

REMARKS BY GEORGIA TECH PRESIDENT G. WAYNE CLOUGH  
Midtown Rotary Club, February 27, 2001

It is great to be here with my fellow Rotarians, and I am pleased to bring you greetings from the Downtown Atlanta Rotary Club. I also want to thank you for being the future home of Georgia Tech.

Georgia Tech's campus has long been a sort of no-man's land. We were cut off from downtown by the Techwood Homes housing project, and we were cut off from Midtown, which is our natural neighborhood constituency, by the interstate. At the same time, we found that our faculty and even some of our students were driving fairly considerable distances to find the kind of quality neighborhoods they wanted to live in. And we decided that in addition to studying and proposing solutions for Atlanta's traffic congestion and air pollution problems, we wanted to actually be part of the solution.

So we went to Susan Mendheim and the Midtown Alliance and more or less asked to be adopted. Over the past several years, we have been working closely with the Alliance in creating both the Midtown Blueprint and our own Campus Master Plan, so that these two documents complement each other. The goal of both of them is to create a model, urban, live-work-learn-play community. We want to put Midtown on the leading edge, not only in Atlanta but also in the United States, as an in-town neighborhood that offers all resources needed for a quality life. Neighborhood residents would no longer have to drive long distances to get to work, attend a concert, visit a museum, take a college class, go to a nightclub, shop, or eat out. They could do it all within blocks of where they live. Not only would we be reducing traffic congestion and air pollution, but people would be less stressed out and have more discretionary time to do what they wanted in their lives.

Georgia Tech has had numerous folks in its history who wanted to make the campus safe by walling it off from its surrounding neighborhoods. Today we believe that a better approach is to work together with our surrounding neighborhoods to improve quality and safety. We want to reach out to the neighborhoods around us and blur the edges of our campus, so that those who live and work nearby can share the amenities we offer.

We were a partner in creating the Centennial Place neighborhood to our south, which is a vast improvement over Techwood Homes. Further to the west, we have been making inroads into the abandoned buildings and crack houses along Marietta Street and the

railroad. We are developing what we call the North Avenue Research Area, along North Avenue between the overpasses for Marietta Street and the railroad and Northside Drive.

The first two buildings to venture into this area were the Georgia Tech Research Institute's Undersea Research Program and the Structural Engineering and Materials Research Lab. Then last fall we cut the ribbons on the Aerospace Combustion Lab and the Advanced Wood Products Lab. The fifth building to be built in the North Avenue Research Area is the advanced food processing technology building, and it is under construction.

Here on the east side of campus, the primary focal point for the neighborhood collaboration is Technology Square, which extends the Tech campus across the downtown connector. Georgia Tech will build a \$150 million complex on the south side of Fifth Street between the interstate and the Biltmore. Across Fifth Street to the north, the state of Georgia will build a broadband design center for its Yamacraw initiative, and next to it we plan to locate a facility for our Advanced Technology Development Center, which is our incubator for technology businesses.

If you go by the site today, there's nothing to see yet. But that doesn't mean we haven't been making progress. Jones Lang LaSalle continues as the developer for Technology Square. And in addition, Thompson, Ventulett, and Stainback Architects have been hard at work. They are not just designing individual buildings, but are developing Technology Square as a compete project. And they have been paying a lot of attention to siting the buildings so that we have attractive green spaces, and both pedestrian and vehicle traffic flows well. The construction will be a joint venture with Holder Construction Company and Hardin Construction Company participating together.

We are going to begin the site preparation and start getting the preliminary sewer and utility lines run in May, and hope to begin actual construction about October. The state plans to break ground and start construction on the Yamacraw Design Center on the north side of Fifth Street in late spring or summer. So you will soon be able to go by there and see things taking shape.

The Fifth Street Bridge between our campus and Technology Square will be widened and made more pedestrian friendly, so that it becomes a major gateway to campus rather than a little-used back door. And, as Governor Barnes has already mentioned, we are thinking long-term of the possibility of capping I-75/85 to provide an even stronger connection between our campus and Midtown.

We asked a group of architecture students in a studio class to come up with proposals for capping the interstate as a project. I went over to the College of Architecture the other day to see how they are coming along, and they have really come up with some stunning and imaginative ideas.

Most of the students are holding both the surface traffic and the drivers on the connector in mind. Rather than put the interstate through a dark tunnel, they are finding ways to provide openings for light and air, and they are also experimenting with ideas for message boards and other colorful artwork that will make driving through Midtown on I-75/85 a memorable experience. Not all of their designs are workable, but they are all interesting to look at and they provide a good collection of ideas to start us thinking. Once they have been graded at the end of the semester, we hope to put them into a presentable format and invite our Midtown neighbors to come see them.

Two years from now, we expect to be finishing up construction on Technology Square, and we expect to move the College of Management into its new building in time to start fall semester of 2003. The College of Management is among the nation's top tier business schools and is ranked #11 by Business Week among public business schools. But in addition to its high quality, the College also offers unique expertise in the management of technology and entrepreneurship, which will make it a special asset to the high-tech business community that is developing in Midtown.

Technology Square will also include a state-of-the-art global learning center with the latest in distance learning technology. Georgia Tech has one of the most robust and advanced continuing education programs in the world. As advanced technology permeates the workplace, more and more people are turning to us for the skills they need.

Last year we taught over 600,000 hours of continuing and executive education classes to more than 25,000 people. And this year we are on track to break that record. Many of these classes are delivered by satellite or over the Internet to people who never set foot on our campus, and the new Global Learning Center will expand our capacity to provide quality distance education.

But an increasing number come to class in person in the evenings and weekends. Our campus space is over-extended to the point of worrying the fire marshal. We have rented additional space at Colony Square, and we still need more room.

So we are moving our continuing and executive education programs to new facilities in Technology Square, and providing an adjacent parking deck. And we believe that their presence in this part of the neighborhood in the evenings and weekends will contribute to its life and its safety.

The parking deck will also serve the hotel and conference center that will be part of Technology Square, and we have had strong interest from several operators for this project.

Technology Square will also include a large Georgia Tech Bookstore that will be operated by Barnes & Noble, and other retail shops and restaurants. These facilities are here to serve the Midtown neighborhood as well as our Tech community, and we welcome you to patronize them.

Of course there is more to this part of Midtown than Georgia Tech's development. The Biltmore has already been renovated. The new Bell South buildings are under construction. Loft projects are planned and underway nearby, and new restaurants are opening. When you add it all together, it transforms a once dilapidated part of this neighborhood into a high-tech corridor and a cornerstone in our bigger goal of making Midtown, an urban live-work-learn-play environment.

We are very excited to be part of this effort. We believe Georgia Tech can play a major role in turning Midtown into Atlanta's technology hot-spot. And in turn we believe our faculty and staff will benefit from the opportunity to live close to campus in a quality neighborhood, rather than driving out to the suburbs for the evenings and weekends.

If we work together, Georgia Tech and the Midtown neighborhood can lead the way in defining quality in-town living for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.