Q&A: John Portman

SMART GROWTH
Designing A Live-Work-Play Atlanta

Homespun Pecan Pie

A LENS ON LIFE
“Through Tech’s gift annuity program, I have set up a scholarship fund that helps students in a way that fits with my own financial situation.”

Jerry S. Johnson, EE 1957
Alamogordo, New Mexico

- Native of Augusta, Georgia; graduate of Richmond Academy.
- Co-op student at Georgia Tech; member of Phi Kappa Sigma.
- MBA from Georgia State University.
- Professional career with Georgia Power Company (14 years including co-op time), Cincinnati Gas and Electric Company, Minneapolis Honeywell, and Adcor Electronics (11 years as Vice President, Marketing; Chairman, Board of Directors).
- Subdivision development and real estate financing in New Mexico.
- Chair of Alamogordo Chamber of Commerce Water Committee and co-chair of Transportation Committee; Member, Board of Directors of Otero County Economic Development Council; County representative to Southeast New Mexico Regional Planning Organization.
- Currently serving on Class of 1957 50th Reunion Fund Committee.

Gifts to Georgia Tech

- Through an outright gift and charitable gift annuities, endowed the Jerry S. Johnson Scholarship Fund to help seniors with financial need who are in the Division of Professional Practice Co-op Program.
- Provision in his will to add to the Jerry S. Johnson Scholarship Fund.

Thoughts on giving to Tech

“I needed financial help to complete my senior year at Tech, and the Augusta Rotary Club gave me a loan. This has made me want to help students in need. Through Tech’s gift annuity program, I have set up a scholarship fund that helps students in a way that fits with my own financial situation. Gift annuities provide me with a significant immediate tax deduction plus a source of guaranteed lifetime income, much of which is tax-free.

I am celebrating my 50th reunion at Tech this October and my gifts, as well as my bequest, will be included in the Class of 1957’s reunion gift totals.”

Jerry Johnson joins Founders’ Council’s 927 members who have made bequests or life-income gifts of at least $25,000 in support of Georgia Tech’s future.

For more information on helping students at Georgia Tech through a bequest or life-income gift, please contact:
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Interview
Cover Story
John Portman: Design for the Human Experience. A negative experience 47 years ago changed the way Portman approached architecture.

Cover Photo: Rlon Rizzo
Courtesy John Portman

Smart Growth
Initiatives conceived by Georgia Tech alumni and students would turn the sprawling, traffic-congested city into a people-friendly metropolis of parks, bicycle trails, streetcars, live-work-play neighborhoods — and maybe even a lake where the Downtown Connector splits the city today.

Atlantic Station: Model City
Atlanta Beltline: Parks, trails and transit replacing a historic railroad route
Trailblazer: Alumnus Ed McBrayer's PATH

Disconnect the Connector: A bold Tech solution to Atlanta's mobility woes
A Desire Named Streetcar: A transportation face-lift for Atlanta's signature street
It was "the greatest day of my life," said Edwin Harrison when he became president of Georgia Tech.

"There's laughter beyond the language barrier," Kristi Odom learned from the Masai men who tried to teach her a song. Her willingness to laugh at herself helped generate the rapport Odom needed as she traveled the world, combining a passion for photography with the love of adventure.

Clint Zeagler's fashion line blends Southern "tacky fancy" with style.
Thank you!

More than 31,000 loyal alumni, faculty, staff, parents, students and friends contributed over $8.16 million to the recently completed 60th Annual Roll Call.

Thank you for investing in Georgia Tech.

Get a head start on the 61st Annual Roll Call by donating online at www.gtalumni.org or call (800) GT-ALUMS.
Lead by Example

“So, what do you do for a living?” asked the guy sitting next to me on a recent flight from California. I told him that I run the Georgia Tech Alumni Association. He replied, “OK, but what do you do for a living?”

I gave him my elevator speech about what we do and how we do it. He was taken aback by the breadth and depth of our operation and told me his university didn’t have the focus on alumni that Georgia Tech has. That’s not an unusual exchange in my travels. It’s not even unusual within our own alumni body. Many of our alumni know the Association exists but their perception is that we simply ask for money to support Tech, which we do, but that’s only one part of what we do. We build relationships between Georgia Tech and its alumni.

Why? Georgia Tech needs its alumni. Alumni can help Tech achieve its aspirations. And it doesn’t happen without you.

The Institute is what it is because from the beginning alumni cared about their school. To become better, Tech needs your leadership, your ability to help govern, your advocacy, your willingness to recruit students, your ability to connect Tech to people and organizations.

I started giving to Roll Call at a fairly young age because it was in my own best interest. As you grow and add significant miles to the vehicle, you realize that giving itself is a reward. You’re contributing to the advancement of an institution that defines you a little. That’s fundamental.

Call your friends from Tech. If they don’t give to Roll Call, tell them they should — or have them call me. If they do, ask them if they’re giving to the annual fund in a way that makes them proud. Some alumni have enormous pride in their experiences at Tech but don’t find it in their hearts (and wallets) to prove it. In the end, the only thing that matters is your family and your friends. And hopefully one of those friends has been the education that you got at Georgia Tech.

Joseph P. Irwin, President
Case for Engineering
During a recent weekend, I read the interview with Don Giddens, dean of Engineering [Spring ALUMNI MAGAZINE]. I was truly impressed with the salient points that he articulated so eloquently. The singular point that most impressed me was: “One thing that technology can do is to help disperse wealth.” This is a fact that is not widely recognized at all and which could be a huge magnet for drawing talented United States citizens into very satisfying careers in engineering.

He provided a compelling case for strong support of engineering education in the United States. Congratulations for sharing his excellent perspective.

James Meindl, director Microelectronics Research Center and Nanotechnology Research Center

Engineers Get No Respect
In order to address the future shortage of engineers [Spring ALUMNI MAGAZINE], one must study the present situation and how it evolved. When I started my engineering career, employers respected engineers and their opinions. We enjoyed what we were doing and created great products.

Corporate embracing of management fads and slogans has changed all this. With the stated goal of maximizing shareholder value, we were burdened with one initiative after another that added nonengineering burdens with no perceptible payoff: return on net assets, continuous measurable improvement, design to cost, Six Sigma, 5S, ISO 9000, expect great things.

Meanwhile, schedules were tightened and budgets cut to squeeze more out of the workers, oops, profit for the shareholders. One large company went as far as mandating a minimum of 10 percent unpaid overtime for all salaried workers until its largest customer insisted the 10 percent be passed along.

In the name of immediate corporate profit, engineers are not allowed to produce great products anymore. If something is good enough for a manager’s nontechnical opinion of the objective it is pushed out the door. If known product defects can be remedied on another manager’s budget, they are passed on to the next level of system integration to preserve schedule.

In an environment where engineers are respected as much as ditch diggers of 50 years ago were, who in their right mind would want to become an engineer?

Bill Roberts, EE 73 Renton, Wash.

No Innuendos, Please
I was so disappointed to read the final sentence in the “Making a Splash” description about a bathing suit photo shoot on campus. I was fine with the picture and commentary until the final sentence: “Be sure to look at those hats.”

Come on, seriously, you printed that? To add insult to injury, the very next page was about a candle-lighting ceremony focusing on sexual violence against women.

Tech has come a long way in recruiting women to attend and feel welcome for their intelligence. Please don’t take us back in time with sexist innuendos.

Susan Sutherland Pina, IE 93 Atlanta

Big Disappointment
I would like to express my disappointment in the Spring 2007 GEORGIA TECH ALUMNI MAGAZINE. I usually enjoy reading the magazine but was unpleasantly surprised by the photo spread and commentary “Making a Splash” in the In Focus section.

Since when did Alumni publications deem it necessary to emulate Sports Illustrated and print photos of bikini-clad models along with suggestive commentary? I expect more professionalism and maturity. It’s also ironic that on the following pages there’s an article focusing on sexual violence against women — a very serious matter.

In this world today, the exploitation of women can promote and lead to sexual violence. There are far better subjects for the magazine to cover.

I suggest that for future publications you use better judgment and consider that your audience includes women and men of all ages. This issue was a major letdown and a misrepresentation of the Georgia Tech Alumni Association.

Becky Irwin Marietta, Ga.

Georgia Tech researchers Kirsti Ritalahti and Frank Loeffler study bacteria contamination in river sediments. Such public-safety research makes a “case for strong support of engineering education,” says James Meindl.
Co-op Experience
The article on Jan Boal, ME 54, MS Math 54 [Spring 2007] was quite fascinating. Jan has been in our office in the Division of Professional Practice, the co-op division, on a couple of occasions to delight us with some of the kaleidoscopes from his shop. He is definitely a delightful gentleman.

In my conversations with him, he proudly spoke of his co-op experience as an undergraduate at Georgia Tech, where he worked five quarters with Timken Roller Bearing in Ohio and two quarters with what was then the Engineering Experiment Station (now Georgia Tech Research Institute). Unfortunately, his co-op experience did not make it into print.

According to Jan, his experience as an undergraduate at Tech helped prepare him in a significant way for his career. In addition, he was able to work near his home in Ohio early in his education to help pay his way through school—a great benefit for a young student at any time, but especially in the 1950s. Having gone through the co-op program myself, I can testify to its benefits.

As we approach the 2012 centennial anniversary of the cooperative program at Georgia Tech, perhaps the magazine will feature some articles about how this program has helped shape Tech and its history over the years. Alumni may be interested to know that the co-op program was inducted into the newly established National Co-op Hall of Honor in June.

Thanks for the high-quality publications and interesting articles.

Thomas M. Akins, IE 74
Executive Director
Division of Professional Practice

Tragic Anniversary
Sixty years ago the Arnold Hardy photograph of a woman jumping out of the Winecoff Hotel was printed on front pages of newspapers all over the world and won the Pulitzer Prize [Winter 2007 ALUMNI MAGAZINE]. Fast-forward to this decade and we now have newspaper and television censorship of photographs and video of people jumping out of the World Trade Center.

Alexandron Janoulis, AE 66
Atlanta
From the team that brought you 9 wins in 2006, an ACC Coastal Division Title, and a 10th consecutive bowl appearance.

