

Student, Alumni Philanthropy Define Campus Despite Economy

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With more than 2,600 participants, our [2011 Family Weekend](#) celebration two weeks ago was an impressive affair. It was a wonderful opportunity to mix with parents and students and to share in their enthusiasm about this institution, capped off with a great win by our football team.

Given the celebratory environment, it seemed appropriate to hold events dedicating two of our newest campus facilities—the [John and Mary Brock Football Facility](#) and the [G. Wayne Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons](#)—both of which stand as a testament to the generosity of those who not only believe in, but also are willing to make an investment in support of Tech.

Neither of these marvelous projects would have been possible without the generosity and private philanthropy of the alumni and friends of Tech. John Brock, a chemical engineering alumnus and current chairman of Coca-Cola Enterprises, tells a moving story about how he could not have attended Tech from his home in rural Mississippi without the benefit of a scholarship.

When the final accounting is done, support for the Clough Commons will exceed \$25 million in external support. You can see the names of dozens of donors whose leadership gifts are recognized on a plaque in the lower level lobby. The names of the principal donors are recognized throughout the facility – from the AT&T Auditorium, to the Tennenbaum Atrium, to the McElroy Physics Laboratories, to the Class of 1970 Rooftop Garden, to the Georgia Power Solar Array. Together, these individuals, corporations, and reunion classes turned a big vision—reimagining the undergraduate educational experience—into a reality.

Philanthropic activity is a hallmark of Tech. While large individual commitments frequently get the attention, it's important to highlight the impact a focused group can have as well. One of our newer traditions is the [Georgia Tech Student Alumni Association \(GTSAA\)](#), founded on the principles of lifelong participation in, and philanthropic support of, our alma mater.

One particularly notable aspect of this student organization is its \$10 annual membership donation, half of which goes to the [GTSAA's Gift to Tech](#). Members vote on how they want this money allocated, choosing from among several worthy campus projects that improve the quality of the student experience at Tech. For its inaugural gift last spring, [the organization presented the Office of Solid Waste Management and Recycling with more than \\$20,000 in funding](#) for the expansion of recycling initiatives on campus.

The other half of the donation goes to the [Georgia Tech Student Foundation](#), a student organization whose motto is “Moving Forward by Giving Back.” Operating in the same fashion as the Georgia Tech Foundation, these students manage a nearly \$1 million portfolio, using the profits derived from their investments to provide an average of \$30,000 annually to students and student organizations for projects that enhance the educational experience. This kind of support, students helping other students, sends a powerful message.

Our annual fund, known as [Roll Call](#), recently completed its 64th year, collecting more than \$8.3 million from 26,000 donors. As encouraging as this is, I find another statistic particularly compelling: the 1,680 individuals who qualify as the Alumni Association's Golden Givers, in recognition of 50 or more consecutive years of financial support to Tech.

Just as the football practice facility is a powerful statement about our commitment to our athletics program, so too do our academic facilities demonstrate a similar commitment to educating and preparing the leaders of tomorrow.

Despite an uncertain economic climate, it is gratifying to be a member of a community that understands the role of philanthropy, is willing to step up and provide the resources that allow us to excel, and recognizes the difference their support can make.