

# FOCUS

Technique • Friday, October 7, 2005

## EVOLUTION: JUST A THEORY?

Retired Regents professor authors a book aimed at college students on understanding the creation-evolution controversy. Page 11

## DEF JAM CEO'S SUCCESS GUIDE

The CEO of Def Jam Records tells the tale of his spectacular rise to hip-hop mogul and details how you can make it happen. Page 15



# Engineering students go beyond national borders

By Emily Tate  
Contributing Writer

As the student body has settled in over the past few weeks, Tech has witnessed the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina and lent a helping hand in as many ways as possible.

Although the Institute's reaction to this disaster has been swift and helpful, it has also turned the American population's attention away from areas around the world that still are in desperate need of help.

One student organization however, has pledged this semester to not only help out with the disaster in New Orleans, but to continue to helping other regions of the world who are suffering from the same problems as in Louisiana.

The Tech chapter of Engineering Students Without Borders (ESWB) returned this May from Colonia Los Angeles, an urban suburb of La Lima, Honduras, after assessing the conditions of a 35-year-old water system that was worn from use.

The deteriorating condition of the water tower, pipes, well and pump has made it hard for people in the community to receive adequate amounts of water due to low water pressure and that has also meant coliform contamination of water coming into the homes.

"From the water quality tests that we performed we were able to determine that the water from the well is in good

order however coliform was found in the water at homes, which is most probably due to leakage," said Angharad Pagnon, ESWB Student President.

"It isn't clear where the sewage pipe is in respect to that of the water [well] and whether it contaminates it," he said.

Due to contamination, the team

**"[ESWB] consists of a group of people dedicated to improving the lives of others and ultimately having the opportunity to improve their own."**

**Brenda Vargas**  
CEE Senior

investigating the water system must now focus on the capacity of the well, the structure of the water tower and the leakage of the piping.

"This fall, the team is returning to Honduras to determine the capacity of the well," Pagnon said.

The group, which has about 35 members will return to La Lima within the year to also implement the repairs they deem necessary after they have analyzed the data gathered.

The team will work on

designing a plan to better control the water system in Colonia Los Angeles.

"ESWB [is] working on a model system for the city and are in the data analysis concept phase," said Michael Saunders, ESWB faculty sponsor.

"Engineering Students Without Borders is a great organization for students as well as faculty to invest their efforts in. It consists of a group of people dedicated to improving the lives of others and ultimately having the opportunity to improve their own," said Brenda Vargas, a fourth-year Civil and Environmental Engineering who was part of the group that visited Honduras.

The Tech chapter of ESWB was founded by Vargas and Pagnon, along with Marcus Millard, a Chemistry major who graduated in 1997.

In addition to helping with the water conditions of this Honduras community, ESWB has joined with other community service organizations to formulate ideas about contributing to the rebuilding effort in Louisiana.

According to Pagnon, ESWB has received much support from the Architecture and Civil Engineering Departments on campus, and they are still looking for help with the technical aspects of both projects.

"Now, the organization is currently looking for volunteers who are willing to specifically help out with the health of the city, but there is plenty of work and opportunity."

See Honduras, page 13



Photo courtesy of Angharad C. Pagnon

The Community Water Tower in Colonia Los Angeles, La Lima is part of the 35-year-old, worn-out water system which the Engineering Students Without Borders (ESWB) members assessed on their trip to Honduras in May 2005.

# Honor Societies offer more than just scholastic recognition

By Chanchala Kaddi  
Contributing Writer

Honor societies cater to students across different majors and classes and yet have stringent selection criteria.

Most of them require members or prospective members to meet certain academic requirements, and they try to instill skills such as leadership and teamworking abilities in their members through various projects and activities.

The 'Nique tried to peek behind the scenes at some of the college's best-known honor societies to see what they were all about.

"The eligibility requirements for membership in Tau Beta Pi are exemplary character and distinguished scholarship," said Stephanie Thompson, President of Tau Beta Pi, the engineering honor society.

"We invite the top 1/8 of the junior class and the top 1/5 of the senior class to join. In terms of exemplary character, we look for individuals who are self-motivated, hard-working, dependable and responsible, and who hold paramount the integrity of the engineering profession," said Thompson.

"The minimum requirements to join the society include being a co-op

that has co-oped at least 2 semesters and a minimum GPA of at least 3.0," said Jennie Teague, President of the Briaerean Honor Society.

"Membership is based on GPA," said Craig Ramsey, Vice President of Chi Epsilon, the Civil Engineering honor society.

