
IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

First Named Inventor:	B. Scott Maxfield	
Appln. No.:	18/490,715	Confirmation No.: 5970
Filing Date:	19 October 2023	Examiner: Shiref M Mekhaeil
Title:	MULTIFUNCTION BUTTON FOR LADDER ADJUSTMENT	Group Art Unit: 3634

DECLARATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.132

Mail Stop Amendment
Commissioner for Patents
P. O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

I, Paul B. Junius, declare that:

1. I have extensive experience in the ladder industry, including work in risk management for ladders from 1991 until today. Since 1991, I have worked for Ladder Management Services, Inc. (a now defunct entity) and Risk Retention Services, Inc., companies specializing in delivering excellence in litigation and claim management for high-risk exposures, including commercial clients in the ladder industry. I am currently the President of Risk Retention Services, Inc.

2. I am an attorney in good standing licensed to practice in the State of Wisconsin.

3. I have also been a member of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) committee for over 15 years. This committee is involved with the development and updating of safety standards that involve various types of ladders and accessories. In

this capacity, I have constantly been exposed to developments in the ladder industry, how they affect the safety of users, and how they affect the companies that implement them.

4. I am familiar with the disclosure of the present application (U.S. Patent Application 18/490,715) and its relationship to other ladder products in the current marketplace and marketplaces of the past.

5. Based on my over 33 years of experience in this field, I respectfully submit that the claims of the present application would not have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made. It would not have been obvious to modify ladder hinge buttons to include tool hanging functionality in the manner recited by the present claims at least because doing so would potentially increase a ladder manufacturer's exposure to product liability lawsuits. I attest that the ladder industry abstained from making accessories or usable top caps of any kind for standard stepladders for many years notwithstanding that today it is common to find functional top caps which was only obvious after someone developed the first one. At the time the present application was filed, there was skepticism in the field by experts, including myself, that tool hanging functionality could be viably and safely incorporated into ladder hinge assemblies. Accordingly, there was actually a disincentive in the field to modify hinge buttons to include tool hanging features, and a person having ordinary skill in the art would not have found it obvious to do so.

6. Additionally, I submit that I am not aware of any prior art ladder designs or products that added tool hanging functionality to ladder hinge assemblies in the manner described in the present application at or before the time the invention was made.

7. I further declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are

true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment or both under section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the above-referenced application or any patent issuing thereon.

Date: 6/25/2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. B. Junius', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Paul B. Junius