

THE IMPACT OF PHILANTHROPY AT GEORGIA TECH

WINTER 2024

# Campaign

Quarterly



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Yellow Jackets sting UCF  
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# A Message From Jen Howe



**Jen Howe**  
Vice President  
for Development

Here at Georgia Tech, we are fortunate to have very passionate volunteers who embody the Tech commitment to progress and service. Over the past few months, I have been able to spend more time with our Campaign Steering Committee as they continue to help us push this campaign and its priorities forward. I am grateful for the guidance and insights they provide and to see firsthand how they live out this commitment. Through our work together it has become clear that one of the most resounding beliefs of our campaign co-chairs and this group is ***there is no greater investment than a Georgia Tech student.***

No matter where a student comes from, when they enroll at Georgia Tech, we provide educational opportunities that will set them up for success now and into the future. This is the transformative power of a Georgia Tech education and why *The Princeton Review* ranks Tech the No. 1 best value public university in the country. When our students graduate, they earn some of the highest starting salaries — the average starting salary was \$84,500 (not including bonus offers) for students who graduated in academic year 2022–23. Some graduate having created and launched their own businesses thanks to CREATE-X, now in its 10th year. And those startup companies are currently valued at nearly \$2 billion. These types of opportunities are life-changing for our students, their families, and the communities they serve. As we have witnessed time and again with our alumni, Georgia Tech students become leaders who change the world and their own realities. I can think of no greater investment than that.

As the fastest growing public university, Georgia Tech has never been in a better position to recruit and enroll the best students from Georgia and beyond. Scholarships and fellowships allow students to focus on academics, research, and campus life while pursuing their true passions. Together, we can ensure that the brightest minds are shaped by Georgia Tech and are prepared to make a difference. This year, we are intensifying our focus on raising funds for student access and success. In these pages, you will see specific examples of those who have stepped up to support students as well as those who have given to challenge opportunities aimed at encouraging others to join us in eliminating financial barriers for the best students to attend and excel at Georgia Tech.

I am happy to report that we had a strong close for 2023, and we are looking forward to continuing the momentum this year and throughout the remainder of the campaign. We have raised more than \$155 million for need-based student support, and we celebrated the George W. Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering's achievement of being the first academic unit at Georgia Tech to reach its initial campaign goal. As we work to secure these resources that are advancing Georgia Tech, we are bolstered by the fact that our alumni are playing a more significant role in the campaign. In the current fiscal year, more than 44% of the new funds raised have been contributed by alumni, up 21% from this time last year.

Our continued momentum is only possible through your ongoing commitment to Georgia Tech and its people — the students, faculty, and staff who make up this extraordinary place. I encourage you to consider the impact you would like to make at Georgia Tech by participating in *Transforming Tomorrow*, and I am grateful to the more than 86,760 donors who have already invested. Thank you for your involvement with and support of the Institute.

With appreciation,  
—Jen

THE CAMPAIGN QUARTERLY INTERVIEW  
WITH CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIR

## TOM FANNING

A renowned leader in the energy sector and national security, **Thomas A. “Tom” Fanning, IMGT 1979, M.S. IMGT 1980, HON Ph.D. 2013**, has made a lasting impact on industry and the United States. For more than 43 years, Fanning worked for Southern Company, rising through the corporate ranks to serve in key leadership positions. He was named president of Southern Company in August 2010, and chairman and CEO in December 2010. Fanning retired at the end of 2023. He remains in several of his national security roles and works with the Northside Youth Organization as well as coaches at Marist School. His volunteer leadership and philanthropic investment through the years have been integral to the growth and success of Georgia Tech. Fanning’s extensive involvement with the Institute includes service on the Georgia Tech Foundation Board of Trustees, the Georgia Tech Advisory Board, the Alexander-Tharpe Board, and the Scheller College of Business Advisory Board.



### What brought you to Georgia Tech?

I had accepted an appointment to West Point and was going to try to play football — but then I got hurt. I was a National Merit Scholar and had scholarships that I had turned down. Tech was nice enough to admit me on late notice. I started as a math major and studied Russian based on my plans for West Point. Later, I was reappointed to West Point and became hurt again. That’s when I decided to stay. I loved Tech and was doing well. I was challenged and interested in the coursework. It turned out to be the greatest accident in my life.

Graduate school was similar — I had graduated and considered working at the 1980 Moscow Olympics. When that didn’t happen, I returned to Tech for graduate school. Life isn’t linear — it is full of left and right turns, and the things you get out of Tech prepare you to take advantage of those opportunities. Graduates from Tech have that “work hard” attitude and approach to life.

### How did Georgia Tech prepare you?

The academic background was fundamental to my career. I’ve been able to translate what I learned at Tech to the business world and into a broad international approach. Beyond studying finance, I took computer

science-related courses and worked as a research assistant. Those experiences led to one of my assignments as chief information officer before I became chairman. With that background, I began intensively working in national security. It’s been a fun career, and every bit has a tentacle back to Tech. Having a broad set of skills has enabled me to take on those extra roles that have been very fulfilling.

### You have said there is no better investment than a Georgia Tech student. Why do you believe that?

The results speak for themselves. There are more Georgia Tech graduates in professional-level jobs at Southern Company than from any other university. The Tech alumni I have worked with are smart and talented, and they do exceedingly well at being practical and dedicated.

### Why is supporting Georgia Tech Athletics a priority for you?

Athletics are paramount to the overall mission of Georgia Tech and represent the “front door” to the Institute. As a national brand, Tech Athletics provides the opportunity to demonstrate excellence in another way. It adds to the luster of the institution

and gives alumni a rallying point around which to stay interested and involved.

### Why is *Transforming Tomorrow* important? What do you hope it will achieve?

The idea is to provide a foundation of financial support for Georgia Tech to carry on its mission into the future. Georgia Tech is the preeminent institution, certainly in the Southeast and nationally. This is an investment in America’s future, especially now with so much unrest and divisiveness in the world, even on college campuses. Tech’s mission transcends a certain narrow-mindedness that exists today. When it comes to paying it forward, there is no better investment than Georgia Tech.

