university laboratory like ARL should focus on both academic research and on applications to national security problems. As a researcher, Chester was one of the U.S. Navy’s leading experts on mine warfare, and particularly mine countermeasures.”

The labs keep a relatively low profile, in part because some of the work is classified. Yet they generate about \$100 million in federal research funding annually and employ 400 scientists and engineers, about 150 part-time students and a support staff of about 250 — all of which Penrod called a legacy of McKinney’s operating philosophy.

Margaret McKinney said her father had a dry sense of humor and an appreciation of irony. “During the Vietnam War, protesters called up the lab and asked Dad where exactly it was,” she said. “He invited them in to take a tour.”

McKinney was one of five co-founders of one of Austin’s first high-technology companies, Texas Research Associates, a 1955 spinoff from the labs that merged with sister spinoff Textran to form Tracor Inc. in 1962.

Tracor held many Austin firsts: first tech startup, first sizable and locally based public company, first to earn a place on the Fortune 500 list of the largest American public companies, first to spin off several other successful companies, first sizable leveraged buyout and first to emerge from bankruptcy protection to achieve \$1 billion in sales. It

was eventually acquired by General Electric Co. and then by London-based BAE Systems PLC.

McKinney grew up in Cooper, a small town northeast of Dallas, becoming an Eagle Scout and a licensed amateur radio operator. After earning a degree in physics at East Texas State Teachers College, now known as Texas A&M University-Commerce, he taught high school science for a year and then enlisted in the military. He served as a radar officer with the Army Air Forces during World War II.

He earned his master's and doctoral degrees in physics at UT, conducting research for those degrees at the labs he would eventually direct.

McKinney is survived by his wife, Linda; two daughters, Margaret McKinney and Kem Ward, both of Austin; five grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

A celebration of his life is being planned for a future date. McKinney's ashes will be interred in the family plot at Oaklawn Cemetery in Cooper.

From 512Tech, Austin [American-Statesman](#), January 30, 2017

Obituary | Chester M. McKinney | 1920-2017 Chester M. McKinney, former Acoustical Society of America (ASA) President, Gold Medalist, and winner of many US Navy and professional society awards, died on January 21, 2017. Born in Cooper, TX, he graduated in 1941 from East Texas State Teachers College and taught high-school physics before serving in the US Army Air Corps (1942-1946) as a radar officer. After World War II, Chester attended the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin), earning a master's degree in physics under Robert Watson (1947) and a doctorate under Claude Horton (1950), while becoming the first graduate student at UT Austin's Defense Research Laboratory (DRL), now the Applied Research Laboratories (ARL:UT). After teaching at Texas Technological University (1950-1953), he returned to the DRL and soon became an expert in high-resolution sonar physics and engineering. His research focused on developing sonar for the detection and classification of undersea naval mines and on a wide variety of related subjects such as the backscattering of sound from the seafloor, the scattering of sound from mine cases and other targets, bottom mapping, and swimmer detection. His insight and pioneering research led to the new field of classification sonar, which enabled a sonar operator to distinguish naval mines from the numerous false targets found in shallow water. He also published many papers in *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* on the acoustic fields of transducers, especially the incorporation of reflector shapes to efficiently create narrow sound beams. He became a sagacious and insightful leader and was director of DRL/ARL:UT during formative periods of its history (1965-1980), which included developing a widely recognized science and engineering staff and a new building and research campus as well as a first-class underwater test facility at nearby Lake Travis. The history of DRL/ ARL:UT pertaining to acoustics is summarized in a *Proceedings of Meetings on Acoustics* article (23, 070014, 2015). Chester joined the ASA in 1953, became a Fellow in 1958, and provided legendary service to the Society. His many contributions to the ASA included being a founding member of the Technical Committee on Underwater Acoustics and its first chair (1956), and he was instrumental in the establishment of three committees: Archives, Tutorials, and Public Relations. He chaired the local committee for the 1975 Austin meeting, where he proposed and implemented changes to meeting formats that continue today: the poster sessions, the plenary sessions for presentations and awards, and the Tuesday and Thursday evening socials. In 1989, he directed the first comprehensive census of the Society membership. Chester married Linda Hooten in 1949, and their 68 years of marriage saw the birth of two daughters, Margaret Phoebe and Katherine Elizabeth, as well as five grandchildren and one great-grandchild. After retiring from ARL:UT, he served as liaison scientist with the Office of Naval Research in London, UK (1983- 1984). In 2000, a new ARL:UT building was named in his honor. Further information on Chester McKinney is found on the Web links <http://acousticstoday.org/mckinney> and http://acousticstoday.org/asa_mckinney. Selected Articles by Chester M. McKinney McKinney, C. M., and Anderson, C. D. (1964). Backscattering of sound from the ocean bottom. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 36, 158-163. McKinney, C. M., Harvel, K. W., and Ellis, G.E. (1972). Characteristics of line and disk underwater sound transducers in the near- to farfield transition region. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 51, 1076- 1082. McKinney, C. M., Hurdle, B. G., and Blue, J. E. (1992). A profile of the acoustics community in the United States and Canada, *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 91, 1169-1179.