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Georgia Tech

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2007 SCHEDULE

Sept. 1 at Notre Dame
Sept. 8 SAMFORD
Sept. 15 BOSTON COLLEGE (Family Weekend)
Sept. 22 at Virginia
Sept. 29 CLEMSON
Oct. 6 at Maryland
Oct. 13 at Miami
Oct. 20 ARMY (Homecoming)
Nov. 1 VIRGINIA TECH
Nov. 10 at Duke
Nov. 17 NORTH CAROLINA
Nov. 24 GEORGIA

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— Wang Fei-ling
Professor of international affairs at Georgia Tech, concerning contaminated Chinese agricultural products, pet food ingredients and fake drug ingredients, in The New York Times

Georgia Tech has a skill set here that has not been applied to motor vehicles. We are marrying what we know from the automotive sector with the aerospace sector so that we have literally a cockpit.

— William Santana Li
CEO of Carbon Motors, an Atlanta-based startup that is working with Institute researchers who are applying their experience in designing cockpits for helicopters to police vehicles, in the San Francisco Chronicle

I was running a company that was plundering the earth. I thought, 'Damn, someday people like me will be put in jail!' It was a spear in the chest.

— Ray Anderson, IE 56
President of Interface, about his 1994 "conversion experience" and decision to turn the carpet tile company into an environmentally friendly, sustainable operation, in The New York Times

You could use it at a movie theater, live theater, baseball stadium, any other sporting venue, a place of worship, a classroom, a conference room. Anywhere you want to provide a text. There's really two parts to the system — the part that involves the venue and there's the part that the patrons carry around with them.

— Leanne West
Georgia Tech researcher, who has created a wearable real-time captioning system using wireless technology for the hearing impaired or those who speak a different language, on CNN

The main complaint I hear from people is that Charlie is a superman, that no single mathematician has so much knowledge in so many specialized areas. He's a metaphor, a stand-in for all this body of knowledge.

— Justin Romberg
Georgia Tech electrical engineering professor, who reads scripts of the popular CBS drama "NUMB3RS" for accuracy and plausibility before episodes go into production, in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution

It's part inspired by a cocktail party and part by a dance-club environment — even in part by a multiplayer game, where people are in competition to influence the music by convincing people to follow them.

— Jason Freeman
Tech assistant music professor and composer, whose latest work, "Flock," has as much in common with Dance Dance Revolution as a symphony, in Wired

Modern medicine relies on engineering and technology. Georgia Tech and Emory are well-positioned to lead that effort.

— Don P. Giddens
Dean of the College of Engineering, in the Atlanta Business Chronicle

Researchers use neural computation to "emulate the brain's visual cortex" — creating sensors that, like the brain, can scan across a wide field of view and "figure out what's interesting to look at."

— Paul Hasler
Associate professor in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, discussing a research initiative by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency to develop high-tech binoculars 10 times more powerful than anything now available, in Wired

When you save energy, you save pollution too.

— Sophie Govetto
Graduate student, who won the $500 top prize in Georgia Tech's Earth Day competition for her commitment to researching ways to manufacture everyday products like car parts and computers to save energy and natural resources, in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution

We wanted them to get the data that they wanted in a way that still respects their ability to manage their classroom.

— Gillian Hayes
Computer science doctoral student, about technology developed at Georgia Tech in a pilot project to make life easier for teachers of children with autism, on Channel 11, WXIA-TV Atlanta

I've been down there probably five times and could see myself playing there. Like one of every five graduates is a millionaire, so I'm not going to argue with that.

— Tommy Reamon Jr.
Junior quarterback at Gloucester (Va.) High School, saying he will strongly consider Georgia Tech if a scholarship offer comes, in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Researchers use neural computation to "emulate the brain's visual cortex" — creating sensors that, like the brain, can scan across a wide field of view and "figure out what's interesting to look at."

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Associate professor in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, discussing a research initiative by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency to develop high-tech binoculars 10 times more powerful than anything now available, in Wired

When you save energy, you save pollution too.

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Graduate student, who won the $500 top prize in Georgia Tech's Earth Day competition for her commitment to researching ways to manufacture everyday products like car parts and computers to save energy and natural resources, in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution
The vast majority of games in this genre are derivative of the Tolkien world. The fact that there is finally going to be a game based on the source material is interesting and exciting to those of us who follow this world.

— Celia Pearce
Assistant professor at Georgia Tech and contributing editor to the Virtual Cultures blog (virtualcultures.typepad.com) concerning fantasy role playing in Lord of the Rings Online: Shadows of Angmar, based on the trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien, in USA Today

Nobody can predict earthquakes, but after a very big earthquake like this 8.1 event, the stresses between the plates in that location are released. It will take a long time to build stress up again at the same location. There's no guarantee. But pretty much we tell the people they can go back to their villages and go back fishing.

— Herman Fritz
Assistant professor at Georgia Tech's Savannah campus, saying the chances of another large earthquake and tsunami in the northwest Solomon Islands are slim, in the Australian online newsletter theage.com.au

You can't just have them make copies or file. If you expose them to upper [level] executives, they'll see the type of dynamics and then come back and sell the company to classmates. There's nothing like having a student come back excited and say, "Wow, these things they're doing are dynamic and exciting."

— Stan Broome
Manager of corporate relations at Georgia Tech, suggesting a low-cost way to improve the metals industry's image by bringing in college sophomores and juniors through summer internships to acquaint them with the business, in Forward magazine online

It's feasible, for sure. It's just, how much do you want to spend? The quandary utilities in the Southeast are in is people want low rates and won't pay more for renewable energy. I believe in renewables, but in some cases there have to be draconian measures taken (before they will be used).

— Bill Bulpitt
Georgia Tech research engineer, on development of a wind farm in the ocean off the South Carolina coast, in The Post and Courier of Charleston

It's particularly sweet that winning this award gives us pause to take pride in our accomplishments and service to Georgia Tech. It helps our staff to know that our work has made a national impact.

— Richard Meyer
Dean and director of Libraries, on receiving the Association of College and Research Libraries' 2007 Excellence in Academic Libraries Award, in BusinessNews online

I would encourage a lot more [research] in solar, in battery and wind technology. In battery research alone, I think on the order of several hundred million [dollars] or more per year [is needed] — and that's for governmental spending. Industry is also going to be investing — but that's the order of magnitude that you need to have to really make the breakthrough.

— Tom Fuller
Principal research engineer at the Georgia Tech Research Institute and director of the Center for Innovative Fuel Cell and Battery Technologies, on NPR

It's literally like cooking a turkey. We are really out to produce a new electronic material.

— Walter de Heer
Georgia Tech physics professor, who has refined techniques to grow graphene — a one-atom-thick sheet of carbon, the thinnest of all materials in the universe — out of silicon carbine, providing better electronic properties, in The New York Times

This new shape for platinum catalyst nanoparticles greatly improves their activity.

— Zhong Lin Wang
Georgia Tech Regents professor, who led a study in conjunction with Xiamen University in China to create new efficient platinum nanocrystal catalysts with 24 facets, which are 200 percent to 400 percent more efficient than spherical platinum nanoparticles, in Chemical and Engineering News online

The economics look very good. The energy balance also looks much better for wood than it does for corn.

— Sam Shelton
A director of Tech's Strategic Energy Institute, observing that it takes 10 times as much energy to produce one unit of corn ethanol as it does wood ethanol and production of wood ethanol is only one-fifth as expensive, on CNNMoney.com
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#9 Learn about innovations, athletics, traditions and all Tech has to offer at Friday’s seminars
#8 Explore Tech’s beautiful campus on guided tours
#7 Meet faculty & staff at the “College and School Receptions”
#6 Connect with other Tech families at the “Tech Square Street Fair”
#5 Learn about Greek life at the “Greek Open Houses”
#4 Enjoy a family night at the “Marching Band Surround Sound Concert”
#3 Gear up for the big game at the “Family Weekend Tailgate Party”
#2 Cheer on the Yellow Jackets as they STING the Boston College Eagles

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Each week on his popular variety radio program “A Prairie Home Companion,” Garrison Keillor is likely to read notes from the audience, which is what he was doing as Betty Derrick, a vice president in the dean of students office at Agnes Scott College, drove along listening. She was totally unprepared to hear Keillor proclaim that Mr. and Mrs. George P. Burdell of Atlanta were in the audience and
then warmly wish them a happy 50th anniversary. "I nearly drove off the road laughing," said Derrick, who is familiar with the history of impish Burdell's pranks. This fall marks the real 80th anniversary of Burdell's arrival at Georgia Tech. In 1927, he entered Georgia Tech's halls of academia and made them not nearly so hallowed as they had been. >>>

Georgia Tech Alumni Magazine • Summer 2007
Shantrell Moss paced the Yellow Jackets to a conference championship in the women’s 4x100 relay at the ACC outdoor championship.

Photo: Scott McDonald
Georgia Tech athletes proved to be as adept in the classroom as on the field according to the NCAA's annual academic report card. All 17 Yellow Jackets sports programs recorded impressive scores, including five teams with perfect 1000s. “Our coaches and student athletes have done an excellent job in meeting NCAA requirements,” says Athletics Director Dan Radakovich. “We're not where we want to be but we're well on our way. The goal of everyone is for our athletic programs to be as highly lauded as our academic programs.” To meet academic eligibility standards, teams must maintain a minimum score of 925 or higher. Men's golf, women's tennis and volleyball and men's and women's cross country recorded perfect 1000s for 2005-06, the third consecutive year of perfection for the golf team. Team scores for the three-year period: golf, 1000; women's swimming, 996; women's tennis, outdoor track and cross country, 990; women's indoor track, 987; volleyball, 986; men's tennis, 978; men's swimming, 976; baseball, 974; women's basketball, 970; football, 959; softball, 957; men's basketball, 944; men's indoor track, 943; men's outdoor track, 940; and men's cross country, 938.
Jeffrey Immelt, chairman and CEO of General Electric, told more than 2,100 Georgia Tech bachelor's and master's degree graduates gathered at the Georgia Dome for spring commencement, "There isn't a graduate here who hasn't
struggled at some point to reach this day. For me, going to college in the '70s, my toughest moment was figuring out how to streak through the library without getting caught," he said to the laughter of the crowd. "And that's the type of experience that now helps me lead the world's most admired company." Immelt said seriously the class of 2007 faces many challenges: international competition, a huge trade deficit, record-high energy costs and volatility, an aging population and a health care crisis. "I know these are huge burdens," he said. "Remember that there are always times like these... In this country, the next generation is always the greatest generation. Americans always have a sense that the future will be better than the past. The key to the American soul is optimism." Immelt advised them to "live with passion, live with purpose, live for others. People are afraid. They need new leaders. They need you, our greatest generation." Alumni Association Chair Janice Wittschiebe, Arch 78, M Arch 80, closed the ceremony by inducting Tech's newest alumni into the Association. "You have the full force of this university and over 100,000 alumni behind you every step of the way." GT
Waiters Serve Surprise at Presidents' Dinner

“This was one of the best Presidents' Dinners yet,” said Talmage L. Dryman, IM 45, a former president of the Georgia Tech Alumni Association. “Last year’s event at the Georgia Aquarium was outstanding, but this year was highly entertaining.”