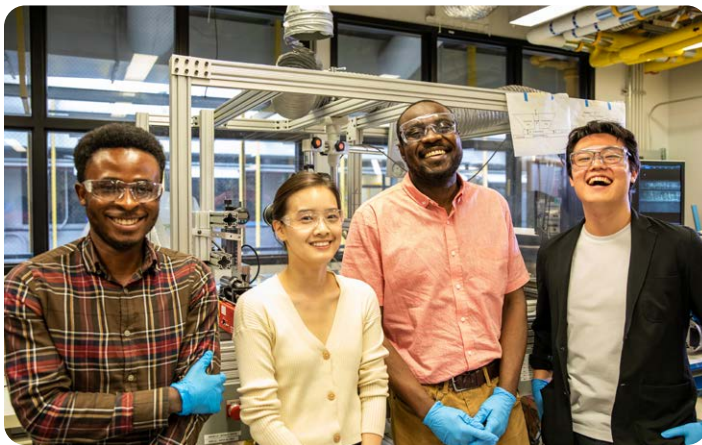
### As Campaign co-chair, what do you hope for Georgia Tech’s future?

President Ángel Cabrera has an excellent grasp on how to bring the Institute forward, and the campaign supports his vision for Georgia Tech. This place is solving the bigger problems of the future with the dedication of faculty and students today. I’m excited to see how we can gain more support not only for the academic mission but also for the athletic program. ///

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### MILESTONE MET!

Congratulations to the George W. Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering for being the first of the academic units to pass their initial campaign goal — \$75 million and counting. Devesh Ranjan, Eugene C. Gwaltney Jr. School Chair and professor in the Woodruff School, said, “Meeting our goal opens the door for us to do more during the remainder of the campaign and dream even bigger.”



### ENGINEERING PROFESSORS ELECTED TO NATIONAL ACADEMY OF ENGINEERING

Two College of Engineering professors are among the newest members of the National Academy of Engineering (NAE), the organization announced Feb. 6.

Patricia Mokhtarian and David Sholl are part of a 2024 class that includes 114 new members and 21 international members. Election to the NAE is among the highest professional recognition for engineers and an honor bestowed on just 2,600 professionals worldwide. New members are nominated and voted on by the Academy’s existing membership. With Mokhtarian and Sholl, Georgia Tech now has 48 NAE members.

Mokhtarian is the inaugural Clifford and William Greene Jr. Professor in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, where she studies travel behavior, including the travel-related impacts of information and communication technology and other topics. The NAE cited Mokhtarian’s work that “improved transportation systems planning and practice through quantifying human behavior” in electing her to the Academy.

Sholl is professor and Cecile L. and David I.J. Wang Faculty Fellow in the School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering. He served as the John F. Brock III School Chair from 2013 to 2021. His research uses computational tools to study materials whose dynamic and thermodynamic properties are strongly influenced by their atomic structure. The NAE cited him “for addressing large-scale chemical separation challenges, including carbon dioxide capture, using quantitative materials modeling.”

### SAVE THE DATE: SPRINT CHALLENGE FOR NEW DONORS TO SCHOLARSHIPS

From May 2 through August 21, Georgia Tech will launch a sprint challenge for new donors who support undergraduate scholarships for students with low or limited income. Running from Commencement until New Student Convocation, this challenge will secure crucial current-use dollars for undergraduate scholarships. Outright gifts or pledges from \$25,000 to \$100,000 will be matched dollar for dollar by the Georgia Tech Foundation, up to \$2 million. This sprint will ensure as much as \$4 million is deployed immediately to provide critical financial support for first-year students entering Georgia Tech in Fall 2024.

*For more information about the sprint challenge, contact Executive Director of Campaign Operations **Meagan Burton-Krieger** at [meagan.burton-krieger@dev.gatech.edu](mailto:meagan.burton-krieger@dev.gatech.edu).*

## CAMPAIGN UPDATE

The accounting period for Transforming Tomorrow: The Campaign for Georgia Tech is January 1, 2018, through December 31, 2027. The following update reflects progress toward goals through December 31, 2023.



### Funds Raised to Date



### Giving by the Numbers

**86,700+**  
donors

**43.2%** of funds raised given  
by Georgia Tech alumni

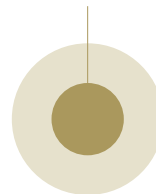
**\$153.6 million**  
raised for low and limited income  
student scholarships

**\$643+ million**  
raised for Colleges and Schools

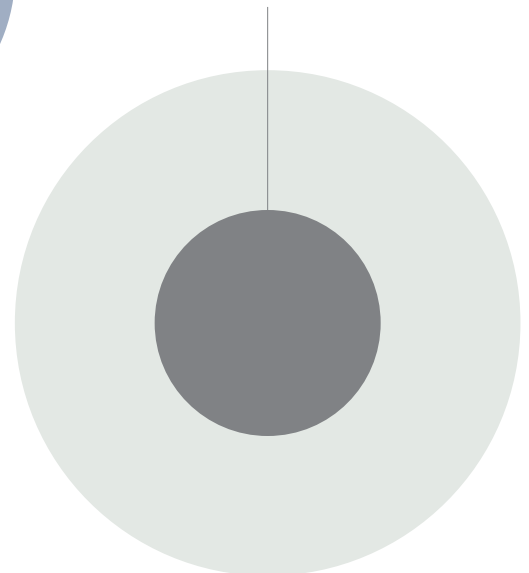
### Funds by Use Progress to recommended goals



**FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**  
**\$143M**  
Goal: \$300M



**ENDOWMENT**  
**\$447M**  
Goal: \$1B



Learn more about the priorities and goals of *Transforming Tomorrow: The Campaign for Georgia Tech* at [transformingtomorrow.gatech.edu](https://transformingtomorrow.gatech.edu).



# STEERING COMMITTEE *as of December 31, 2023*

## Co-Chairs

Kelly H. Barrett, IMGT 1986,  
and Rick L. Barrett, IE 1985  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

Sarah L. and Thomas A. Fanning,  
IMGT 1979, M.S. IMGT 1980,  
HON Ph.D. 2013  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

## Vice Chair

Michael K. Anderson, IE 1979  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

## Honorary Chairs

Mary R. Brock, HON Ph.D. 2016,  
and John F. Brock III, CHE 1970,  
M.S. 1971, HON Ph.D. 2016  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

Shawn S. and Brook Byers,  
EE 1968, HON Ph.D. 2010  
*Menlo Park, California*

Penny P. and William W. George,  
IE 1964, HON Ph.D. 2008  
*Minneapolis, Minnesota*

Elizabeth H. and Francis S.  
“Bo” Godbold, IE 1965  
*Tierra Verde, Florida*

Billi and Bernie Marcus,  
HON Ph.D. 2015  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

Roberta R. and Ernest Scheller Jr.,  
IM 1952, HON Ph.D. 2013  
*Naples, Florida*