These societies bring students together through fun-filled social activities to form new friendships and lasting networks.

"Members can participate in our monthly social dinners at local restaurants or our pool and paintball tournaments where the organization pays the bill and encourages its members to get to know one another," Teague said.

"HKN also organizes the Spring Picnic in April for all ECE students and faculty. A catered barbeque and various other activities are provided to ensure that everyone has a good time."

"We don't want to be known as people with high GPAs, so we have lots of fun social events and get-togethers for our members. Bringing our members together helps create a network that they can carry out into the world with them," said Daniel Might, former President of Alpha

See Honor, page 10



By Ayan Kishore / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Students take an oath to be inducted into the National Society of Collegiate Scholars as new members of the elite honor society in an official ceremony held in the Student Center on Sept. 12, 2005.



## Honor from page 10

Pi Mu, the Industrial Engineering honor society.

"We ran a t-shirt competition to design an IE shirt, which was a huge success," he said.

Honor societies often develop mechanisms to help their members survive the grueling Tech curriculum while rewarding the top performers.

From mentoring programs to scholarships, all serve to aid as well as motivate the students.

"As biomedical engineers, we have many options and career paths in this new emerging field. Alpha Eta Mu Beta seeks to recognize, promote excellence, and aid

those in progress," said Hua-Mei Chai, President of Alpha Eta Mu Beta, the Biomedical Engineering honor society.

Applications are accepted for \$2000 scholarships for undergraduate members and \$10,000 fellowships for graduate student members. In addition, Tau Beta Pi selects a Laureate each year.

"This award is given to gifted engineering students who have excelled in areas beyond their technical majors, such as in music, art or community service and includes a \$2500 cash award," he said.

Eta Kappa Nu offers annual prizes to outstanding senior and sophomore students in Electrical and Computer Engineering.

HKN runs a fundraising campaign that provides scholarships to ECE students. HKN began selling chip sets for ECE lab classes a year ago at prices significantly lower than

those of Engineer's Bookstore and Barnes & Noble.

"This program has saved students \$12,500 in comparison to what they would have spent by purchasing their chip sets from Engineer's Bookstore, and the chip sets' price at Engineer's is cheaper than at Barnes and Noble," said Abhinav Saxena, the Publicity Chair of Eta Kappa Nu, HKN.

HKN is using proceeds from this fundraising campaign to establish scholarships.

These scholarships are awarded to ECE juniors "on the basis of a student's financial need, academic record, on-campus and community involvement and future aspirations in the field of electrical or computer engineering," Saxena said.

This year, one \$500 scholarship will be awarded

each semester.

"We are looking for corporate sponsors for the scholarship fund in order to transform it into a Georgia Tech endowed scholarship for ECE students," he said.

Eta Kappa Nu offers a variety of academic support activities for ECE students, including seminars on applying to graduate school and pursuing an MBA, and also more day-to-day help in matters such as choosing classes and exam preparation, according to Saxena.

While co-opting in itself helps students find jobs prior to graduation, the Briaerean Society tries to make the whole process easier for its members.

"Corporate speaker meetings provide a way to network with these companies maybe even before the members start looking for jobs," said Teague.

Being part of an honor society

can also be a good way to give something back to the community, both on and off campus. Many of them have mandatory community service requirements that members must fulfill.

"HKN requires that initiates into the honor society complete one volunteer service project in the community. We have an active relationship with HOPE Worldwide in which we tutor underprivileged children in several Atlanta area elementary schools," Teague said.

"Each semester, at least once, we go to the Atlanta Community Food Bank and volunteer our time and effort in assisting them with whatever they need help with."

Jane Ammons, associate dean of Engineering for Faculty Affairs and Chief Advisor to Tau Beta Pi was herself initiated into the society back in the early 70's, when they had just started accepting women.

