To the Editor:

The lead article in your Octo-
ber 7 issue told of the Un-
dergraduate Association's at-
tempt to change the name of the
Harvard Bridge. A memo cir-
culated by the UA last August
listed a series of alternatives. The
most likely among these were
names of early Institute presi-
dents, such as Rogers, Macaulay,
and Compton. Each already has
a building, laboratory, or hallway
named for him on our campus.

Why not choose from among
the MIT alumni? One of the most
significant facts of MIT's ex-
istence is its century-long produc-
tion of the world's best engineers.
Let's choose one of them.

Granted, with such a large do-
main, the chance for agreement
on any one engineer is low.

The person I have in mind is
John Ripley Freeman, Class of
1876. Freeman was a consult-
ing engineer and insurance execu-
tive. He built a reputation as the
leading American hydraulic engi-
neer from 1900 to 1932. He de-
designed water supply systems for
Boston, New York City, Balti-
more, Los Angeles, San Diego, and
San Francisco. In 1912 he over-
saw construction of the larg-
est hydroelectric dam built on
the Mississippi River. In 1919 he
oversees construction of the
Grand China Canal. Freeman
served with the Panama Canal
Commission, founded the Na-
tional Hydraulic Laboratory, and
conducted extensive studies near
the Charles.

Freeman's work on sanitary engi-
neering, seismology, and fire
prevention systems in the 1890's
was comparable to that of the
Japanese. He published a
monograph of his work on earth-
quake resistant construction and
earthquake zones in Japan.

Freeman was not a MIT grad-
uate, but he did some significant
work on the Charles River.

Freeman left his imprint on
MIT's Cambridge campus. As a
consulting engineer for the
Harvard Bridge, he would have
been the leading candidate for
building the bridge. He was a
strong supporter of MIT, he was a
leatherman of MIT, and he was a
leader of the Factory Mutual
Insurance company. Freeman
founded the Factory Mutual
Insurance company with his MIT
peers in hydraulics; with seismol-
ogy he learned from the Japa-
nese. He published a long
monograph on their work on earth-
quake resistant construction and
earthquake zones in Japan.

Freeman served on the MIT
Corporation for forty years. He
was an informal consultant to
each President of the Institute
during the first three decades of
this century. Freeman sponsored
the Cambridge campus site and
did extensive studies of urban-
dwelling space requirements,
economical building techniques, and
the architectural styles of
comparable European institutions.

Freeman's work on the
Charles River Dam Committee
in 1903 included studies of
the whole Charles River basin.

Since August the UA has had
an informal straw poll. On the
poll were a half dozen names of
past presidents hypothesized to
have "technology." Will our best
choice come from that list? I don't
think so. If anyone is curious why
I am so convinced of this, they are
welcome to visit the Institute
Archives (14N-111) and take a
look at the thousands of original
reports, photographs, blueprints,
maps, and letters left by Freeman
for posterity. His place in the
history of technology is promi-
inent.

It would be by no means in-
appropriate to name a bridge
after him.

Roland Madsen
Archives

Imagine yourself putting a satellite's entire communication system on a GaAs chip.

Imagine your group designing a missile system that exceeds human perception.

Imagine your team building a thermal imaging system that can see through darkness.

Imagine yourself at Hughes
... working on innovations that could change the world.
... taking advantage of Hughes' continuing education program — one of the finest in the country.
... enjoying the Southern California lifestyle.

See your placement office for an appointment.

At Hughes, your future is limited only by your imagination.