E. Roe Stamps IV, IE 1967, M.S.  
IE 1972, HON Ph.D. 2014, and  
Elizabeth Ann Stamps-Ridgeway  
*Miami, Florida*

Suzanne S. and Michael E.  
Tennenbaum, IE 1958,  
HON Ph.D. 2016  
*Rio Grande, Puerto Rico*

Alfred P. West Jr., AE 1964,  
HON Ph.D. 2010  
*Coatesville, Pennsylvania*

## At-Large Members

Michelle L. Adkins, IMGT 1983,  
and Rodney C. Adkins, EE 1981,  
M.S. EE 1983, HON Ph.D. 2013  
*Miami Beach, Florida*

Richard L. Bergmark,  
IMGT 1975, HON Ph.D. 2022  
*Houston, Texas*

José M. Bern, CE 1995  
*Doral, Florida*

Kathy S. and G. Niles Bolton,  
ARCH 1968  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

Sarah R. and James R.  
Borders, ME 1983  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

Sarah Beth Brown  
*Marietta, Georgia*

Tricia F. and Kenneth G. Byers Jr.,  
EE 1966, M.S. EE 1968  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

Elizabeth J. Cabrera,  
M.S. PSY 1993, Ph.D. PSY 1995  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

Donna C. de la Guardia, IMGT  
1982, and Mario M. de la Guardia  
Jr., IMGT 1982  
*Amelia Island, Florida*

Kara and Walter G. Ehmer,  
IE 1989  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

David D. Flanagan, IE 1976  
*McLean, Virginia*

Beth and Daniel F.  
Flowers Jr., ME 1983  
*Houston, Texas*

Alessandro S. Hatami, CE 1983  
*London, U.K.*

Thomas M. Holder, IMGT 1979  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

Helen B. and Roger A.  
Krone, AE 1978  
*Annapolis, Maryland*

Andrea L. Laliberte,  
IE 1982, M.S. IE 1984  
*Jacksonville, Florida*

Megan B. Langley, IE 2009,  
and Garrett S. Langley, EE 2009  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

John A. Lanier  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

Jenny K. and Michael G. Messner,  
CE 1976, HON Ph.D. 2023  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

Bonnie and Charles W. “Wick”  
Moorman IV, CE 1975  
*Charlottesville, Virginia*

Gregory J. Owens, IMGT 1982  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

Magd M. Riad, IE 2001  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

Jean Marie F. Richardson,  
MGT 2002, and Harry L.  
Richardson, BIOL 2002  
*Brookhaven, Georgia*

Patricia D. and Carl D. Ring,  
ME 1978  
*Memphis, Tennessee*

Jacquelyn R. Schneider,  
BC 2006, MBA 2018  
*Brookhaven, Georgia*

Wayne Sellers and Teresa  
M. Smith, IMGT 1983  
*McDonough, Georgia*

G. Leigh Teixeira, ID 2001,  
and Mark C. Teixeira, BA 2022  
*Austin, Texas*

Melba and Alfredo Trujillo,  
AE 1981  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

Karen and Alan C. Warren,  
PHYS 1978  
*New York, New York*

Mary and James A.  
Winnefeld, AE 1978  
*McLean, Virginia*

## Ex Officio Members

Betsy A. Bulat, IAML 2004  
*Chair, Georgia Tech Alumni Association*

G. Wayne Clough, CE 1963,  
M.S. CE 1965, HON Ph.D. 2015  
*President Emeritus*

Lance M. Fritz  
*Chair, Georgia Tech Advisory Board*

Thomas M. Holder, IMGT 1979  
*Chair, Georgia Tech Foundation*

G.P. “Bud” Peterson  
*President Emeritus*

David P. Rowland, IMGT 1983  
*Chair, Georgia Tech Foundation Development*

Teresa M. Smith, IMGT 1983  
*Chair, Georgia Tech Foundation Stewardship*

Carrie and Michael P. Zamora  
*Chairs, Georgia Tech Parents  
Advisory Board*

# Center Improves and Saves Children's Lives



For more than two decades, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and Georgia Tech have worked together to improve the health and care of young people. The Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Pediatric Technology Center (PTC) at Georgia Tech combines the world-class research and innovation at the Institute with the clinical expertise at Children's to develop leading-edge technological solutions for an important cause: improving and saving the lives of children.

For Tommy Holder, IMGT 1979, the decision to support the PTC was an easy one. Holder currently serves as chairman of both the Georgia Tech Foundation Board of Trustees and the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta System Board. These volunteer leadership positions have bolstered his confidence in the organizations and individuals working at the PTC.

"This partnership has had a profound impact on our ability to take care of kids in a really meaningful way," he said. "The doctors at Children's identify problems that need to be solved or opportunities for improvement, and of course the answer from Georgia Tech's people is always, 'Yes, we can fix that, we can make that.'"

The PTC provides extraordinary opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration in pediatrics, creating breakthrough discoveries that improve the mental and physical health and well-being of children and young adults by increasing the accessibility, efficiency, and quality of healthcare delivery in hospitals and in communities that need it most. The PTC has identified three strategic focus areas, or pillars, that they are prioritizing over the next five years: data science, AI, and machine learning; patient-centered care delivery; and technologies and devices.

Visionary philanthropy like Holder's helps make these discoveries and innovations possible. "Since Georgia Tech and Children's provide the administrative underpinnings for the center, gifts to the PTC are

used wholly for projects addressing any of the three pillars," said Julia Kubanek, vice president for Interdisciplinary Research at Georgia Tech and professor in the College of Sciences. "This not only solves urgent problems in children's healthcare but also enables us to educate Georgia Tech students in interdisciplinary biomedical research."

Kubanek's leadership and the three-pillar approach contribute to the strength of the PTC and the reality that a gift to the center is an investment in a better future for young people in Georgia and beyond. "All three pillars are very important, and I want them all to have great results," said Holder. "At the end of the day, what it's all about is using the power of Georgia Tech — intelligence and know-how — to help address some opportunities at Children's that ultimately result in better care for kids."

Holder also was inspired to support the PTC because of the work of Wilbur Lam, co-director of the PTC, a practicing doctor at Children's, and a professor in the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering at Emory University and Georgia Tech. Lam has been involved in groundbreaking work in the areas of devices and innovative medical technologies.