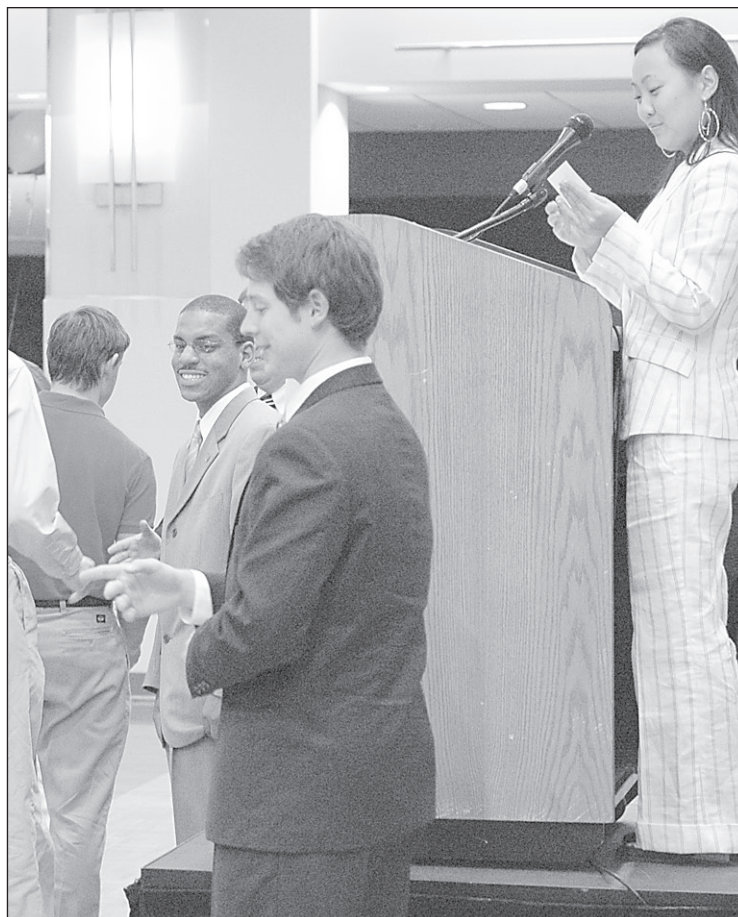
"At Tau Beta Pi, we have some of the future leaders of engineering and these students learn a whole lot about having a vision and executing it. You pick up a lot in the process of trying to organize and implement [Tau Beta Pi] events," said Ammons.

She further points out that a large amount of the learning that takes place during college years happens outside the classroom in dorms, social organizations or intramural sports. An active professional society is a great place to acquire such skills.

"If you're a Tau Beta Pi officer, you make good friends with top students and leaders from across engineering disciplines as well as those from other universities," she said.

Dr. Eric Murray, Academic Professional and Manager of Introductory Laboratories at the School of Physics, seconds the benefits that membership in an honor society can bring. "Any opportunity to get involved, especially if it has to do with your major or a career, is a plus," said Murray.

Students have mixed feelings on the value of honor societies. "I



By Ayan Kishore / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Students line up to be inducted into the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, one of the many honor societies present at Tech.

think they are wonderful; they give students some recognition for all of the hard work they put in to do well in school; they allow for students to identify with others who value the same performance level that they strive for," said Jessica Durham, a third-year psychology major. "I believe they are helpful in creating networks among high achieving students which are not only helpful while they are at Tech, but likely in the future, in their chosen careers."

However, some students note that honor societies are not essential to success at Tech or in future careers. They point out that the exclusiveness of some honor societies can be a drawback to the sense of community

among students in a given major or other recruiting category.

"They serve a good purpose to those who are in them but they can sometimes promote elitism in their members," said Jessica Smith, a sixth-year Electrical engineering major.

"People who are never in honor societies can get through high school and college just fine and still have a great future, so I don't necessarily see how they are truly beneficial," she said.

"Some sort of recognition is due for the top of the class but I don't think there needs to be a whole society for those people."

Zen Mehra also contributed to this article.

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# Tech professor tackles creation-evolution controversy

By Swathy Prithivi  
Focus Writer

Dr. Eugene Ashby has spent his entire career, here at Tech, as a distinguished professor in the Chemistry department for over 30 years devoted to scientific pursuits.

Now as a retired Regents Professor and a Christian, he has applied the same ardor to scientifically investigating his new book titled *Understanding the Creation Evolution Controversy: A Scientific Evaluation Consistent with Both Modern Science and the Bible*.

"The inspiration [behind the book] was that I was reading and hearing a lot of things about the creation-evolution controversy and...it didn't make sense to me," Ashby said.

"So I decided to take whatever time it took, and it took five years to write this book, to study both sides on the question."

Despite his Christian roots, he wrote this book mainly as a scientist.

