

WELCOME BY GEORGIA TECH PRESIDENT G. WAYNE CLOUGH
Black Issues in Higher Education Reception, January 18, 2001

I am pleased to welcome all of you to this special reception to celebrate diversity at Georgia Tech. Joining Georgia Tech in co-hosting this event is *Black Issues in Higher Education* magazine.

Frank Matthews, who is the publisher of *Black Issues in Higher Education*, was hoping to make a stop in Atlanta on his way from Washington to Phoenix this evening, but Delta's flight schedule would not cooperate. And we are pleased to welcome his daughter, Maya Matthews-Minter to speak in his stead.

Forty years ago in September, Georgia Tech made history by becoming the first university in the South to integrate voluntarily, without court order. It was a very calm, matter-of-fact process, in which the job of the police was to keep the news media off campus so that classes and other activities could proceed without disruption. Then as now, Georgia Tech was focused on a rigorous, high quality education, and our students and faculty believed that anyone who could do the work deserved to be here.

Our goal is to be a campus of inclusion, a place that respects and values diversity in all aspects of our daily life as a campus community, a place that provides all of our students with the resources they need to succeed.

Today's world has become a global village, and corporations all around the world have come to view diversity as a competitive advantage. They want a diverse workforce that brings a rich variety of ideas to the table and works well together to bring the best ideas to fruition. At the same time, technology is becoming more pervasive in every area of life, and society is increasingly looking for leaders who understand technology and can manage it well.

Unfortunately, the fields of science and technology are still largely dominated by white males, and if that doesn't change, we will all be the losers. We will not realize the benefits that a diversity of ideas ought to provide in these fields that are so critical to our future, and minorities and women are going to miss out on the leadership opportunities of the future.

Georgia Tech's business is to shape the future through technology. That means generating a rich mix of creative ideas that will produce new knowledge, and educating the science and technology leaders of tomorrow. So we feel keenly the tremendous responsibility we have to draw more minorities and women into our student body and onto our faculty.

To do that, we have developed dozens of ongoing programs over the years to help minority and female students excel. We have about a dozen programs that target young students, especially in middle and high school, stimulating their interest in science, math, and engineering, and encouraging them to prepare for college.

Another dozen programs provide support services for our undergraduate minority and female students here on campus, and recognize their outstanding achievements. And finally, we have about a dozen programs that assist graduate students and help minorities and women to establish academic careers.

One of our most important programs is going on right now and will gather for a gala dinner in just a few minutes. FOCUS is an exciting celebration of the King Holiday weekend that brings hundreds of the brightest young minority students in the nation to Atlanta and Georgia Tech. Most of them are juniors or seniors in college, whom we are encouraging to pursue graduate studies, hopefully at Georgia Tech. But FOCUS also includes some of the nation's top minority high school students, and a group of graduate students who are close to receiving their PhDs and who we hope to launch on academic careers. Finally, it includes alumni of the FOCUS program who have gone on to graduate from Georgia Tech.

It is important to emphasize that Georgia Tech's diversity programs do not exist in a vacuum. Many of them involve partners who are vital to their success. Our dual degree program with the traditionally black colleges of the Atlanta University Center, for example, is at the heart of our efforts to graduate minorities with engineering degrees. We want to thank and recognize our partners at AUC, and you will hear from Sam Jolley in just a few minutes.

Even if you are not directly involved in actual programs on our campus, many of you still contribute to this effort. Each time you as a business or community leader encourage the minority youth of your neighborhood and community to work hard in school, to develop an interest in science or math or technology, and to envision themselves attending college, you are joining with us in our efforts. We need that kind of help and support, and we thank you.

It is the collective efforts of everyone working together that enabled Georgia Tech to become the top school in the nation in graduating African American engineers at all degree levels. This evening, as we celebrate that distinction, we at Georgia Tech want to thank all of you for your help and support along the way, and we want to assure you that we are in this for the long haul.

We have come a long from admitting our first African American students 40 years ago, to being the number one institution in the nation in graduating African American engineers today. It has been a very deliberate journey on our part, and we are going to

continue and strengthen our efforts to attract, retain, and graduate outstanding minority students who will be the technology leaders of tomorrow. This evening we are taking a few minutes to celebrate our progress with all of you, and to thank you for the many ways you helped make it possible.