What made the event exceptional was the entertainment served by The Three Waiters, added his wife, Joanne. “They were a lot of fun.”

Neal Stubblefield, ME 79, and his wife, Jo Anne, concurred. “They were fantastic,” she said.

The Three Waiters lived up to their billing as winners of the Entertainer of the Year Award and Best Performing Arts Act of 2006, catching a surprised audience in a comedic hoax before revealing themselves as opera singers.

It was such an engaging performance that when Georgia Tech President Wayne Clough addressed the nearly 600 Leadership Circle guests at the World Congress Center, he drew a laugh by professing, “I'm not the fourth waiter. I won't be singing for you.”

Clough lauded the Institute's No. 8 ranking among public universities according to U.S. News & World Report and by peer institutions as among the top 25 in reputation regardless of public or private status.

“Recently we conducted a comprehensive...”
Georgia Tech President Wayne Clough, Alumni Chair Janice Wittschiebe and Foundation Chair Don Chapman host the Presidents' Dinner, which observed the 60th anniversary of Roll Call.
"We believe in the mission of Georgia Tech. We believe in the vision of Georgia Tech. We believe in the people of Georgia Tech. And, of course, we believe in the outstanding leadership of Georgia Tech."
— Janice Wittschiebe
Alumni Association chair

A study of Georgia Tech's economic impact. It showed that Georgia Tech has a $4 billion annual impact on Georgia's economy and that we generate 45,000 jobs for Georgia citizens," Clough said.

Janice N. Wittschiebe, chair of the Alumni Association, and Don L. Chapman, chair of the Georgia Tech Foundation, also hosted the event, observing the 60th anniversary of Roll Call.

"We believe in the mission of Georgia Tech. We believe in the vision of Georgia Tech. We believe in the people of Georgia Tech. And, of course, we believe in the outstanding leadership of Georgia Tech," said Wittschiebe, Arch 78, M Arch 80.

Wittschiebe added that more than 31,000 donors will contribute more than $8.16 million to this year's annual Roll Call, which provides unrestricted funding to the Institute.

Chapman, IM 61, said, "Our passion for Georgia Tech and its mission and our gratitude for all Tech has meant to each of us in our lives is what brings us together here tonight."

Wayne Kerr, Biol 73, enthusiastically led the audience in singing the "Ramblin' Wreck" fight song to conclude the program. The evening entertainment continued with dancing to the Motown sounds of the Jimmy Church Band.

Garbage in, Energy Out

The growing landfill problems the country faces represent an energy resource just waiting to be tapped. And it's finally about to happen, says Lou Circeo, director of plasma research at the Georgia Tech Research Institute since 1991.

"This will revolutionize the entire field of waste management," Circeo says.

Circeo has been a champion of plasma arc technology since 1971 and helped obtain a 1973 patent, which expired before Japanese developers sought his expertise in the early '90s when they were building the first of three waste vitrification plants in their country.

At last a contract has been signed for construction of the first U.S. plasma arc gasification facility — the world's largest — that could open as soon as 2009 in St. Lucie County, Fla.

The trash torch is being built and financed by Geoplasma, an Atlanta-based subsidiary of Jacoby Development, the company that bought the old steel mill site, a heap of an eyesore, and oversaw its transformation into Atlantic Station (see page 36).

Geoplasma's Web site lists Circeo as the company's principal research scientist and GTRI is credited as a "leading plasma arc technology research institution and a longtime partner committed to technical oversight on Geoplasma projects."
NASA's Johnson Space Center selected Georgia Tech's College of Management to provide leadership training for engineers, scientists and technologists who will be instrumental in extending the agency's reach deeper into space.

"We are extremely proud that NASA selected the College to design and deliver customized leadership training that will play a key role in NASA's new Vision for Space Exploration programs," says Dan Stotz, director of executive programs for the college.

NASA officials say they are placing high priority on management and leadership training to prepare the agency for future space exploration. The Johnson Space Center's organizational functions include the Constellation Program Office, which is responsible for the overall development of space vehicles and infrastructure.

Tech's training program for the Johnson Space Center began in June. It will last a total of 15 days, broken into five three-day modules through November 2008 and includes courses on leadership, project management, vendor and contractor relationships, financial and risk management and systems engineering. The Georgia Tech Research Institute and H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering are assisting the College of Management with the training.

"We are pleased to bring the systems engineering and management experience of the Georgia Tech Research Institute into this partnership with NASA," says Stephen Cross, vice president of GTRI.

The program's 30 participants, including many former astronauts, will be active in developing NASA's crew exploration vehicle to replace the space shuttle, which is scheduled for retirement in 2010. Other major goals of NASA's Constellation Program Office include launching the crew exploration vehicle by 2014, completing the International Space Station, returning to the moon by 2020 to establish a sustained human presence there and leading human and robotic missions to Mars and other destinations.

"We're very excited about this terrific opportunity to employ Georgia Tech's strengths in management and technology to help NASA fulfill its ambitious mission," says College of Management Dean Steve Salbu. "Our college does an excellent job of customizing leadership development programs for a wide variety of companies and organizations."
"Jim Jacoby had gotten started on Atlantic Station. He's a pretty big environmentalist. He was very interested in establishing a relationship with Georgia Tech. When he heard my plasma briefing, he was really interested in it."

— Lou Circeo
director of plasma research at GTRI

Geoplasma touts its capabilities as "waste destruction at the speed of lightning with energy to spare." A plasma arc can reach temperatures of 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit, so intense that solid waste in landfills can be gasified and thus produce a substitute for natural gas. Other byproducts are an obsidian-like stone and sand.

"Municipal solid waste is perhaps the largest renewable energy resource that is available to us [and it] could not only solve the garbage and landfill problems in the United States and elsewhere, but it could significantly alleviate the energy crisis," Circeo told the Associated Press.

When fully operational, the St. Lucie County facility is expected to annihilate 3,000 tons of garbage a day and produce enough electricity to power 100,000 households — more than there are currently in the county.

"They hope to break ground at the end of the year," says Circeo, noting that the first phase of the project will allow the county to get rid of 1,000 tons of solid waste per day.

Circeo retired in 2001 — for a day. He returned to GTRI to continue his push for acceptance of plasma arc technology.

"I do want to see the technology take off," he says. "It's very difficult for new technologies to catch on. Since the price of energy has gone up and the cost of landfills has gone up, it will prove cheaper to take municipal waste to a facility like this. This will revolutionize the entire field of waste management."

Student Designs Living Memorial

When the city of Duluth, Ga., decided to honor its veterans with a living memorial, it invited students in the College of Architecture's senior design studio to submit proposals for the memorial's design. After a tour of the city, the students had two weeks to prepare their proposals.

The winner was Allyson Barfoot of Dublin, Ga. Her design was chosen by a panel of five judges.

"You dream about a design project like this," Barfoot says. "They didn't have any specifications as to specific locations or materials that were to be used — or cost. We were not given a budget."

To recognize the estimated 3,000 military veterans living in Duluth and the city's police and fire department workers with just one monument, the architecture student "started with the idea of versatility," she says. "Originally I was thinking, 'What can I do with these nameplates so that they can change in and out?'"

Barfoot, who begins her last semester as an undergraduate in August, thought of a bulletin board, "Trying to think of things that could accommodate that many names was how I came up with the idea of a pegboard, and it kind of evolved from there."

Her design consists of a polished, black marble wall with a perforated grid of 3,000 holes, from which plates inscribed with the names of Duluth's police officers and firefighters may be hung. When no longer actively serving,
Career Conference Wins Award

The 2006 Alumni Career Fair and Conference has been awarded a silver medal in the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education’s 2007 Circle of Excellence Awards program. The Alumni Career Services event was among 64 entries competing in the Alumni Relations Programs category.

“This affirms our place as one of the top alumni career programs in the nation,” says Len Contardo, vice president of Constituent Services for the Alumni Association. “It further demonstrates the commitment by the Alumni Association to offer innovative events to our alumni.”

More than 800 alumni preregistered for the 23rd annual conference, which had representatives from more than 100 companies. The conference featured a breakfast seminar with Rosita Smith, business development manager for the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, and a luncheon address by Joe Evans, IM 71, founder and managing principal of Bankers’ Capital Group LLC, then chairman and CEO of Flag Financial Corp.

Students’ Film Wins National Fest

Georgia Tech students Michael Gluzman and Brad Herrmann walked away from a national competition with best picture honors for their film “Fanya Kaplan.”

The film directors were recognized at the Campus MovieFest National Grand Finale on April 27 after winning in the Atlanta division of the competition earlier this year.

The six-minute short spotlights Kaplan’s attempt to assassinate Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin in 1918. The film cites her attempt as one of the events marking the beginning of the Red Terror, in which thousands of people were arrested and executed without trial by Lenin’s government.

More than 20 Georgia Tech students worked on the film. Architecture student Rolan Duvvury composed the film’s musical score.

“There is a lot of talent here at Tech, and we are pleased to bring those all together to make an art form, which breaks the conception of what a Tech student is interested in outside of the classroom,” says Herrmann, who also is the president of Georgia Tech’s Buzz Studios, a student organization devoted to creating independent films.

The entire film is in Russian. The script was translated into Russian and broken down into phonetics and a Russian friend of the directors was brought in as a voice coach.

Gluzman, the only actor in the film who knew the language, also sat down with actors Becky Tucker and Matt Perry, both Tech students, for one-on-one language sessions and provided them MP3s of himself reading the lines.

Gluzman, an industrial design major at Tech, and Herrmann, a mechanical engineering student, are no newcomers to the Campus MovieFest scene. The two met at last year’s competition and decided to collaborate on a film for this year’s festival.

The world’s largest student film festival, Campus MovieFest provides students across the country with camcorders, laptops, editing software and one week to shoot a film.
Col. Sean MacFarland leads a 1st Brigade combat team on patrol in Ramadi.