"The PTC represents the best of two worlds: one of the most renowned technical universities in the country and one of the largest and most preeminent pediatric healthcare systems in the U.S.," he said. "We're poised to truly change childhood and adolescent healthcare. That said, this entire endeavor would not be possible without the generosity of our donors, because the pediatric healthcare market is much smaller than that of adults." ///

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To make a gift or commitment to the PTC, contact **Jim Hall**, senior associate vice president for major gifts and next generation philanthropy, at [jim.hall@dev.gatech.edu](mailto:jim.hall@dev.gatech.edu).

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# Family's Gift to Improve Crane Safety

In April 2019, 19-year-old Sarah Pantip Wong, a bright first-year student at Seattle Pacific University, lost her life when a tower crane toppled over and collapsed beyond the confines of a construction site, spilling into traffic and crushing the Uber vehicle she was in. Sarah, another passerby, and two ironworkers died. In response to this incident and with a commitment to addressing the pervasive issue of crane safety, Andrea Wang and Henry Wong, Sarah's parents, have partnered with researchers from Georgia Tech to establish the Crane Safety Research Center.

William Singhose, a distinguished professor at Georgia Tech specializing in automation and mechatronics in the George W. Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering, emphasizes the gravity of the crane safety problem. With millions of cranes in operation worldwide, the United States alone experiences multibillion-dollar losses due to crane accidents, leading to hundreds of deaths each year. Singhose, through his extensive research, private sector engagement, and educational initiatives, is dedicated to addressing these issues comprehensively.

The Crane Safety Research Center at Georgia Tech collaborates with researchers from the University of Texas at Austin and the University of

Washington to bridge the gap between engineering curricula, practical applications, and legislation. Wang, Sarah's mother, underscores the disconnect between academia and construction practices, advocating for a more integrated approach.

Focusing primarily on tower cranes and boom cranes, the center aims to precisely calculate the potential falling distance of cranes during tower crane assembly, disassembly, and reconfiguration procedures. This critical data will facilitate a more accurate determination of public safety zones, thereby enhancing overall safety protocols. Building on principles taught in Singhose's Emerging Technology Law curriculum, another dedicated team of researchers will delve into the legislative landscape surrounding crane safety, leveraging the center's findings to formulate recommendations for legislative improvements.

Thanks to the unwavering support from the Wong family, the Crane Safety Research Center is poised to make profound impacts on crane technology, procedural enhancements, and the formulation of public policies. Wang hopes that the research center creates new knowledge and technology, advancing crane safety and informing



public policy to safeguard lives — the public and workers. The Seattle incident, like many others, was entirely preventable — and the Wong family hopes the Crane Safety Research Center can find the solutions to eliminate all death and injury by tower cranes. Wang said, “Together with Georgia Tech, we are steadfastly committed to preventing future tragedies and elevating crane safety standards globally.” ///

*To inquire about making a gift or commitment in support of the Crane Safety Research Center or the Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering, contact Senior Director of Development in the Woodruff School Jaimie Hayes at [jaimie.hayes@me.gatech.edu](mailto:jaimie.hayes@me.gatech.edu).*

# Student Organizations

## Fueled by Corporate Support



When Eli Kuperman looks at a car, he does not see a single object so much as a collection of interdependent subsystems — suspension, powertrain, aerodynamics, to name a few — and all of them are costly. “Race cars are expensive,” said Kuperman, a fourth-year business administration student and team lead for GT Motorsports, a student organization where members compete against other college teams to design, fabricate, and race F1-style vehicles. “The steel tube chassis that holds everything together costs \$10,000 alone. And that is before we can even think about putting wheels on it or an engine in it.”

Membership dues and fundraisers are not sufficient for projects of this scale. Only through the support of Georgia Tech’s Student Government Association (SGA), College- and School-level funding, and, crucially, corporate donations from organizations such as John Deere, Caterpillar, Texas Instruments, and others can student organizations undertake such ambitious endeavors.

“Corporate sponsorships are critical to our operation,” said Schuyler McCaa, a fourth-year aerospace engineering student and team lead for the Yellow Jacket Space Program (YJSP), which develops liquid-propellant rocket systems. Like race cars, rockets come with significant costs, but the generous support of more than a dozen sponsors, including six at the \$30,000-and-higher level, help defray these expenses. “Without them, the work we do would not be possible,” she said.

Corporate support for student organizations may take the form of outright gifts; in-kind donations like software, parts, or tools; or, in some cases, subject matter expertise and mentorship. Students “gain hands-on, real-world experience in design-build activities in a competitive environment,” said General Motors Business Analyst Chris Boehle, CE 2001, M.S. CE 2007. General Motors is a long-standing sponsor of GT Motorsports and other competition teams. “Building these competencies provides a great advantage in their careers,” he added.

But skills acquisition and financial support are not the only benefits students see from corporate partnerships. Shreyas Saraf, a fourth-year computer science major and director of external affairs for the student organization Data Science at Georgia Tech (DSGT), said that while corporate philanthropy accounts for approximately 80% of the budget for Hacklytics, DSGT’s annual, three-day hackathon that draws more than 1,000 attendees, the networking that extends from the partnership is equally, if not more, valuable. According to Saraf, corporate representatives often engage with students in meaningful — and mutually beneficial — ways. “Sponsors come to campus and recruit students, host workshops, design challenges, and even help market our event,” he said.

The same is true for students involved in GT Motorsports, and Kuperman noted that several of his race team’s members have secured internships, co-ops, and full-time

employment through interactions with their industry supporters.

For Wenting Sun, associate professor in the Daniel Guggenheim School of Aerospace Engineering and faculty advisor to YJSP, sponsorships provide intangible, morale-boosting benefits as well. “Support from sponsors goes beyond merely sustaining students’ work,” he said. “It becomes a continuation of their dreams. It serves as both recognition and encouragement. It offers inspiration.”

Maybe the biggest impact of corporate support for student organizations has less to do with the innovations it makes possible or the career networking it promotes than with the belonging it helps nurture. Undergraduate Student Body President Aanjan Sikal, a fourth-year industrial and systems engineering student, said that SGA has seen a marked uptick in participants — more than 51,000 students combined — across Tech’s 656 registered student organizations over the last two years, growth he attributes to a desire for connection following the Covid-19 pandemic. “Corporate sponsorships are more important than ever,” said Sikal. “They fundamentally affect the day-to-day operations” of the student organizations that “foster a real sense of community on our campus.” ///

*To inquire about corporate sponsorship of student organizations, contact **Caroline Wood**, executive director of Corporate Engagement, at [caroline@corporate.gatech.edu](mailto:caroline@corporate.gatech.edu).*



# Ken Hawkins' Legacy Lives on Through New Scholarship

As Olivia Hawkins Wallace, BA 2013, puts it, one of the first things people learned when they met her father Kenneth W. “Ken” Hawkins, EE 1981, was that he was a Yellow Jacket. “He was very proud of his Georgia Tech degree, and he credited Tech for his success,” she said.

