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RADM James M. Mc Garrah, PE, CEC, USN  
(ret), Director, Information Technology and  
Telecommunications Laboratory, Georgia  
Tech Research Institute (Biographical Essay)

Naval Postgraduate School Committee on the Future

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**Member**

**RADM James M. Mc Garrah, PE, CEC, USN (ret)**  
**Director, Information Technology and Telecommunications Laboratory, Georgia Tech Research Institute**

Following successful Navy and telecommunications industry careers, Jim McGarrah joined the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) in November, 2008, as the Director of the Information Technology and Telecommunications Laboratory (ITTL). In this capacity, he leads over 200 research faculty, staff and students in delivering applied research solutions for sponsors in federal, state and local government and in the commercial sector.

Jim graduated "With Distinction" from the U. S. Naval Academy with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering and received his Navy commission in 1973. He served in both the active and reserve components of the U. S. Navy for 33 years. His key assignments included Electronic Warfare Officer and Damage Control Assistant in USS Belknap (CG-26), staff engineer assignments with U.S. Central Command and U.S. European Command, and various line and staff assignments in the Naval Construction Force. During his command of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion TWENTY-FOUR (NMCB-24), he led recovery operations in the Southeastern U.S. following Hurricane Hugo, and supported operations of the FIRST Marine Expeditionary Force in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm. His "Seabee" battalion was twice selected as "Best of Type" under his command. He also commanded the THIRD Naval Construction Regiment and served as Deputy Commander of the FIRST Naval Construction Division. During his final uniformed position as Deputy Chief of Civil Engineers and Director of the Contingency Engineering Group, he assumed additional duties leading a special assignment for the Secretary of the Navy. Following retirement from the Navy in 2006 as a Rear Admiral (O-8), he served an additional 2 years as a senior civilian Special Assistant working for the Deputy Secretary of Defense. His military awards include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (2), Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medal (3), Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal and various campaign and service medals.

In addition to his military career, Jim spent 24 years in the telecommunications industry working for Southern Bell, BellSouth and Cingular Wireless. He served primarily in operational and planning assignments with the network department. He also led organizations that were involved in the evaluation and deployment of new technologies such as fiber optics and wireless communications. He represented BellSouth's wireless segments for four years in various North American telecommunications standards organizations. He retired from Cingular Wireless in 2003 as Executive Director of National Network Planning and Operations.

Jim holds a Master of Arts degree in Human Resource Management from Pepperdine University, a Master of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology, and is a registered Professional Engineer in the state of Georgia. He is an active member and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of his church, a member of several civic and professional organizations, and is Past President and member of the Board of the Seabee Memorial Scholarship Association.

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