Photo: U.S. Army
Unconventional Warfare

Tech alum, Iraqi sheiks form unlikely alliance

By Neil B. McGahee

An unlikely alliance shaped by an Army commander, who is a Georgia Tech alumus, with Iraqi tribal leaders allowed U.S. and Iraqi security forces to regain control of Anbar province. Now military commanders are taking a closer look to see if his ideas might diminish chaos in other parts of the war-torn country.

When Col. Sean MacFarland, MS AE 90, commander of the Army's 1st Brigade combat team of the 1st Armored Division, was ordered from northern Iraq to Ramadi, Anbar's provincial capital, in May 2006, he was told, "Fix Ramadi, but don't destroy it. Don't do a Fallujah." Military commanders didn't want a repeat of a 2004 offensive to expel insurgents from Fallujah that leveled much of that city and angered Sunni Muslims across Iraq.

"Anbar stretches from south of Baghdad to the Syrian border and has a well-earned reputation as the most dangerous place in Iraq," MacFarland says. It is the violent heartland of Sunni Arab and al-Qaida insurgency.

"We fought our way in to Ramadi and established small combat outposts under cover of night because we were under frequent attack. After we got in, Army and Marine engineers and Navy Seabees installed prefabricated barriers to protect us."

With only 5,500 available troops, a prolonged door-to-door offensive was out of the question, but the small, heavily fortified command outposts allowed the U.S. troops to engage the insurgents on a smaller scale. Still, 95 soldiers were killed and more than 600 wounded in daily battles during the brigade's 14-month tour of duty. More than 1,500 insurgents were killed and another 1,500 fled the city.

Even before the fighting stopped, MacFarland's brigade would enter a neighborhood to begin construction projects, recruit police and establish infrastructure — a key component in winning the loyalty of the population, MacFarland says. At the same time, he began negotiating with some of the local tribal leaders.

"When dealing with a counterinsurgency, the key is to drive a wedge between the people and the insurgents," MacFarland says. "Once the insurgents are separated from the people, they have no place to hide so they have to leave or be killed. But to secure the people's trust, you have to gain the trust of the sheiks."

The sheiks tolerated al-Qaida's presence out of fear more than anything, MacFarland says, after they witnessed a battle several years earlier between former members of Saddam Hussein's Baathist party and al-Qaida. "Al-Qaida just killed those guys," MacFarland says. "So by the time we got there the sheiks were trying to stay out of the fight and protect their people."

MacFarland's unit tried to recruit local men to join a police force but received little backing from the sheiks. It was time for dialogue.

"I spent a fair amount of time in the Balkans and this was my second tour in Iraq, so I have a lot of experience dealing with local power figures," MacFarland says. "These sheiks aren't always the nicest guys in the world but as long as they had no American blood on their hands, I was willing to deal with them."

MacFarland told the sheiks that if they encouraged tribe members to join the police, he would build police stations locally so the recruits could be near their own tribes and families. Within a few months, the number of recruits soared from a few hundred to more than 3,000. Still the sheiks hadn't fully committed to helping the Americans.

Then al-Qaida made a big mistake. They bombed a Ramadi police station killing several Iraqi police and sheik Abu Ali Jassim. Rather than turning over the sheik's body to the tribe for burial, they hid it in a field and the remains weren't found until four days later, an onerous violation of Islamic tenets. The outraged tribesmen turned on al-Qaida.

A few weeks later, tribal leaders gathered at the home of sheik Abdul Sattar al-Rishawi and cast their lot with the Americans, MacFarland says. It was the beginning of what the military dubbed "the awakening."

Eventually more than 200 sheiks formed an alliance with the Americans, something MacFarland calls flipping.

"When the tribes flipped over to our side, they would unilaterally disarm themselves of vast supplies of ammo, guns, improvised explosive device components and rocket-propelled grenades," he says. "In a lot of cases they had buried them six months earlier when they were the bad guys. Even if they were former insurgents, once they joined the police force, they had the support and expectations of their tribal elders."

MacFarland, who earned his bachelor's degree from the U.S. Military Academy, credits much of his success in Iraq to lessons learned at Georgia Tech.

"As a combat brigade commander, I often was deluged with tons of data — charts, numbers, locations — that had to be boiled down to figuring out the 'so what.' 'So what is this telling me? What's useful about this data?' Georgia Tech is all about problem solving — breaking down big problems into basic conditions and variables and adjusting the variables until you get the desired result. Tech was one of the greatest tools in my tool kit."

When the 1st Brigade combat team left Iraq in February, violence in the province had dropped to an all-time low and Army leaders are examining MacFarland's unconventional methods to see if they might work in other parts of the country.

"Every part of Iraq is different from every other part of Iraq," MacFarland says. "There is no cookie-cutter solution. It's changing all the time. What works today won't work tomorrow so you have to be open to all types of opportunities and be ready to exploit them."

He also says he doesn't expect the war to end anytime soon.

"The average insurgency lasts 10 to 12 years," he says. "We've been in Iraq four years so we probably have six or seven years to go. We may not be at this strength — hopefully the Iraqis can take over more of the fight for themselves — but we'll be supporting them."

"No matter what any politician says, we can't just turn around and walk away from this. That part of the world has been our declared interest since Jimmy Carter was president so I just don't see us pulling completely out."

MacFarland will leave his home base of Friedberg, Germany, this summer and it's unlikely he will return to Iraq anytime soon. He is being transferred to the Pentagon.
In 1964, when architect John Portman was 40, he wrote, "It is through accomplishment that man makes his contribution and contribution is life's greatest reward."

At the time, Portman, Arch 50, was a partner with H. Griffin Edwards, a former professor of his at Georgia Tech. It wasn't until Edwards' retirement in 1968 that the firm became John Portman & Associates.

Portman's AmericasMart had been flourishing on Peachtree Street since the late 1950s, but he had yet to achieve the recognition as the "father of the Atlanta skyline" and international fame as the celebrated architect of the Hyatt Regency Atlanta.

A native of Atlanta, Portman discovered a love for architecture while taking a required course in mechanical drawing in junior high.

After graduating from high school, he enlisted in the Navy and earned an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy. But when World War II ended, he chose a career in architecture. Portman, married and a father, paid his way through Georgia Tech working for Atlanta architectural firms.

The writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson have influenced his self-reliance, Portman says, and Frank Lloyd Wright, who was a guest lecturer while Portman was at Tech, has influenced him as an architect.

Portman's first commission was the renovation of the Fraternal Order of Eagles building on which he wanted to affix the metal sculpture of a contemporary eagle. While the client liked the idea, he was unwilling to finance the art. Portman invested his own money for the sculpture and began incorporating art as an integral part of his work.

Portman followed his entrepreneurial instincts when he saw a need for vendor exhibition space in Atlanta. He converted a parking garage into 40,000 square feet of wholesale showrooms for furniture manufacturers. Its success won Portman the backing to design and build the 1 million-square-foot Atlanta Merchandise Mart.

The demand for more downtown hotel space in the 1960s led to the design and development of Portman's first hotel, the Hyatt Regency Atlanta. Portman conceived of a radical structure built around a 22-story, skylit atrium with glass-cabbed elevators taking passengers to a revolving rooftop restaurant. The hotel opened 40 years ago and its instant popularity brought international recognition to Portman.

Portman was in demand. He designed the Embarcadero Center in San Francisco, the Renaissance Center in Detroit, The Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles and in New York, he undertook a 14-year project to help revitalize Times Square's deteriorating theater district — the New York Marriott Marquis hotel and theater.

Portman began his international work in Europe with the design and development of the Brussels International Trade Mart in 1975 and shifted to...
John Portman revisits the atrium of the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, a stunningly innovative hotel design that brought him instant fame.

Photo: Eric S. Lesser
Portman spoke at Georgia Tech's commencement in 1991. He advises novices to study all the principles of architecture. "Observe it all. Experience as much as possible," he says. "Explore everything. That is how you will find your own voice."

In addition to starting projects in Hong Kong, Malaysia and Indonesia, Jack Portman pioneered the firm's entry into China in 1980. When China opened its doors to the West, Portman was one of the first American architects to build a long-term relationship. The Portman Companies led the development of Shanghai Centre, a large mixed-use complex that provides hotel, office, residential, retail and exhibition space. Opened in 1990, Shanghai Centre was described by China Daily as "one of the five architectural stars in China mainland."

A founding member of Action Forum, Portman was one of the two dozen business leaders who helped Atlanta become a role model for racial integration in the 1960s. His restaurant on top of the Mart was the first integrated in the city.

He served as president of Central Atlanta Progress from 1969 to 1971 and led the city's first comprehensive study of downtown. He supported construction of the city's rapid rail system in the 1970s and initiated the idea of the Georgia World Congress Center to boost the city's convention industry. He twice served as a director of the Chamber of Commerce.

In the early 1980s, Portman discovered art as a painter and sculptor. At first his works hung only in the corporate offices or in the homes of family and friends. The first paintings and sculpture to be shown publicly are in his newest office tower, SunTrust Plaza.

At 82, Portman has no plans to retire.

### Design for the Human Experience

**How do you view architecture today?**

Architecture is the ultimate art form. It incorporates sight, sound, touch and evokes an emotional response. For me, architecture will always be about the human experience.

**What is the future of architecture?**

Just as technology has touched every aspect of life today, architecture has been affected by advances in technology. For example, designs incorporating forms of all shapes are now easier to execute. We are also taking buildings higher than ever.

However, just because you can doesn't mean you should. We are seeing fanciful buildings that are marvels of design. I can appreciate them as works of art but have to question whether some of these buildings best serve the people they are meant to serve. Do they perform the function that is at the heart of their purpose?

As architects, we must never lose sight of the human being. That is how we will keep our profession most relevant in the future.

**What drives you when you conceive an architectural design?**

Since the very beginning of my career, it has always come down to the experience of the common man. What does he want? What does he need?

I have always been a people watcher. I observe how people relate to space. It drives the manner in which I design. I strive to create spaces that enhance the human condition on the functional and spiritual levels.

**When you are building in other parts of the world, how does that impact your architectural concept?**

The basic answer is that people are people. We are more alike than we are different. If one is designing for the needs of the people, many of the same principles apply, no matter where the building is situated. But having said that, a building does not exist in a vacuum. It is part of the environment and needs to relate to its context. I do not believe in mimicking local architecture, but I do strive to be respectful of local culture and tradition.

