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Hall of Honor

The Hall of Honor was created in 1999 to pay special tribute to the pioneers and heroes who rendered distinguished service to American cryptology.

1999

William F. Friedman

Wolfe Frederick Friedman was born on 24 September 1891 in Kishinev, then part of imperial Russia, now Chisinau, capital of Moldova. His father, an interpreter for the Czar's postal service, emigrated to the United States the following year to escape increasing anti-Semitic regulations; the family joined him in Pittsburgh in 1893. Three years after that, when the elder Friedman became a U.S. citizen, Wolfe's name was changed to William.

After receiving a B.S. and doing some graduate work in genetics at Cornell University, William Friedman was hired by Riverbank Laboratories, what would today be termed a "think tank," outside Chicago. There he became interested in the study of codes and ciphers, thanks to his concurrent interest in [Elizebeth Smith](#), who was doing cryptanalytic research at Riverbank. Friedman left Riverbank to become a cryptologic officer during World War I, the beginning of a distinguished career in government service.

Friedman's contributions thereafter are well known-- prolific author, teacher, and practitioner of cryptology. Perhaps his greatest achievements were introducing mathematical and scientific methods into cryptology and producing training materials used by several



generations of pupils. His work affected for the better both signals intelligence and information systems security, and much of what is done today at NSA may be traced to William Friedman's pioneering efforts.

To commemorate the contributions of the Friedmans, in 2002 the OPS1 building on the NSA complex was dedicated as the William and Elizebeth Friedman Building.

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