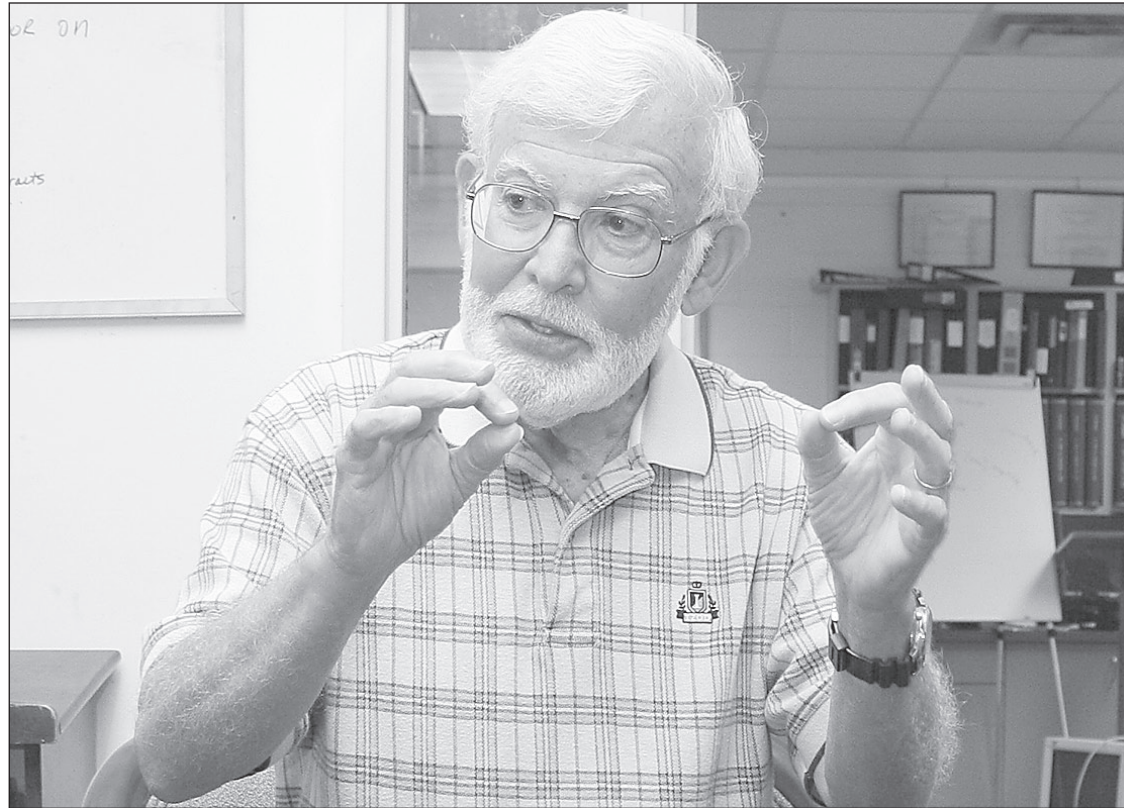
"This is not a religious book [but rather] this is a scientific analysis of the creation-evolution controversy," he said.

He analyses the controversy by looking all sides and all the facts and comes out with evidence, as the book title suggests, supporting, to some extent, both sides of the argument.

"I looked at both sides, all the facts. Unfortunately I could not come out strongly on either side because both sides have major problems, which I don't think they're facing up to."

This book is aimed at first-year college students as Ashby has spent the majority of his life teaching or advising young people.

"I'm not so interested into talking to adults although if they want to read this book, they're fine. But if young



By Michael Skinner / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

**Eugene Ashby, a retired Regents and Distinguished Professor of Chemistry at Tech for over 30 years, recently authored a book on the creation-evolution controversy aimed at first-year college students.**

people are not completely confused by what they've been reading and seeing, they should be," he said.

"Both sides, I think, have overstated their positions. So I've studied both sides and I've come to a conclusion that I feel very comfortable with."

He clearly outlines in his book the different sides of the controversy before embarking on any sort of analysis.

"I consider myself a creationist and I believe that God created the universe and the analysis that I've done has not changed that all. But I'm not a scientific creationist and people don't make a distinction between the two things."

According to him, when the

media talks about creationists, they are really talking about scientific creationists and when they are talking about evolutionists they are really talking about Darwinian evolutionists.

"If you ask me if I believe in evolution, I'd say, 'I do.' But if you're talking about Darwinian evolution it's an invalid concept. The facts are there but I don't why people won't measure up to that. You have to define terms," he said.

"A creationist, to me, is a person who believes that God created the universe and man. I believe that through faith but it's been re-established through by studies."

"Scientific creationists believe that the Earth is 6000 years old and

that the universe was created in six 24-hour days. They hold very fast to that and they don't believe or accept the Big Bang theory."

The scientific facts show that the universe is 17 billion years old and the earth is 4.6 billion years old, he said.