For instance, in Jinan, China, we designed the Shandong Hotel and Conference Center to create harmony within a setting shared with older governmental buildings and gardens. Our buildings creating the campus of the Indian School of Business in Hyderabad, India, are inspired by the essence of traditional Mughal architecture.

**Who or what has influenced you the most?**

I was perhaps most greatly influenced by a trip to Brasilia in 1960. The experience, a negative one, made me question some of the prevailing principles and theories of modern design and led me to shape my own philosophy.
What happened in Brasilia in 1960 that had such a profound effect on you?
The trip marked a change in thinking for me, philosophically. Architects must have a consistent design philosophy if they are going to keep progressing in a meaningful direction. I had begun thinking seriously about my own guiding principles when I made the trip to South America for the dedication at Brasilia.

I was excited at the prospect of seeing a new city completely designed by architects, but the experience did not live up to my expectations. I found the city to be an inhuman place. There were great blocks of buildings arranged in military order. While some of the architecture is actually quite interesting, the buildings seen together become objects in a sterile, twodimensional pattern that shows no understanding of human scale or of the need for people to interact with their environment. Soon I found that I had no desire to walk down the street, no anticipation in turning the corner; I already knew what was there.

This trip to Brasilia made me realize that many of the design concepts that had come to be accepted by the architectural community did not work very well at the scale of an entire city. I returned to Atlanta resolved to learn how to design at the scale of a city, and I was determined to find ways of making buildings more responsive to human needs and values.

I have spent the rest of my career striving to improve in those two areas.

How do you approach an architectural project?
The design concept begins first and foremost with a program. What is the purpose of the building? How should the space function, flow and reveal itself? Architecture's raison d'être is space.

Do you view any project as a defining moment in your career?
My career is probably most defined by my role as both an architect and a developer. That all began here in Atlanta with a building that I did not design. The now demolished Belle Isle building was, in fact, originally a parking garage. I rented and remodeled it to set up a furniture mart in downtown Atlanta.

That idea grew into AmericasMart, now the largest wholesale marketplace of its kind in the world. The success I experienced developing and designing Mart buildings set me on a path that allowed me to determine my own destiny, so to speak.

What is the best advice you have ever received?
Never mislead yourself. Be a practical idealist. Never assume or presume. Believe with discipline and focus.

What is the worst advice?
You can't do it. It won't work.

Is there one achievement that gives you the greatest sense of pride?
My family is a great source of pride for me. The homes that I have designed for them bring me tremendous joy. Entelechy I is my home in Atlanta. Entelechy II is my beach house...
The Portman Influence

Above: The Westin Peachtree hotel is an Atlanta landmark.
Below, left to right:
• The Hyatt Regency Atlanta and the SunTrust Plaza Tower
• Grand stairs in the Shandong Hotel and Conference Center in Jinan, China
• Tomorrow Square in the Shanghai skyline
• Portman inside the atrium of the Marriott Hotel in Atlanta

Designing these homes allowed me to explore and express my evolving design philosophy. These two houses, while very personal projects, contain at their core the fundamental ideas philosophically influencing my design projects since 1961, when my trip to Brasilia prompted me to question accepted principles and begin to establish my own.

What advice would you give a young architect today?
When it comes to the principles of architecture, study it all. Observe it all. Experience as much of it as possible. But do not accept it as a matter of course. Question everything. Explore everything. That is how you will find your own voice.

Now, having said that, I am a bit dismayed by the need today to always be unique. Understand that unique is not always better. Do not put your need to “make your mark” above creating an environment that will end up contributing to a cohesive whole. Our job as architects is not to create chaos but to bring our cities together as harmonious entities.

What inspired you to design the Hyatt Regency Atlanta in a style that was radical in its day?
The Hyatt Regency Atlanta is the direct result of my years of people watching. I wanted to improve the experience of the weary traveler who came into the typical hotel at the time from a crowded, congested city street and walked through a dull lobby to a registration desk in the back. From there, they used a small, closet-like elevator up to a narrow, poorly lit hallway of nondescript doorways. The body language in their shoulder-slumped trudge down that hall said it all. That was the typical urban hotel experience. I wanted to create the antithesis of that.

The whole idea was to open everything up. What do people like to do? They like to watch other people. They are fascinated with movement. Natural light lifts their spirit. They are attracted to the sound and sparkle of moving water.

Have you ever watched how people act in a closed elevator? They stare straight ahead or look down at their feet. No
one speaks. No one interacts. Now put those same people in a glass observation elevator and they come to life. It becomes an experience that they share with others.

The Hyatt Regency Atlanta was unlike other hotels of the day. Many did not believe that it would succeed, but it opened to a tremendous response from the public. Not only visitors to the city but locals flocked to the hotel to sit in the atrium, dine in the restaurants, ride the elevators.

Today, the Hyatt Regency Atlanta is going strong, still delivering a wonderful experience. The hotel just celebrated its 40th anniversary with a party that was attended by dignitaries from around the world, Atlantans recognizing its impact on the city and some of the very people present at its grand opening in 1967.

**What impact did Georgia Tech have on you?**
Architecture at Tech opened doors that allowed me to become who I am today. My son, Jack, also got his architectural degree from Tech. In addition, some of the best and the brightest graduates populate my staff at John Portman & Associates. Georgia Tech taught me discipline and focus.

**Did you have any experiences as a college student that influenced your career?**
I think everyone is shaped by their college experience, and I was no exception. I knew at a fairly young age that architecture is what I wanted to do. But my plans were interrupted by World War II and a stint in the Navy. By the time I returned to Georgia Tech to begin my architecture studies, I was a husband and father — which meant I had to work my way through school.

I was fortunate to get work with a couple of local architecture firms while I was attending Georgia Tech. It was exciting to be surrounded by others who shared my passion and my thirst for knowledge.

However, if one were to pull out the designs and drawings that any of us did at that time, I’m certain that we would all be greatly embarrassed.

I strive to never stop learning and growing. Time moves on at an ever increasing speed. **GT**
Atlanta has embraced smart growth initiatives conceived by Georgia Tech alumni and students that would turn the sprawling, traffic-congested city of asphalt and concrete into a people-friendly metropolis of parks, bicycle trails, streetcars and live-work-play neighborhoods. The magic began 40 years ago when John Portman unveiled his awe-inspiring, open-air atrium Hyatt Regency hotel. It continues with the model Atlantic Station community and an equally bold vision by architecture students to eliminate the downtown connector and maybe even turn it into a lake.
Atlantic Station, with its retail shops, restaurants and residential offerings, emerged from the abandoned ground of Atlantic Steel.
Remediation, Reurbanization, Redirection: All these have been cornerstones of Brian Leary's dream to create a live-work-play community rising from the rust and rot of a shuttered steel mill. Begun as a masterful thesis while a Georgia Tech student, Leary's vision has become the model for other cities' renewal and revitalization projects — and the stuff of urban legend.
Model City

Atlantic Station
B

rian Leary outlined the largest urban brownfield remediation project in the nation as homework. “I started working on the idea of Atlantic Station in 1995,” says Leary, Arch 96, M CP 98. “I tried to convince and cajole my different professors that whatever assignment or class project we might have I could extrapolate what we were working on and apply it toward redeveloping the Atlantic Steel site into Atlantic Station.”

Today his office in the Wachovia building along 17th Street in Midtown Atlanta overlooks what he sketched on paper. Not yet 35, Leary is the vice president of design and development for Atlantic Station, which, when built out, will encompass 6 million square feet of office space and 2 million of retail, house 10,000 people and employ 40,000 on what was 138 acres of rust and rot less than 10 years ago.

As a Georgia Tech student, Leary was working with Central Atlanta Progress when he was introduced to Charlie Brown, BC 62, the principal and chair of CRB Realty Associates, who was providing his services for the development of the Centennial Olympic Park area.

“Charlie, through his leadership in the Georgia Tech Foundation, had long been focusing on the Atlantic Steel property,” Leary says. “The Foundation was the first entity to buy property from the steel mill, where the softball field and the golf practice facility are today. Charlie was always chewing over ideas. ‘What could we do out there?’”

Bounded by 16th and Bishop streets, Interstate 75/85 and Northside Drive, the steel mill was shuttered in December 1998 after decades in decline. Opened in 1901 as Atlanta Hoop Co., the steel mill employed more than 2,000 full-time workers in its post-World War II prime. By 1980, the number dropped to 1,400 and by 1997 to 400.

“I got in front of Charlie and showed him the first 85 pages of what would eventually become a 190-page document,” Leary says. “To sum up the whole discussion, he said, ‘Great idea, let’s keep talking.’ Right about that same time Jim Jacoby, a longtime retail developer, had made an offer to the steel mill and gotten it under contract.”

To sum up a series of discussions, Brown got in front of Jacoby, who hired the developer of such notable projects as Lenox Park and Technology Park as a consultant to lead the initial development work.

A PLACE TO WORK

That’s where I came in because Charlie hired me to be his right-hand guy,” Leary says. “When I graduated from the master’s program in the spring of ’98, the next day I was working for Charlie. We didn’t have a name. I had a name. It was the title of my thesis: ‘Atlantic Station: A Place to Live, Work and Play.’ In 1995, when I started to put words to paper, that’s what it was. I figured I could put in all the data behind it to back it up.”

Leary worked out of an office in Brown’s Johns Creek development in north Fulton County. “My actual first office was shared with the Junior League of North Fulton. My desk was a fold-out table that occasionally had graham crackers and sippy cups on the end of it.”

He wasn’t distracted by toddlers spilling juice on blueprints. Leary remained focused on the vision to clean up the old steel mill site and build a new community.

“That’s where we started,” Leary says. “Day to day we were trying to get the full master plan developed and entitled — working with the city, the state and the federal government to get all the approvals to implement it. We had to work with potential third-party land partners. We had to have a remediation plan fully developed, fully digested and approved prior to closing.”

Leary also had to work to generate support for the Atlantic Station vision. “At one point I was averaging a public meeting every day, sometimes more, with the Sierra Club or neighbors or the Atlanta Regional Commission. If we added them up now, it was probably over 4,000 meetings.”

