

**W. Lincoln Hawkins** Polymer Cable Sheath

National Hall of Inventors Inductee, 2010



Walter Lincoln Hawkins and his colleagues at Bell Labs helped make universal telephone service possible by revolutionizing cable sheathing for telephone cables. Specializing in cellulose chemistry, Mr. Hawkins developed a way to stabilize polyethylene, thereby creating a plastic cable insulation that could withstand changes in temperature and other environmental factors. This innovation reduced the cost of building and maintaining modern telephone systems.

Mr. Hawkins also devoted his time to improving education and employment opportunities for minorities interested in pursuing careers in engineering and science, helping to establish the Bell Labs Summer Research Program for Minorities and Women.

See the National Inventors Hall of Fame: <https://www.invent.org/inductees/w-lincoln-hawkins>