After Ken died unexpectedly in October 2023, Olivia and her mother, Patti Hawkins, decided to establish an endowed scholarship fund in memory of Ken. They also made an outright gift for the scholarship, so that as the endowment builds, the scholarship can be immediately awarded. Recipients will be undergraduate students with financial need who are from Georgia, with first preference for those who live outside the metro Atlanta area.

Patti said, “We love the idea that in Ken’s name, we can support students who need a little extra help. We’re very excited about it and can’t wait to meet the first scholarship recipient.”

She added, “I think Ken would be pleased.”

Known for his upbeat nature, innate kindness, and gifted storytelling abilities, Ken could find common ground with anyone. He grew up in an Air Force family and lived all over the U.S. before his family eventually settled in Bonaire, Georgia, when he was in high school. Ken graduated from Warner Robins High School as the Class of 1976 valedictorian before enrolling at the one university he applied to — Georgia Tech. He helped cover the costs of his college education by participating in the co-op program, working at IBM in Raleigh, North Carolina.

After graduation, Ken joined AT&T with a team that eventually operated as Southern Bell, later becoming BellSouth. He earned his MBA from the University of Alabama in 1994. During his career as a telecommunications executive, he held many roles in South Georgia, Birmingham, Chicago, and Atlanta. Ken retired from Cisco in 2020.

Ken and Patti met at Second Baptist Church of Warner Robins and married in 1985. They eventually settled with Olivia in Stock-

bridge in 1997. From a young age, Olivia remembers her father encouraging her to follow in his footsteps to Georgia Tech. The decision to attend Georgia Tech was her own, though, and like her father, Olivia applied to the one school.



Patti Hawkins, Kevin Wallace, Ken Hawkins, and Olivia Hawkins Wallace at Olivia and Kevin's wedding.

*Photos courtesy of Sommer Daniel Photography*

Ken was a fixture on campus during Olivia's college years. She has fond memories of her father dragging her to his favorite breakfast spot on campus — Brittain Dining Hall — as well as attending football and basketball games together. The two were each other's companions for the President's Dinner.

In September 2023, Ken excitedly welcomed his new son-in-law, Kevin Wallace, BA 2014, to the family. He was even more excited that Kevin also was a Georgia Tech graduate and an excellent cook.

Olivia said, “There's no replacing a parental figure ever. There's certainly no replacing Ken Hawkins because he was a force in and of himself. Our sense of urgency for getting this scholarship set up so quickly was knowing that this is what he would have wanted. He would have wanted to support students and for that to start right away. To have a student benefiting from this scholarship less than a year after Dad passed away brings some closure for us in the grieving process. It's also a way to make something positive out of this, which was always what Dad would have wanted.”

The Ken Hawkins Scholarship will perpetuate Ken's legacy and benefit Georgia Tech students for generations to come. ///



Kenneth W. “Ken” Hawkins, EE 1981, with Buzz.

*For information about making a gift to the Ken Hawkins Scholarship Endowment Fund or to make a gift for student support in general, contact Associate Vice President of Development **Matthew Ryan** at [matthew.ryan@development.gatech.edu](mailto:matthew.ryan@development.gatech.edu).*



# MUSIC TECHNOLOGY STUDENT CREATES TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES

Georgia Tech Dual Bachelor and Master in Music Technology student Ripken Walker, MT 2023, combines high-tech savvy and a love of music to create multi-sensory experiences for people. A recipient of a fellowship funded by Col. Stephen C. Hall, IM 1967, and his wife, Pamela Hall, Walker is a collaborator on a state-of-the-art, interactive installation known as medusai.

Walker, now in the master's degree phase of the program, is part of a team in the Center for Music Technology's Robotic Musicianship group exploring the role of artificial intelligence in music, dance, and human-robotic interactions. For Walker, his work with medusai is not just technology for technology's sake — it's about improving the human condition. "Being able to influence someone's emotions with technology, that's what the magic is," Walker said. "We can build as much technology as we want, but if it doesn't evoke any sort of emotion, then what is it really for?"

Originally built, in part, from pieces of an old jungle gym, medusai combines music, lights, robotics, and movement of dancers, with an AI-driven computer that charts and responds to observers' movements. While it may be a bit unnerving, one of the project's goals is to alleviate people's unease with robotics and AI. Jason Freeman, chair of the School of Music, said, "As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly important to the music industry, medusai takes a refreshing approach: embracing our fear of the singularity while simultaneously inviting us to explore how humans and machines can become co-creative, even symbiotic."

Walker's primary focus has been on how lighting affects interactions between humans and robots. The project taps into his interest in creating transformative spaces and experiences. "I really started to discover this passion," he said, "for working with people and with technologies in physical spaces that can specifically influence people's emotions on the spot." Walker had been working with the

group for less than a semester when he convinced Gil Weinberg, professor in the School of Music and director of the Center for Music Technology, to apply his lighting ideas to medusai.

"Ripken used lights as anticipatory cues to let you know where to look," Weinberg said. "Whenever a string is about to pluck, you will have lights indicating where to look and showing you what's going to happen."

Walker wants to build his career around crafting such experiences for people. And the interdisciplinary nature of the music technology program is helping him work toward these goals. With the knowledge gained from his electrical engineering, business

management, and industrial design classes, Walker currently runs his own mobile recording business. He can record just about anywhere. "If I wanted to go into the middle of Tech Green to record an album, I have the capability to do that," he said.

The Hall Fellowship that has supported Walker's research at Tech has led to a mentoring relationship with Col. Hall and his wife, who Walker affectionately refers to as "Miss Pam." Walker has gotten to know Hall well through a shared interest in running, and when Hall is in Atlanta, they meet for runs around campus. Last October, the two even participated together in one of Tech's most time-honored traditions — the Freshman Cake Race.

Thanks to the support of the Hall Fellowship and the informal mentoring he receives from Hall, Walker has the resources necessary to focus on his studies and take what he is learning in the music technology program into exciting and innovative directions. ///



**"Being able to influence  
someone's emotions  
with technology, that's  
what the magic is."**

— Ripken Walker, MT 2023, and current music  
technology graduate student

To make a gift or commitment in support of the School of Music, contact College of Design Director of Development **Kelly Smith** at [kelly.smith@design.gatech.edu](mailto:kelly.smith@design.gatech.edu).