Jacoby funded $10 million in predevelopment costs to get to the 1999 closing for the $76 million purchase of 138 acres and the formation of Atlantic Station LLC with joint venture partner AIG Global Real Estate. “I became the first employee of Atlantic Station LLC, which was half owned by Jacoby and half owned by AIG, on the last day of 1999,” Leary says, noting that Brown moved on to launch another
major mixed-use project in Roswell, Ga., more than five years ago, satisfied that the property was taking shape.

“There were a series of hurdles that came up,” Leary says. “One of the zoning conditions was that the contract for the 17th Street bridge had to be in place prior to the issuance of any building permits.

“It is not typical that a zoning condition of the city requires a private developer to get a major federal project under way and under contract. But we needed the 17th Street bridge to reconnect the two sides of Midtown. The Downtown Connector is not the Downtown Connector. It’s the downtown disconnector.”

GREENING A BROWNFIELD

The ground on which Atlantic Station now stands was an urban wasteland, what the Environmental Protection Agency refers to as a brownfield — property developed for industry, polluted and abandoned. The EPA estimates there are 450,000 brownfield properties in the United States.

Leary says 165,000 tons of soil — about 11,000 dump trucks worth — were removed. “The bad thing is for close to 60 years on this site there were no environmental controls. The good thing is that we had a steel mill out here that had a very finite process. It turns out that a lot of what was removed was stained soil, where oil or gasoline might have been spilled. It did not get into the groundwater, it didn’t migrate.

“We removed the contaminated soil. We installed monitoring wells for the groundwater, which have never had a hit, never been positive in terms of detecting any contaminants. For an added measure of protection, we’ve capped the entire site with clean dirt and high-rise buildings,” Leary says. “It took a year to take the buildings down, it took a year to clean up the site and a year to put in $300 million in infrastructure.”

About 1.3 million square feet of retail space now is open or under construction. That includes roughly 800,000 square feet within the retail district as well as the 365,000-square-foot IKEA store, in business since the summer of 2005, and Target, a 150,000-square-foot, double-story standalone set to open this fall.

“Two thousand residential units have been built to date and we’ve got close to 3,000 people living here,” including rental units at The Flats that house some Tech students and luxury condos in the Twelve building, he says. “Eventually 10,000 people will live here in approximately 5,500 residential units.”

Built by the Novare Group, headed by president and CEO Jim Borders, ME 83, the Twelve hotel, which opened in February 2006, has six floors, topped by 20 floors of condos. In April, the National Association of Home Builders presented Novare a Pillar of the Industry award, citing Twelve Atlantic Station as the best condo-hotel.

The rectangular, spired building is the tallest structure in Atlantic Station — for now. Novare and AIG broke ground in late March and presales are under way for The Atlantic, a 46-story condo tower that also will feature 10,000 square feet of street-level retail.

Leary says Atlantic Station eventually will have 6 million square feet of Class A office space, which he points out is the equivalent to six IBM towers or three Empire State buildings.

The office high-rise nearing completion at 171 17th St., adjacent to the Wachovia building, was precertified under the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program with a gold rating.

“There are no commercial office buildings in Georgia that have reached that standard yet. We use less energy, we use less water and we use less materials to build. We recycle a great deal of the materials that are part of the construction process,” he says.

“The glass and structural system on the exterior is a high-performance system so it allows in the greatest amount of natural daylight while minimizing the thermal solar gain,” he says. “When the sun is hitting it and thermal levels are at the highest, the glass becomes more reflective. When there isn’t a very large thermal impact on the exterior of the building, the glass becomes more transparent.

“The office buildings in Atlantic Station will be LEED certified at a minimum. That’s just part of the Atlantic Station story,” Leary says. “The community started from an environmental perspective. We committed that people who lived and worked in Atlantic Station would drive less, ride transit more and thus have less impact on air quality.”
Underground parking wasn't an avenue to discourage vehicular traffic. Leary says it was a necessity because the 17th Street bridge came onto the Atlantic Station site at 40 feet above grade. Enter Lanier Parking, steered by CEO Michael Robison, Mgt 97.

Leary calls Robison a community leader and cites his work as chair of Atlanta Streetcar and the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau board of directors. "Lanier also got the job because they aren't just about parking cars, they're about moving people, getting people to and from.

"That's what Atlantic Station is about. If no one came in a car, fantastic," Leary says. "We needed a transportation provider, not just a parking provider. Part of that is the trolley that we run. We call it the Free Ride. It's carrying 850,000 people a year right now in its own dedicated lane, which has never been done before in Georgia. Seventeenth Street isn't congested yet, but when Atlantic Station is built out we'll have that dedicated right-of-way for transit, which is also designed to accommodate rail."

Leary supports Robison's push for the return of streetcars to Peachtree Street. "Peachtree first? Absolutely. Why shouldn't it then spread out throughout the city like it used to 100 years ago? We've designed 17th Street to make room for it. We're ready to go and have the welcome mat out.

"Atlantic Station also makes sense from a Brain Train standpoint, the Athens-to-Atlanta line. Originally it was just going to go to Emory and come in on the east side of Atlanta. It wasn't even going to connect to Georgia Tech. When we heard about that, we quickly got in touch with the Georgia Rail Passenger Authority. This was before we were even built. We gave them all our data and they ran it through their models and said, 'This will have a huge impact on our system.' So they realigned to go to Emory, come down here and connect to Atlantic Station. Then you can connect to Georgia Tech," Leary says.

"That's where the 'station' in Atlantic Station came from. It was built to be a place where you can come by car, by foot, by transit or even by commuter rail," he says. "An hour on the train versus an hour in traffic? Big difference. Once the Athens-to-Atlanta line starts running and people realize how they can be free of bumper-to-bumper traffic, then watch out, they will be fighting to bring it to their communities instead of debating whether it should happen at all."

The reclamation of the steel mill property and development of the live-work-play community has been cited as an example of smart growth, a label Leary has called the "most brilliant campaign name ever. If you're against it, I guess that means you're for dumb growth, which not too many people sign up for.

"Atlanta has been on this unhealthy diet of consuming land," Leary says. "Atlanta has grown upward and outward, basically consuming 100 acres a day of field, farmland and forest. At that rate, it's the fastest growing civilization in the history of the planet ... for consumption of our land.

Chances are in the back of your mind you're saying, 'That's not something we'd put on our chamber of commerce Web site.'

"The Atlanta region stretches 110 miles north to south. You can fit the entire state of Delaware in the Atlanta region," Leary says. "Because we're so spread out, we drive more than anywhere else. We drive as a region 110 million miles a day together. That's enough to go from the Earth to the sun and start coming back," Leary says.

He came back to Tech to teach a class in integrating design, construction and development four years ago after a conversation with the late College of Architecture Dean Tom Galloway. "I work with architects, building contractors and engineers. I kept saying, 'Tom, we've got to get the architects to be able to communicate with the building contractors and vice versa. They don't talk the same language.'

"He said, 'Quit complaining, come teach it.' The first part of the class is fundamentals of real estate, of development, whether it's zoning or law or planning or architecture. The second half is how that is applied in Atlantic Station.

"Atlantic Station is a national model of reurbanism — and public/private partnerships and brownfield cleanup and transit orientation. We've probably talked to 75 to 100 different cities or governments from Warsaw, Poland, to Malaysia," he says. "This is a real world experiment. Atlantic Station has continued to be a living laboratory."
An alumnus Ryan Gravel’s vision to create a beltline around Atlanta by revitalizing 22 miles of dormant railroad line that circles the heart of the city is on track to become a $2.8 billion project that will shape the city’s growth over the next 25 years. While the Beltline is moving on the fast track by political standards, Gravel, himself, has been derailed by a “bump” in the corridor.

“I’m disappointed about no longer being involved,” says Gravel, Arch 95, M Arch 99, M CP 99. “But I’m obviously excited that the Beltline is going forward.”

After leading a grassroots effort in support of the Beltline as a volunteer, Gravel helped found the nonprofit organization Friends of the Beltline in 2004. Also that year, the Trust for Public Land, a national nonprofit conservation group, conducted a study of the Beltline and found that about 1,400 acres of new green space could be created by the project, bringing Atlanta’s ratio of park acres per...
Smart Growth: ATLANTA BELTLINE

resident to near the national average. The Beltline became a three-part quality-of-life proposal: transit, green space and economic development.

Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin gave support to the project and in December 2005, a milestone was achieved — the funding mechanism. A tax allocation district to raise $1.6 billion over a 25-year period was approved by the Atlanta City Council, the Fulton County Commission and Atlanta School Board. Gravel said a “conservative estimate” is the Beltline will realize a $20 billion economic return.

In the summer of 2006, Gravel was hired as the senior project manager of the Beltline by the Atlanta Bureau of Planning. In the meantime, Atlanta BeltLine Inc. was created as a subsidiary of the Atlanta Development Authority, which took over the project. BeltLine Inc. offered Gravel a different position on its staff, which he declined.

LOOKING AHEAD

Gravel hopes that a future opportunity will allow him to be involved with the Beltline again. “I’ve been around the project long enough to know that there are bumps in the road. This is too big of a project not to have bumps in the road,” Gravel says. “This is a long-term project. It’s going to take a long time to build.”

David Green, a member of the College of Architecture faculty and a partner in the architectural firm Lord, Aeck and Sargent, believes that Gravel should have a prominent role in developing the Beltline.

“Everyone needs to realize that without Ryan Gravel, this thing should not have and would not have ever happened. I think it is imperative that his vision for this Beltline remains intact and that he remains intimately involved with the process,” Green says.

In an interview days before his unexpected death in March, Tom Galloway, dean of the College of Architecture, said, “The Beltline is extraordinarily important, not just of itself, but to movement in the city of Atlanta.”

Gravel came up with the concept as a master’s thesis in the College of Architecture. Galloway sat on Gravel’s final review for the thesis in 1999.

“I had been studying how the design of infrastructure systems influences urban development — the way the old streetcars came out of downtown and built neighborhoods like Grant Park, West End and Midtown and the way the interstate highway system created a different kind of urban growth pattern,” Gravel says.

“How do you design a system that would revitalize inner-city neighborhoods?” he asks. “By creating sustainable, walkable, urban districts through the implementation of a transit system that would connect to MARTA and broaden the opportunities to live in Atlanta, without a car if you want to. You could walk to transit and walk to the store.”

He didn’t shelve the concept after completing work on his master’s degrees.

“That was amazing,” says Douglas Allen, associate dean in the College of Architecture. “He had the thesis pinned up on the wall in the east architecture building,” Allen recalls.
"I thought, 'This is a really great idea, but like so many great ideas, it won't go anywhere.'"