"The scientific evidence is overwhelming and they [scientific creationists]...don't realize they're trying to defend an untenable position. The reason that people don't want [scientific] creationism taught in public schools is because they know that all of the scientific evidence is against a 6000 to 10,000 year old earth."

"For scientific creationists, there's no reason to distinguish between

the creation of the universe and the creation of the earth since they are only 6 days apart."

Ashby undergoes a rigorous analysis on the evolution theory as well.

"Some of the top scientists in the world are getting very disillusioned with Darwinian evolution. In biology arguments are being developed to show (and I do some of that in my book) that there's no way that [creation] is going to happen by chance. 17 billion years is not enough time [for that]."

Ashby explores Darwinian evolution in his book that says that the cell came about by chance and then from the cell through mutation followed by natural selection from which emerged all of these different species.

According to him, the way to analyzing the controversy would be to look at the first cell about which, even today only little is really known.

To demonstrate the role of randomness in evolution Ashby gave an example of the role of enzymes in the folding of proteins in the cell.

"The probability calculation of putting just one enzyme [in the right place] is 1 chance in 10 to the 30013 chances. According to mathematicians, 1 chance in 10 to the 50<sup>th</sup> chances is 0 i.e., 50 zeroes followed by a one. That's just one enzyme. You have roughly 2000 enzymes in the cell and 1000s of proteins, carbohydrates and lipids," he said.

He also touched on the topic of including different ideologies of the in high school curriculum.

"I believe that creation should be part of the discussion in high schools," he said.

"A person might say, 'Well, that's not science,' and those are the people that don't know what [is] going on."

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**ESWB** from page 9

ties to work to go around," Saunders said.

With two high-energy projects taking place simultaneously, one of them might end up affecting the other in quality due to the limited resources of any student organization.

However ESWB is determined not to let this happen as the organization is "structured to make sure that the projects do not hinder each other," Pagnon said.

The organization is sponsored by Obra Cost Consulting and has also received funds from an anonymous donor according to Dr. Saunders.

ESWB is proposing to other community service organizations to help out primarily with housing for the victims on the Gulf Coast.

The exact needs of the areas affected by Katrina will be assessed in meetings with other participating student organizations.

"I feel very privileged at having had the opportunity to spend

almost a week with the members of the community in Honduras," Vargas said.

"The assessment trip in May, I think, was a way for ESWB members to acquire an understanding of the hardships faced by people in developing communities, and to also use their engineering problem-solving skills to find a way to arrive at a solution that will ultimately raise the quality of life for the wonderful people of La Lima, Honduras," she said.

From their experience in Honduras in dealing with decaying water situations, ESWB is a strong ally in the rebuilding of the devastated areas affected by the hurricane.

They are not only addressing situations of importance in our own country, like the Katrina crisis but are also raising awareness of challenging issues faced by developing communities internationally.

Students interested in joining the organization or participating a project can find more information at their website: <http://cyberbuzz.gatech.edu/ESWB/>



Photo courtesy of Angharad C. Pagnon

Members of the Engineering Students Without Borders, who travelled to Honduras, pose with some of the local community leaders.

# Tech Up Close

**CAN YOU FIGURE OUT WHERE ON CAMPUS THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN?**

**THIS WEEK'S PHOTO:**



By Scott Medway / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Email [focus@technique.gatech.edu](mailto:focus@technique.gatech.edu) if you think you know the answer—and check to see if you won in next week's issue!

Last week's Tech Up Close:  
Tombstone of Sideways outside Tech Tower

Last week's winners:  
Mark Miller, Bob Canada and James Stefanakos

## sliver

[www.nique.net/sliver](http://www.nique.net/sliver)

I'm sure I'm not the only one who thinks race heritage months are stupid

Now go study

To bring up a much-debated topic from last year...

I am the freshman who wrote Bush's intelligence is a constitutional problem

Why can't I make a deposit in the new ATMs? F\*\*\* you, Wachovia!

I still really, really like Sarah.

Someone woke me up "When September Ended"

I love you Green Day!!!

who wore my sandal home from ATO sat?

what happened to recess?

hey FOOSK, have you been counting??

They weren't kidding. English at Tech is a joke.

I'm a simple man. I don't ask for much. Only that Danny keep his shirt on at all times. Ugh.

I put the ROCK in piobaireachd

I love lamp

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I think we need to scrap our marching band and form a bagpipe band

I dunno y everyone hates Matlab and Webwork....i like it... :0)

I couldn't sleep last night because I couldn't stop thinking of how much UGA pisses me off....DAMN UGA!!!!

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See page 16 for more Slivers.



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