# Two Yellow Jackets Named Churchill Scholars

Undergraduate scholarships help attract top students to Georgia Tech, where they have access to the Institute's numerous unique opportunities. These opportunities, combined with the consistently growing national and international value of a Georgia Tech degree, lead students and alumni to earn prestigious career placements, fellowships, and recognitions. Recently, Yellow Jackets Velin Kojouharov, a mechanical engineering major, and Shea Rathburn, CE 2023, were named recipients of prestigious Churchill Scholarships.

The Churchill Scholarship selects 18 scholars annually for one year of master's study at the University of Cambridge. Kojouharov received the Churchill Scholarship for science, mathematics, and engineering, and Rathburn received the Kanders Churchill Scholarship for science policy. Churchill Scholars are selected on the basis of academic and research achievement.

At the University of Cambridge, Kojouharov will pursue a Master of Philosophy in biological sciences. His long-term goal is to "design biologically inspired robots that can move in complex and dangerous environments."

Kojouharov's research at Cambridge will focus on the net-winged midge larvae, an insect that lives in fast-flowing streams of the Alps. "By working with both zoologists and engineers, I hope to design a robot, inspired by the larvae, that can crawl around in similar conditions," he said.

The potential application of this robot includes environmental monitoring and search and rescue in fast-flooding or other extreme weather conditions.

Kojouharov expressed his gratitude to Daniel Goldman, Dunn Family Professor in the School of Physics, for his research guidance over the last three years. "He has encouraged me to ask bigger, more interesting research questions," said Kojouharov. He also thanked Tianyu Wang, Robotics Ph.D. candidate and mentor to Kojouharov.

Kojouharov has received significant funding for his undergraduate education at Tech as the recipient of the Stamps President's Scholarship, Goldwater Scholarship, Astronaut Scholarship, and the ThinkSwiss Research Scholarship.

Rathburn plans to pursue a Master of Philosophy in public policy at the University of Cambridge. She is excited to study in the U.K. so she can see firsthand how the country has worked toward accomplishing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. She also hopes to learn how those practices can be applied in the U.S. Rathburn said her long-term goal is to "combine engineering



and policy to make cities around the world sustainable, equitable, and resilient."

She acknowledged the contributions of her mentors, Jennifer Hirsch, senior director of the Center for Sustainable Communities Research and Education, and James Tsai, professor in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, in advancing her undergraduate research. Rathburn's mentors helped shape her perspective on transportation equity and equitable city planning during her time at Georgia Tech.

Rathburn received the Alex G. and Faye Spanos Scholarship and funding from the Joe S. Mundy Global Learning Endowment.

Georgia Tech's pre-graduate and pre-professional advising team aids students in the process of applying for prestigious awards such as the Churchill Scholarship. Awards are available for students as early as their second year. Fellowship advisors work with students each step of the way, identifying opportunities, reading drafts of essays, and arranging mock interviews.

Karen Mura, prestigious fellowships advisor, worked closely with both Kojouharov and Rathburn as they applied for this and other awards.

"Shea and Venny are remarkable students with significant real-world experience that prepares them well to make a global impact throughout their professional lives," Mura said. ///

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*To make a gift or commitment in support of undergraduate scholarships, contact Senior Associate Vice President for Major Gifts and Next Generation Philanthropy **Jim Hall** at [jim.hall@dev.gatech.edu](mailto:jim.hall@dev.gatech.edu).*

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# Georgia Tech Presents Satya Nadella With Honorary Degree



In recognition of his transformative leadership, Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella received an honorary Ph.D. during a ceremony inside the John Lewis Student Center's Atlantic Theater on Jan. 25.

"The innovation you're driving here at Georgia Tech comes at one of the most consequential moments in the history of technology. As we enter this age of artificial intelligence, it's communities like this one that will help create the world we want to live in," Nadella said.

With over 2,000 Georgia Tech alumni on its staff and a prominent presence in the city of Atlanta, Microsoft recently became the second company in history to surpass a \$3 trillion market value. Accepting the degree, Nadella, who became the company's CEO

in 2014, spoke of aligning values between Microsoft and Georgia Tech and looking forward to working together to create technologies and solutions for the world's most pressing challenges.

"When you talk to Satya, he always leads with the impact that the company is having on people and organizations around the world," Georgia Tech President Ángel Cabrera said during the ceremony. "That sounds awfully familiar with our mission at Georgia Tech — to develop leaders who advance technology and improve the human condition. Our motto is progress and service. We define our success by the impact that we have in the lives of others. So, that explains why we're so excited to bring Satya into the family of Yellow Jackets."

A fireside chat between Cabrera and Nadella followed the ceremony. Along with the transformative nature of AI and its ability to improve workflows and productivity in business, Nadella spoke of its potential to bring personalized instruction to students worldwide.

Nadella then sat down with a group of students, all former Microsoft interns, to discuss their educational experience and what he called a "paradigm shift" across the industry, similar to the rise of the internet and cloud computing.

Rynaa Grover will graduate with a master's degree in computer science in May and has accepted a position with Microsoft. "The research that goes on at Georgia Tech is very advanced and in line with the industry. It's incredible to be in this field at this point in time and to be able to contribute to such a big firm; it's really empowering," said Grover, who worked with Microsoft's machine learning platforms as an intern and with large language models in Assistant Professor Srijan Kumar's lab.

Yi Qin will also join Microsoft after graduating with a master's in human-computer interaction. "This was such a memorable experience for me," she said. "Conversations like this make me feel like we are capable of doing a lot of great things. We should capture every opportunity that we have, have a growth mindset, and create whatever impact we want to make." ///



Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella and Georgia Tech President Ángel Cabrera meet with students.



## IN MEMORIAM

# Marilyn Somers

Marilyn Somers, honorary alumna and beloved founder of the Georgia Tech Living History Program, died on Jan. 3, 2024, at age 86. Through decades of pioneering work preserving Georgia Tech's history, Somers has left an indelible mark on the Institute and touched the lives of thousands of Yellow Jackets in the process.

Over the course of 26 years with the Living History Program, Marilyn Somers interviewed 1,192 alumni, including astronauts, captains of industry, and former President Jimmy Carter. Somers was honored by the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council with the 2021 Award for Excellence in Lifetime Achievement for her unwavering dedication to preserving the history of the Institute.

