REMARKS BY GEORGIA TECH PRESIDENT G. WAYNE CLOUGH
FORD DAY: Naming Announcement Program
ES&T Building Site, March 1, 2001

I'm pleased to welcome all of you to this special ceremony honoring Ford Motor Company and announcing the naming of the Ford Motor Company Environmental Science and Technology Building.

The two vehicles that we just drove in are important symbols of this day. The Ramblin' Wreck, which is a Model A Ford, represents the past – the rich and valued history and traditions of both Georgia Tech and Ford Motor Company. Ford's Think Car represents the future, a new era when new technology will reshape significant aspects of our daily lives.

The Ramblin' Wreck comes from an era when humans set out to conquer Nature, and economic progress was made at the expense of the natural environment. The Think Car represents the realization that it is essential to create environmentally sustainable technology, if we are not to destroy our future in the very act of trying to create it.

These two vehicles literally and figuratively brought us here to this event. The Ramblin' Wreck represents a multi-faceted relationship between Georgia Tech and Ford Motor Company that goes back 40 years. Today we celebrate a historic step in that relationship, a step in the direction of the Think Car, which represents the environmentally sustainable research and education that will take place in the Ford Motor Company Environmental Science and Technology Building which will rise from the ground to your right.

Before we begin this program I would like to recognize a very special group of students who are out there in the audience. They are Ford Scholars from Georgia Tech and our partner institutions at the Atlanta University Center – recipients of scholarships and stipends made possible by the generosity of Ford Motor Company.

At this time I would like to introduce Dr. Jean-Lou Chameau, dean of Georgia Tech's College of Engineering, and Dr. Glen Cass who is representing the College of Sciences. These are the primary colleges that will work together on environmental problems and solutions in the Ford Motor Company Building. Dr. Chameau will speak first, followed by Dr. Cass.

(CHAMEAU, CASS SPEAK)

Thank you, Dean Chameau and Dr. Cass.

Georgia Tech and Ford Motor Company both got their start toward the end of the 19th century. And through most of the lifetime of our two organizations, economic development has been viewed as something that happened at the expense of environmental preservation. Engineers and environmentalists were thought of as enemies.

But even as we achieved unprecedented levels of wealth and power, we looked around and realized that natural beauty was disappearing, open space was shrinking, and the quality of our lives was diminished by pollution and blight. And we began to realize that, as former interior secretary Stewart Udall said, "Over the long haul of life on this planet, it is the ecologists, and not the bookkeepers of business who are the ultimate accountants."

All of our business endeavors must exist within the finite natural system of the planet Earth, whose capacity has been stretched to precarious levels by unprecedented environmental problems. Any future approach to development that is adverse to environmental preservation and resource conservation will be a dead end.

We will not solve traffic congestion by adding more lanes to a freeway that already has ten. We will not reduce air pollution unless we develop combustion engines that burn more cleanly. We keep producing more solid waste even as we run out of places to put it.

The United Nations estimates the world population will grow by another 4 billion people before peaking at 10 billion sometime during the latter part of this century, but water tables are falling in China, India, and the United States, which together produce half of the world's food. And contaminants that are slow to break down are contaminating an increasing portion of our water supply.

There are no easy answers to problems like these, and we cannot extrapolate the solutions of the past into the future. The problems of this new century require new solutions, and we must look to technology for those solutions.

The technology will be new, but the rule for its development comes from Aldo Leopold, scientist at the University of Wisconsin more than 50 years ago and father of modern wildlife conservation. He said, "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

Our tendency has been to separate ourselves as human beings from the natural environment, and to think of preservation in terms of saving trees or endangered species, but we are coming to realize that it is really ourselves we will save through environmental sustainability.

The well-being of our children and grandchildren depends on the development of environmental solutions and sustainable technologies that will enable economic growth and prosperity without compromising the natural environment. Those solutions and that technology will be developed in the Ford Motor Company Environmental Science and Technology Building.

The well-being of our children and grandchildren also depends on the education of a new breed of technology worker who knows how to use the sustainable technology and benign manufacturing processes that simultaneously support a healthy economy and a healthy environment. That new workforce will be educated in the Ford Motor Company Environmental Science and Technology Building.

It is an honor for Georgia Tech to have Ford Motor Company as our partner in these endeavors. Ford Motor Company is "striving to make the world a better place" – not only by creating environmentally friendly vehicles like the Think Car, but also by making their manufacturing process more environmentally sound and by speaking out as a major, global corporate citizen, and calling all of us to join in the critical task of caring for the Earth.

We are honored to have a number of Ford Motor Company representatives with us today. The highest ranking official and spokesman among them is a man to whom we owe a deep debt of gratitude for counseling and mentoring and guiding us through the process that brought us to this day. Frank Taylor is vice president of material, planning, and logistics at Ford Motor Company and the company's primary liaison to Georgia Tech. He is also a member of the Georgia Tech President's Advisory Board, and a much-valued friend of this institution. And at this time I would like to invite him to speak on behalf of Ford Motor Company.