A few years later, Allen attended a breakfast meeting at which the Beltline was on the agenda. The president of the Atlanta City Council and the mayor were both present.

"I was astonished," he recalls. "I realized, 'This is real.'"

ALWAYS ON HIS MIND

Gravel went to work for the architectural firm Suber, Barber, Choate & Hertlein after graduation, but the idea of the Beltline stayed on his mind. "I was working on some mixed-use projects in the city — loft conversions, industrial buildings, new lofts and apartment buildings, a lot of which, coincidentally, were along this railroad corridor that I called the Beltline," Gravel says.

In the 1970s and '80s, Atlanta was losing population, he explains. "Now it's gaining considerable new population every year — 150,000 people in the next 10 years."

The new growth has prompted redevelopment of large industrial properties that fell into disuse after the railroad ceased to operate. Gravel and two co-workers decided the idea of a Beltline "was too good not to get out there."

EVOLUTION OF THE IDEA

The concept was condensed down to a letter with a few maps and mailed to every public official and organization that might be interested, including the mayor and governor. "We got back a lot of nice letters saying, 'Good luck,'" Gravel recalls. "But we got a great response from Cathy Woolard, who chaired the Atlanta City Council transportation committee."

"She called us in and we started going around her district talking to people about it," Gravel says. "People just loved it. Over the next three years, we went around}
and talked to people about it. The neighborhoods loved it. "The ones that were already experiencing a lot of new growth liked it because it helped them accommodate that growth and maintain their quality of life in the process. Neighborhoods that had not seen any new investment for the last 30 years liked it because it would attract growth to their communities. It was an interesting time and we really felt this groundswell of support."

The Beltline transit would connect to MARTA, Atlanta's rapid rail system, at each of its four lines.

Gravel says the Beltline will actually begin this fall when the PATH Foundation starts developing 1.5 miles of trail on property owned by the Department of Transportation. "They won't be building the transit piece, but they'll be building the trail alongside the future transit line."

The Atlanta Development Authority calls the Beltline "a $2.8 billion redevelopment project" and proposes development that follows the evolution of Gravel's idea for "a network of public parks, multiuse trails and transit along a historic railroad corridor circling downtown and connecting many neighborhoods."

The authority proposes the addition of nearly 1,300 acres of new green space and parks and 33 miles of multiuse trails along the 22-mile transit loop that touches 45 neighborhoods.

Gravel and his wife, Karen, M Arch 99, have a 2-year-old daughter, Lucia. "I'm hoping before she goes to college, we can ride it," he says.

"This project has a sort of uncanny ability to capture people's imagination. It will make Atlanta a more attractive place to live even if you choose to not live directly on the Beltline," Gravel says. "It certainly benefits the broader city."

Mentoring Masterminds

In her role as a vice provost for academic affairs and professor of city planning in the mid-1990s, Catherine Ross served as a mentor to Brian Leary and Ryan Gravel, two architecture students who despite incredible odds launched projects that are literally changing Atlanta's future.

Leary, Arch 96, M CP 98, is the mastermind behind Atlantic Station, the former site of Atlantic Steel that now is a 138-acre mixed-use district, and Gravel, Arch 95, M Arch 99, M CP 99, is the visionary behind the Atlanta Beltline, a plan to revitalize 22 miles of abandoned railroad freight lines encircling downtown into a transit route entwined with parks, trails and economic opportunity.

"It's an unparalleled success," says Ross, now director of the Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development.

"I don't know of anywhere you would find two such real projects coming out of students' academic training."

Both projects began as master's theses in the College of Architecture. "They typify the kind of innovation and creative thinking we strive very hard to have at Georgia Tech," Ross says. "They each came with an idea. A lot of people said, 'This probably is not going to work,' and there was a lot of skepticism. But what you find is a certain enthusiasm, which is important, and a certain originality.

"I don't think it's an accident," Ross says. "I think Georgia Tech fosters that. It says something about the people first and foremost, but it says something about the place too.

"If you get really bright, smart people and they have really good ideas, Georgia Tech is the kind of place where you find people who are willing to invest time and nurture and assist those students in taking those ideas a step further and in their cases eventually seeing it happen," she says.

"Both of these projects reflect the theoretical exposure you get at Georgia Tech with the practical orientation that you get when you try to make it work in the real world."

As a mentor, Ross says there was a lot of discussion between her and the students.

"These students are very inquisitive. You don't have to encourage them to ask good questions," Ross says. "They take what a professor delivers and they turn it over in their own minds and they ask a different set of questions and they come back to you, and you respond. Pretty soon you have something that is very different than where you started. And you come up with the Beltline and Atlantic Station." — John Dunn
Trailblazer
ALUMNUS ED MCBRAYER'S PATH PAVES THE WAY FOR A BETTER METROPOLITAN ATLANTA

By Leslie Overman
In his down time, Ed McBrayer can be found on a bicycle — whether he's teaching a cycling course at LA Fitness in Atlanta or partaking in a peaceful weekend excursion on the Arabia Mountain Trail. McBrayer rides his bike when he can. During the week, he drives his car 100 to 150 miles daily to oversee the development of future bike trails.

McBrayer, AE 68, is a founder and the executive director of The PATH Foundation. In just 15 years, PATH has built more than 100 miles of scenic and recreational trails throughout Georgia for walkers, joggers, cyclists and skaters.

In addition to the Arabia Mountain Trail that winds through south DeKalb County, PATH has developed the Silver Comet, Freedom Park, Stone Mountain and Chastain Park trails. “We have emerging trail systems from many different areas,” says McBrayer. “Our long-term goal is to have a connected system throughout metropolitan Atlanta that people can use for recreation but also for trips to work and school.”

PATH trails complement the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority system, McBrayer says, providing people an alternative to commutes spent in bumper-to-bumper traffic on Georgia’s highways.

“MARTA allows bicycles on its trains 24-seven, which makes the MARTA system an extension of our trail system,” McBrayer says. In neighborhoods such as Atlanta’s Inman Park, PATH has trails running “right up to the door” of MARTA stations.

A MASTER PLAN

The PATH Foundation headquarters is located in the basement of WSB-TV’s three-story office building in Midtown Atlanta and provided by Cox Enterprises at no charge. “Our overhead is extremely low,” McBrayer says. “We are proud to tell potential donors that we put about 88 percent of their money on the ground, with about 12 percent spent for overhead. We’ve maintained a staff of three people — even though we’ve gone from a tiny organization to a rather large organization — on purpose.”

Spanning an entire wall of the PATH office is a detailed chart, which allows the staff to keep track of the more than 30 projects in various stages of development. PATH has public/private partnership agreements to build trails with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 10 counties and several cities in the metro Atlanta area. The foundation also lends expertise to cities throughout the state for planning and promoting their own trails.

“Really the first step in trying to get trails built is to have a master plan to work from. We’re really good in deciding where a trail should go and recognizing the opportunities,” McBrayer says. “We’re not a club, and we’re not a typical nonprofit. We really raise money and build things. We’re a trail-building machine, if you will.”

The cost to build a mile of trail varies depending upon the location, a mile of the Silver Comet averaging more than $300,000 and in-town trails costing PATH nearly $500,000 a mile.

Every three years, PATH has a capital campaign. After deciding which projects to tackle within that three-year period, McBrayer begins arranging for public funding, going to the counties, Georgia General Assembly and federal government for two-thirds of the financial support before going to the private sector.

One of PATH’s most successful trails is the Silver Comet, which weaves through Cobb, Paulding and Polk counties. With nearly 2 million visitors a year, it has helped rejuvenate small towns along its path.

“It’s a boon to residential housing developers,” says McBrayer. “We’ve contributed significantly to the revitalization of the city of Rockmart, for example. It was kind of dead and sleepy. Now they have several thousand people a day who ride through on bicycles, many of whom stop to eat and shop.”

The PATH Foundation also is helping people develop healthier lifestyles. Last year, PATH was awarded a grant from Health Care of Georgia to study the effects of the trails on the people who frequent them.

“So many of the people in these neighborhoods rarely exercised before our trail was built. Now, they’re forming groups that meet and exercise on the trail every day. Obesity is down, their health improves and their quality of life is better,” McBrayer says.

“It’s really remarkable to watch neighborhoods become healthier as a result of our work. We bring the park right to their door. We are actually building linear parks rather than just trails.”
GOODBYE TO DESK JOBS

A
fter graduating from Tech, McBrayer moved to Huntsville, Ala., to work with NASA on the Skylab and later joined Martin Marietta Corp. in Denver to work on the same project. He soon realized that his interests were better suited for work on the ground, not in the sky.

“I just realized that sitting behind a desk every day, bringing my little sack lunch and eating for 30 minutes just wasn’t for me,” McBrayer says. He spent the next 20 years of his life building and renovating homes and developing communities in Denver and later in Atlanta.

While volunteering as the planning commissioner for the suburb of Englewood, Colo., he helped plan a trail along the South Platte River. During the process, he became a cyclist, taking advantage of the city’s numerous bike trails.

“When I moved back to Atlanta in the late ’80s, there were no sidewalks to speak of, certainly no trails, not one bike lane,” McBrayer says. “Basically, my sport went away. I sort of hung my bike up and forgot about it.”

When Atlanta was chosen to host the 1996 Summer Olympic Games, McBrayer and several other cycling enthusiasts went to talk to city officials. “They told us nobody had ever really asked for trails before. Meanwhile, some of the people who are now PATH board members were coming to the same conclusion. They were going to other cities to ride their bikes. We all got together and formed our own little nonprofit,” he says.

McBrayer and his friends created PATH in 1991 as a volunteer group. By August of that year, the newly formed nonprofit organization was backed by such influential Atlantans as former Atlanta mayor Andrew Young and Cox Enterprises CEO and chairman Jim Kennedy, who both still serve on the PATH Foundation board of directors.

“I was just somebody with an idea,” McBrayer says. “If not for the board, I’d probably still be out trying to get my first trail built. They were able to go to everybody and say, ‘We’re behind this.’”

In 1993, McBrayer became a full-time PATH employee. The foundation built its first trail that same year and went on to develop about 20 miles of trails in time for the Olympics. Last fall, PATH celebrated two landmark events — its 15-year anniversary and the completion of its 100th mile of trails.