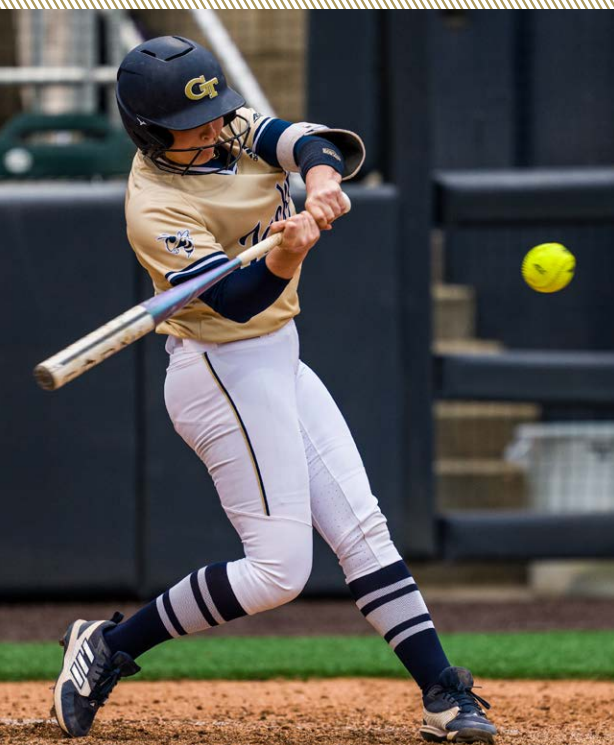
Somers retired in December 2020 and said the best parts of the job included working with students, meeting interesting people, and saving the stories told by Tech alumni. The videos and transcripts from these interviews not only provide a more complete history of the Institute as told through the voices of those who lived its history, but the recordings also have become cherished mementos for families.

Somers' impressive knowledge of the Institute and her ability to recall names and facts from memory made her Georgia Tech's de facto historian. A natural storyteller, she captivated audiences each year with her popular Homecoming talks on Tech traditions and history.

In 2008, the Institute recognized her many contributions by naming her an honorary alumna of Georgia Tech. To further commemorate her work preserving Tech's history, the "Marilyn Somers Living History Program Collection, 1994-2020" was unveiled in 2021. The collection is housed in the Georgia Tech Archives and Special Collections.

Somers also provided endowed support for the Living History Program Collection and for graduate fellowships in the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences.

Through her extraordinary work capturing the Institute's history and thoughtful philanthropy, Somers made a profound impact on the Georgia Tech community. Her remarkable legacy will live on in perpetuity. ///



## Update On Competitive Drive Initiative Turn 2

Following the enormous success of the first Competitive Drive Initiative in Fall 2022, Georgia Tech Athletics launched Competitive Drive Initiative Turn 2 to fuel the Yellow Jackets and continue momentum. A collaborative effort including President Ángel Cabrera, the Georgia Tech Foundation, Georgia Tech Athletics, and the Alexander-Tharpe Fund, Competitive Drive Initiative Turn 2 succeeded in securing additional funding for student-athlete scholarships and other operational needs. Thanks to the generosity of Tech fans, Turn 2 exceeded its goal of raising \$2.5 million in new gifts to Georgia Tech's Athletic Scholarship Fund by December 31, 2023, ultimately resulting in \$4 million in support.

## Q &amp; A WITH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC STUDENT ACCESS

# Rick Clark

*Rick Clark brings more than two decades of experience to the inaugural role of executive director of Strategic Student Access at Georgia Tech. Here, the thought leader and expert in college admission talks about the importance of ensuring that all students who are accepted to Georgia Tech have the financial support to attend.*



## Tell us about your background and your new role.

I've been at Georgia Tech for 20 years, serving in several different roles in the Admission Office. Most recently, I was the assistant vice president and executive director of Undergraduate Admission. I'm proud of what we have accomplished. In the admission and enrollment world, Georgia Tech has established itself as a true leader, and helped build a national brand that is in high demand. We have expanded access by significantly growing our first-year and transfer classes, as well as our overall undergraduate enrollment, drawing talented students from the state of Georgia and beyond. Due to the demand for a Tech education and experience, we've also become more selective. By any measure, Georgia Tech is now competing not just regionally but nationally, against the heaviest of heavy hitters.

## Why is it important to increase opportunities for financially vulnerable undergraduates to attend Georgia Tech? How does that relate to the mission of Georgia Tech?

Georgia Tech is a public institution. We exist first and foremost to serve the state of Georgia and its citizens. Through our history, some of the most effective leaders we have produced came from middle- or lower-income families. As college costs have increased, that type of student is quickly disappearing from our campus. And increasingly, because of affordability issues, we are losing badly to our competitors (all of which are ranked higher than us and are located outside of Georgia). In fact, the average family income of a Tech student exceeds \$200,000 annually — and that number is going up. So, if we are serious about our mission of developing future leaders, producing talent for industry, and solving the

world's problems, we must invest in making Tech financially reasonable to all talent — not just wealthy talent.

## What are some of the pathways Tech has created to elevate and expand opportunities for every student?

Many people are aware of what we call the Georgia Tech Scholars program — a guarantee of admission to valedictorians and salutatorians from across Georgia. This past year we have begun to back that up with scholarship dollars. The Georgia Tech Val-Sal Scholarship now includes the opportunity to receive up to \$5,000 annually. This is our attempt to both attract and also support the best students from communities and districts around the state. I am very proud of the fact that we also have created transfer pathways for veterans, first-generation students, and low-income students, as well as Georgians interested in studying engineering, sciences, business, computing, liberal arts, and design.

## What opportunities are you most excited about?

Recently, President Cabrera increased the annual household income ceiling from \$33,000 to \$55,000 on the G. Wayne Clough Georgia Tech Promise program. In year one, that change helped us increase the number of incoming Tech Promise students by over 20% — demonstrating that Georgia students will choose Georgia Tech if we can reduce or eliminate their debt burden and compete with the offers they are receiving from our competitors. What we need to do now is raise money to ensure that we can continue that trajectory. There are several programs, national nonprofit organizations, that many of our peers are part of — QuestBridge, The Posse Foundation, and the Cristo Rey Network, for example — that identify talented,

low-income students from around the country and help match them with institutions. I am hopeful we can explore some of these partnerships, because they have established a strong track record for identifying and supporting students in the admission process and through their college career. I am also excited to partner with campus colleagues who are deeply committed to helping us ensure that these students are supported on campus and have a transformative Tech experience.

