

What: Technology Park Reception
When: March 14
Why: Recognize Technology Park Founders and Leaders, thank them for
Length: 5 minutes

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Good evening. It is my pleasure tonight to help honor a group of visionaries. A group who saw that changes were needed in the Atlanta business community—and took steps to make those changes. A group who took a chance—and helped redefine Atlanta's technology business environment. A group who, when their endeavor achieved success—shared that success with their alma mater.

That group is, of course, the founders and business leaders of Technology Park/Atlanta and tonight, I feel fortunate to celebrate with you, your 25th anniversary.

The partnership between Technology Park and Georgia Tech is longstanding. In fact, you could say much of Technology Park's history is intertwined with Tech's growth and development—and vice versa. Three Georgia Tech presidents played a role in your development. Presidents Harrison, Hansen, and Pettit worked side by side with you to accomplish your vision. I have been told that President Pettit, with his Silicon Valley experience, was especially helpful.

During Hansen's term as president, back in 1963, a study commissioned by the Georgia Tech Foundation found Atlanta ill-equipped to support technological companies. And, by the late 60s it was obvious to all that Georgia Tech graduates were being forced to leave the state to find employment.

It was that deficit that inspired the founders of Technology Park. Resolving to end the “brain-drain,” they incorporated Technology Park in 1971. Being true visionaries, they also had several other goals for Technology Park. One was to establish the first identifiable community of scientific, research, and technical organizations in Georgia. Another was to become a financial source, developed by private enterprise, of perpetual endowment to Georgia colleges and universities.

Today, all three goals set by the leaders and founders of Technology Park/Atlanta have been achieved. Today, Technology Park/Atlanta, Inc., encompasses three high-tech office parks: the original Technology Park, located in Peachtree Corners; Johns Creek, located in North Fulton; and Lenox Park, tonight’s meeting place. All together, more than 123 companies totaling more than 9,000 employees, lease space in these parks. The parks fill an important economic need here in Georgia—enabling our high-tech industries to continue to grow—and continue to provide good jobs to Georgia’s engineers, scientists, and other technological specialists, thousands of whom are Georgia Tech graduates.

Technology Park/Atlanta also fulfilled its goal of helping local institutes of higher education. In 1974, a gift of \$500,000 worth of Technology Park/Atlanta stock was given to the Georgia Tech Foundation. In 1981, Georgia Tech sold that stock for more than \$8 million. In keeping with the values espoused by Technology Park/Atlanta, that endowment is being used to increase the quality of education at Georgia Tech.

In conclusion, I would like to point out one more trait shared by

Georgia Tech and Technology Park/Atlanta: foresighted founders. When Georgia Tech was founded, it was with the hope that it would revitalize industry in the South. Georgia Representative Nathaniel Harris, one of the men credited with founding Georgia Tech, authored a bill to establish a technological school in 1885. In an editorial, the famous *Atlanta Constitution* editor Henry Grady rhapsodized about Mr. Harris's bill saying: "The technological school will be recognized ten years from now as the most important factor in the new era that will open gloriously for Georgia."

Likewise the founders of Technology Park/Atlanta helped herald a new high-tech era for Georgia. In fact, I think the existence of Technology Park/Atlanta and the actions of its founders and leaders epitomize the dreams of Mr. Harris and Tech's early founders. I think that group of visionaries would be most proud of this group of visionaries.

Before I leave the podium, I have one last honor. It is my pleasure to introduce to you, a man most of you already know and admire. The original founder, the original visionary. A 1945 graduate of Georgia Tech in mechanical engineering and former All-American football player. The man who has been called the father of Peachtree Corners.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in recognizing Paul Duke.

Thank you.