

What: Thomasville Rotary

Good morning. It is a pleasure to speak to the Thomasville Rotary. As the president of Georgia's sole engineering university, I try to visit as many of Georgia's cities as I can. I can't say all--but I will say most--of those visits are enjoyable. However, the cities and counties where I feel most comfortable and at home are those here in South Georgia. As you may or may not know, I was raised not too far from here in Douglas, Georgia, and in fact, graduated from Coffee County High School.

I remember as a high school senior deliberating about where to attend college. Choosing Georgia Tech has been one of my better decisions--especially one of the better ones decided while I was in high school.

I would guess there are several others of you out there who are also attended Georgia Tech. Would all of the Yellow Jackets please raise your hand?

Thanks. Whenever I speak in public, it gives me a great deal of pride to see so many fellow alumni of the Georgia Tech Experience. Because there are more than 45,000 of us all over the world, it is extremely infrequent that I address a crowd without at least one Yellow Jacket.

As you would expect, our graduates are for the most part, engineers— however our alumni job titles and accomplishments run the gamut from former president of the United States to the comedian best known for his “You Might Be a Redneck If” jokes. From a Nobel Prize winner to the inventor of WD-40, and from an astronaut who has walked on the moon to the second woman to command a space shuttle.

Now, before I continue my speech, could the graduates of the University of Georgia do me a favor and raise your hands as well?

And since we're so close, could the graduates of the University of Florida raise your hands as well?

(Pause) Thanks; I've found that it always helps to know exactly which direction any rotten fruit may be coming from.

Wherever you graduated from, as a Georgian, the universities within Georgia's university system belong to you. In fact, we all often kid that our loyalties belong to only one university...or one university's football team, but in fact, all of the

universities in Georgia are working for you.

Today, I'd like to tell you about one of those universities, Georgia Tech, and exactly what it is we do for you.

The first, and most obvious way we serve Georgia is through the education we provide its students. Recent rankings place Georgia Tech among the top 50 institutions--both public and private in the country. When just public schools are considered, we are ranked among the top 15.

Georgia students are able to access this high-quality education at an extremely reasonable rate. In fact, most of our students from Georgia finance their Georgia Tech educational experience through the HOPE Scholarship, and attend Georgia Tech virtually free of charge!

Through education, we improve the quality of life and economic condition for thousands of Georgians. As educators, we reach more than 13,000 students each year. Of that number, almost 65 percent of our undergraduates and more than 29 percent of our graduate students come from Georgia counties. Each year, we accept approximately 80 percent of the applicants from Georgia.

According to current enrollment statistics, Thomas and its nearby counties of Grady, Decatur, Mitchell, Colquitt, Cook, Brooks, and Lowndes are sending Georgia Tech approximately 90 students a year.

Through the university and graduate-level education we provide, we prepare thousands of Georgia students for productive careers. After just four or five years at Georgia Tech, the average management major can expect to enter the workforce and earn around \$30,000 a year; the average starting salary for chemical engineering majors is \$42,000, and the average for computer science students is around \$40,000. All are very nice salaries--especially for students just out of school!

Continuing education courses are also available; residents of Georgia as well as those from other states can even earn a master's degree without once setting foot on the Georgia Tech campus.

Through the Economic Development Institute, Georgia Tech also offers StarTech, a satellite distance learning system that provides educational courses in advanced technology and management from 50 of the nation's leading universities and commercial organizations. So far in 1997, StarTech, has delivered 20 National

Technological University programs to some 420 attendees across Georgia, enabling companies and their workers to access needed information, training, and education—without incurring high fees and travel costs.

It might surprise you to know that we also have several other programs to educate Georgians who are either not ready for the college experience or not interested. One such program is a statewide adult literacy program. This program has helped thousands of Georgia adults improve their futures by learning to read.

Although our primary concern will always be education, we have discovered a definite link between providing educational opportunities and bolstering economic growth.

In fact, Georgia Tech was founded to further the economic growth of Georgia. Tech's foresighted founders looked at a technological institute as a method to lift Georgia out of the economic slump begun during Reconstruction. In a key editorial supporting the need for such an institute in the South, Tech supporter and editor of the Atlanta Constitution Henry Grady predicted: "...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."

His optimism was not universally shared. In those days, Georgia was primarily agrarian — and farming rather than manufacturing and technology was seen as the key to a successful future. In fact one Georgia state representative went so far as to label the idea of a technological school "a hydra-headed monster that should be strangled at birth."

History does not record where that individual obtained his degree, but I suspect it was somewhere near Athens.

Through the years, Georgia Tech has maintained its commitment to economic prosperity for Georgia. Our commitment has taken many forms. From education as I mentioned earlier to research and economic outreach programs.

The research undertaken by our academic faculty and researchers from the Georgia Tech Research Institute is useful and relevant. Proof can be found in the continuous growth of our research programs as industry and government receive satisfaction from our researchers--and then return for more. In 1996, more than \$173 million in extramural research support was generated and our research awards from industry doubled in number from the year before.

In fact, many government and industry groups have relocated to Georgia to take advantage of proximity to our research centers and research faculty. Two recent examples are the relocation of Philips Electronics headquarters and the expansion of Lucent Technologies. Both cited Georgia Tech's research as well as its ability to provide a technically trained workforce as one of the reasons behind their decision.

Inside Georgia Tech, an entire division has been created to encourage economic development in Georgia. Through our innovative Economic Development Institute and its 18 industrial extension offices, we see to it that Georgia's businesses have access to the information that increases their competitiveness and delivers jobs to our citizens. Formerly known as Georgia Tech's Industrial Extension Service, EDI is a network of field offices conducting technology transfer, economic development, and technical assistance activities across Georgia. In addition, a small unit of EDI, Tech's Advanced Technology Development Center was founded in 1980 to stimulate the technology base here in Georgia.

Right here in Thomasville, Georgia Tech, through EDI, is working to establish the Genesis Advanced Food Technology Center. The Center will be a cooperative facility for education, training, technical services, a food testing laboratory, and a food processing business incubator and is intended to complement the food processing and agribusiness strengths of the companies based in and around Thomasville.

One additional example of how EDI helps Georgia companies can be found in the help rendered to the Rotary Corporation, based in nearby Glennville. A family-owned business, the Rotary Corporation manufactures lawnmower parts. Since working with Georgia Tech, the number of employees working for the Rotary Corporation has doubled and sales have increased to more than \$46 million a year.

Finally, Georgia Tech also helps Georgia through education, industry, and government partnerships. One such partnership is the Georgia Center for Advanced Telecommunications Technology. GCATT's goals include more jobs for Georgians as well as more dollars for Georgia. Industry experts have estimated those figures at more than 300 jobs for Georgia and more than \$9.7 million in increased incomes for Georgia citizens. This year, industry involvement at GCATT increased to more than 100.

Another partnership is the Traditional Industries Research Program. Targeting the food processing, textiles, and pulp and paper industries—industries that have been traditionally strong in Georgia—the partnership works to help Georgia companies in these areas compete in the global economy and meet new environmental and

food safety standards. Georgia Tech helps through technological research that helps Georgia companies virtual reinvent themselves to better compete and through our service on the Program's steering committee.

As you can see, there's much more to Georgia Tech than the solid education we provide. We are also working on a daily basis to improve the economic condition of Georgia and its citizens.

If you or your company believes you might benefit from some of Georgia Tech's economic development initiatives, please give our local Economic Development Office a call, and we'd be glad to work with you—to work for a stronger Georgia.

Thank you.