## How will you collaborate with the Office of Development and other areas across campus?

One of the things I've really enjoyed since I've been at Tech has been the opportunity to speak with donors, alumni groups, individuals, and corporations. This new role as executive director of Strategic Student Access extends that opportunity, giving me more capacity for those kinds of interactions. I look forward to continuing to partner with Development in telling the story of Georgia Tech, to meet with donors and companies, and to present the reasons why Tech must attract and develop top talent from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

## Is there anything else that you would like to add?

I have met thousands of Georgia Tech students, faculty, staff, and alumni in my 20 years on campus, but never one who likes to lose, wants to limit potential, or is scared of trying to solve problems. We have an amazing history and so much to be proud of, and I'm confident that our best days are ahead. But I am also convinced that if we do not invest now in making Tech affordable, we will continue to lose ground to our competitors and significantly diminish our potential for future impact and influence. ///



# Spotlight on Georgia Tech Students

## #1

**Public university in value for students**

according to *The Princeton Review*, 2023 edition

### 22%

reduction in tuition and fees for in-state students over 4 years when adjusted for inflation\*

### 52,384

total applications of incoming first-year and transfer students\*

### 15%

are first-generation

### 43%

are women

### 13%

are from rural areas



### 113

Georgia counties\*



### 50

states + D.C. & Puerto Rico\*



### 103

nations\*



### 6,162

undergraduates with financial need\*

### \$84,500

Average starting salary for graduating undergraduate students for those who responded to the survey, AY 2022-23  
(not including bonus offers)

### 450+

student startups founded through CREATE-X†

### \$1.9B

total valuation of student startups†

### 4,220

students participated in co-ops or internships†



### 5,000+

undergraduates engaged in research†



### 1,816

students studied abroad†

\*Admissions statistics for academic year 2023-24 † All student data from AY 2022-23

# Honoring Marta Garcia



Named in honor of Marta Garcia upon her retirement, the Marta Garcia Student Support Scholarship Endowment Fund has been made possible thanks to the support of Georgia Tech alumni across the nation and world. The endowment will support undergraduate students, with preference for international students, a passion of Garcia's throughout her career at Georgia Tech.

Garcia began connecting with Georgia Tech's internationally based alumni while she was director of development for the College of Engineering. She was instrumental in engaging with alumni and securing support for Georgia Tech-Europe, and was involved with

the creation of France-Atlanta, an annual event series co-organized by the Consulate General of France and Georgia Tech. For these efforts, Garcia was inducted into the Legion of Merit by French President Nicolas Sarkozy in 2012.

Garcia's colleagues in International Development initiated the endowment to perpetuate her remarkable legacy and deep commitment to international students.

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To make a gift to the endowment, contact Latin America/Managing Director of Development **Sara Araujo** at [sara.araujo@gatech.edu](mailto:sara.araujo@gatech.edu).

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**“I wanted to share some of my life savings with Georgia Tech because of the dramatic impact it has made on my career and life.”**

— Paul Reitz, IMGT 1978



Raised primarily in Panama by Methodist missionary parents, Paul Reitz, IMGT 1978, first encountered Georgia Tech as a teenager when his family lived in Atlanta for a year. When it came time for college, Tech was his top choice, and he was thrilled when he received his acceptance letter.

After nine challenging years of balancing classes and work, Reitz finally received his hard-earned diploma with gratitude, enthusiasm, and humility. “Getting married, getting sober, and going to Georgia Tech have been the three most important things to happen in my adult life,” he said.

Following his graduation, Reitz worked in HVAC sales before moving to New York City to serve as a project manager with a consulting engineering firm. Over the years, he has been heartened by the respect his Tech degree garners and said, “Working in New York City, people rarely reference their alma maters, but I would always refer to being a Georgia Tech graduate! This would immediately

bring positive comments from those around me.”

Reitz and his wife, Trudy, are longtime supporters of the New York Public Library and the American Museum of Natural History. When they retired in 2016, the couple decided to expand their philanthropy and support Georgia Tech. They were especially interested in establishing scholarships that provide discretionary funds to students, as this was something Reitz needed when he was a student. He added, “I was working and could pay my tuition, but it would have been nice to be able to see a movie on a Friday night.”

The Reitzes have given generously to Tech through vehicles including an endowment, a Charitable Remainder Trust (CRUT), and a planned gift. As a result, they are able to receive monthly income from the CRUT, witness first-hand the impact of their support on students, and know their philanthropy will provide resources to Tech in the future.



**Georgia Tech<sup>®</sup>**  
**Founders' Council**

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## Inspiring Others: Flanagan Challenge Adds 8 Dean's Scholars in Engineering

Ann and David D. Flanagan, IE 1976, have provided an incredible matching opportunity to support students in the College of Engineering Dean's Scholars Program. The Flanagans matched contributions at the \$125,000 level, resulting in endowed scholarship funds of \$250,000 each for a total of eight new Dean's Scholars. Launched in December 2023, the challenge sparked an immediate, enthusiastic response from donors. All eight of the scholarship opportunities have been fulfilled.

David Flanagan said, "We wanted to inspire others to give so that more top engineering students have the resources necessary to attend Tech and access the full experience without financial worry."

The College of Engineering Dean's Scholars Program awards a \$10,000-per-year scholarship, for up to four years, to promising, highly qualified undergraduate students across all engineering disciplines. The program is available to students who have shown exemplary academic achievement. Dean's Scholars also have access to a cohort-based environment to grow their professional skills and networks. Throughout the program, students work with faculty mentors, participate in leadership development retreats, and meet with campus leaders and influential alumni. Each Dean's Scholar is provided with an enrichment fund that may be used during their academic career for co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

"It was Ann and David's vision and generosity that launched the Dean's Scholars Program in 2019 and changed the lives of our students," said Raheem Beyah, dean of the College of Engineering and Southern Company Chair. "Their initial support laid a foundation that will award 45 scholarships by the end of this semester. This matching gift has extended their impact, empowering more aspiring engineering leaders to pursue their dreams."

The program directly supports the College's mission of recruiting highly sought-after first-year students who will lead and enrich the Georgia Tech community while receiving a world-class education and life-changing research opportunities. With support from donors like the Flanagans and others participating in the match, the College will help these students become exemplars of Georgia Tech's motto: "Progress and Service."

To make a gift to the College of Engineering, contact Executive Director of Development **David Zaksheske** at [davez@coe.gatech.edu](mailto:davez@coe.gatech.edu).