“We’re a great example of how the public sector and private sector can work together to build something nice for the community and a good model for anybody in the country as far as efficiency and minimizing the cost of administration. But I think what means the most is that we’re leaving behind infrastructure that dramatically changes the quality of life,” McBrayer says.

“I’ve had the extraordinary opportunity to live my vision. It’s been a great little chapter in my life. Being an aeronautical engineer was nowhere near as exciting as doing all of this.”
Disconnect the Connector

GEORGIA TECH GRADUATE STUDENTS PROPOSE A BOLD SOLUTION TO ATLANTA’S MOBILITY WOES: DIG UP THE LANES THAT DIVIDE THE CITY.

By Gary Goettling

When a group of Georgia Tech graduate students was asked to suggest improvements to the Downtown Connector, they came up with a startling proposal: Get rid of it. “We wanted them to take a fresh new look at the interstate system and think about how we could connect the central business district with Midtown,” says Steve Cover, Arch 78, M Arch 81, M CP 81, commissioner of planning and development for the city of Atlanta.

The students took the definition of connection well beyond his expectations.

One of the approaches Cover had in mind involves extra-wide bridges or “lids” over the connector similar to the newly reconstructed Fifth Street bridge. As much a plaza as a bridge, the structure ties the Tech campus proper with Technology Square and includes wide pedestrian walkways, decorative lighting and a small park, complete with trees and benches.

To collect other options, Cover enlisted the help of Richard Dagenhart, one of his former architecture and urban design professors at Tech, who agreed to assign the project to his graduate students.

In a semester-long project last fall, the Tech students embraced a back-to-basics approach, calling for digging up the connector between 17th Street and Interstate 20. While recognizing that the Downtown Connector offers a shortcut through the city — a convenience also accomplished by traveling I-285 — it comes at a high cost to central Atlanta’s urban fabric by cutting the city in two. In effect, the highway is a wall, dividing rather than connecting.

“The connector severed most east-west streets, making it difficult to move from one side of the city to another,” says Dagenhart. “The connector turned many surface streets into on- and off-ramps for the highway, which complicated moving around even more. It has also devalued the adjacent real estate and created a lot of underutilized land.”

To identify highway alternatives, Dagenhart divided his class into two groups. The first elected to maintain the Downtown Connector right-of-way, but with a smaller road. “Our basic premise was to maintain the north-south connection, but we redesigned it as an urban boulevard with six lanes instead of the 12 lanes it has now,” says Jihan Stanford, Arch 05, who earned a master’s in architecture in May. “We would introduce more connections with cross streets, reclaiming some of the old historical streets that were disconnected by the highway.”

The plan reclaims the verge and buffer for usable green space and real estate development. “We placed the boulevard at the grade of existing streets to link the city together again,” explains Stephen Conschafter, M CP 06, M Arch 07, noting that 25 streets were closed permanently when the Downtown Connector was built. He likens the proposal to an Atlanta version of the Champs-Elysees, “with trees planted along it and buildings set up next to it to create a more walkable environment.”

He adds, “None of the world’s great cities — like New York or Paris — have highways dividing them.”

The second group worked out a plan to restore most of the original street grid, but without a major new north-south artery. “If you take out the highway, there are several streets that can come back as major north-south routes,” says Falynn Schmidt, M Arch 07, referring to Peachtree, West
Peachtree and Spring. “So instead of having everyone funneled down the highway, we’re proposing a lot of alternate routes,” including a streetcar system and dedicated north-south bus lines. A sketch of the proposed grid restoration shows a lake, fountains, parks and even a new coliseum for Georgia Tech.

They estimate the land consumed by the connector, including buffers and right-of-way, at 445 acres or the equivalent of 148 city blocks. The green space in the connector right-of-way alone adds up to a little more than 44 acres — the equivalent of two Centennial Olympic Parks.

“There’s so much going on to make Atlanta a destination city,” says Cyndi Combee, Arch 02, M Arch 07, “but the highway actually impedes that process.”

Atlanta’s projected growth — by 2030 the metro and city population is expected to double — warrants a fundamental re-evaluation because the connector is already operating at capacity. “The Downtown Connector,” Dagenhart observes, “cannot be double decked, and it can’t be put in a tunnel. It cannot be widened either. Imagine how much money it would take to acquire land to expand its right-of-way. Imagine the neighborhood opposition to expansion.”

A NEW PARADIGM

They readily admit that traffic issues need to be addressed more thoroughly. One relatively easy first step would be to renumber sections of the Perimeter as parts of Interstates 75, 85 and 20, thereby directing through traffic around instead of into the city.

According to Dagenhart, as much as 50 percent of trips on the connector originate outside I-285 and have destinations outside the Perimeter. About 75 percent of the connector’s traffic passes through, with only 25 percent actually using the highway to access the central business district.

Combee says, “For either plan to work there has to be a major overhaul of mass transit. There would need to be different zoning considerations and an expansion of MARTA and the park-and-ride system.”

In lieu of a project review jury, the Tech students offered their proposals in a major presentation before a Central Atlanta Progress meeting. “Our goal was to start a conversation,” says Schmidt. “We’re not proposing that this happen anytime soon, but we at least wanted people to change the way they think about the highway.”

During the course of the presentation, Cover discerned a shift among audience members, which included several skeptical state, city and county transportation officials.

“Your first reaction was that it’s impossible,” he says. “Then when you looked at all the research they did and the justifications they came up with, it didn’t seem so far-fetched, at least from a long-term planning perspective.”

Dagenhart says the graduate students’ project led to “understanding that the important question is not what to do with the connector but what kind of city do we want Atlanta to be 30 years from now, when the population is double that of today.”
In the first half of the 20th century, the clacking and clanging of streetcars was a common sound along Peachtree Street, the 37-mile ribbon of concrete winding through the heart of Atlanta. Now, a group of business and civic leaders, including five Georgia Tech alumni, want to return streetcars to the city’s best-known thoroughfare — a move some fear will contribute more gridlock to an already congested corridor.

The Peachtree Corridor Task Force was formed in 2005 by Mayor Shirley Franklin and included J. Michael Robison, Mgt 97; Niles Bolton, Arch 68; Jack Guynn, Mgt 70; Stan Harvey, M Arch 94, M CP 94; and Sam Williams, EE 68.

The committee released details in March of a $1 billion, 20-year plan that includes new sidewalks and bicycle lanes, improved lighting and landscaping, buried utility lines, small parks and plazas and the cornerstone — a 14-mile streetcar line running from Brookhaven in the north, including Buckhead, Midtown and downtown, to Fort McPherson in the south. A separate four-mile loop would connect the main line to downtown hotels and attractions including the Georgia Aquarium and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. historic district.

Tom Galloway, the late dean of the College of Architecture, thought the plan was sound as long as the Peachtree line connects in several places with streetcars or trolleys operating on the proposed Atlanta Beltline project — a 22-mile loop of abandoned railroad right-of-way encircling downtown and Midtown.

“Great cities have great streets,” Galloway said in a March interview with the Alumni Magazine. “In Paris it’s
The Champs-Elysees, in New York it's Broadway and it's Michigan Avenue in Chicago. We have the potential of having a great street in Peachtree.

The return of streetcars was proposed in 2002 by Robison, CEO of Lanier Parking Systems and chair of the nonprofit organization Atlanta Streetcar Inc.

"We formed Atlanta Streetcar to explore whether streetcars could link our transit systems in order to address Atlanta's traffic problems," Robison says. "We believe it can and now the Peachtree Corridor Task Force is laying the groundwork to transform Peachtree into a world-class boulevard, with streetcars as the centerpiece."

The task force's proposal addressed two of the stickiest issues — how to fund the project and how to make room for streetcars on an already congested street — by proposing the creation of a special tax district in downtown, Midtown and Buckhead, areas where commercial property owners already tax themselves to support community improvement districts and widening Peachtree to accommodate the streetcars.

"It's a good proposal, although we have a long way to go figuring out how to fund it and implement it," says Bolton, CEO of Niles Bolton Associates and past chair of the Buckhead Coalition. "I expect it to be modified some but it ties together what Buckhead, Midtown and downtown are trying to do. It's good for tourism but it won't solve Atlanta's traffic problems. We must have more north-south corridors and it must tie into regional transit planning."

Mike Meyer, director of the Georgia Transportation Institute and a Georgia Tech civil engineering professor, says streetcars are a viable option.

"Not only does it serve the corridor with the highest population and employment density in the metropolitan region, but it connects many of the city's major cultural and commercial activity centers. With the development that is occurring in the Peachtree corridor, the streetcar will be a necessary addition to the city's transportation network."

Meyer says placing something like a streetcar line in any major thoroughfare is always a challenge because of the changing characteristics of the road.

"Peachtree exhibits very different characteristics south of I-85 as it does north of I-85," he says. "In Midtown, it is narrow, and a streetcar would have to be designed to allow some operation of cars, although there are good parallel routes available. Peachtree widens north of I-85 and a streetcar operation could be integrated into the road alignment more easily.

"However, there may be challenges," Meyer points out. "Buckhead experiences significant congestion during rush hours so the combined road/streetcar design would require minor road widening or improved traffic channelization by using medians and turn lanes.

"More than 40,000 cars travel daily on Peachtree through Buckhead," Meyer says. "If a trolley gets bogged down in traffic, lots of people will use their cars."
Imagine all the people standing barefoot, fretting that their toothpaste is going to be confiscated as they slowly make their way through airport security.

Imagine walking onto the tarmac without ever taking off your shoes, carrying a bag loaded with full-size lotions, perfumes and hair spray — none encased in zippered plastic bags — and immediately embarking on a flight scheduled just for you.

ImagineAir wants you to think about those two scenarios. The company principals are staking their business on the bet that the latter one puts you in an enjoyable-flight frame of mind. If the no-hassle, no-waiting, no-shoe-removal policy doesn’t sell the service, the pay-by-the-mile fee structure just might.

The first metro Atlanta air taxi service is a young company run by young men. Chief executive officer and president are the first job titles they’ve ever had. CEO Aaron Sohacki, Mgt 06, is 23 years old. President Ben Hamilton, AE 05, is 24. They’re also ImagineAir’s first pilots.

ImagineAir is not a fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants business venture. It took a year of filing applications, writing an operations manual, submitting business plans and earning certifications before the Federal Aviation Administration finally cleared ImagineAir for takeoff in April.

“I’d be up all night working on the manual — 1,000 pages,” Hamilton says. “It’s highly regulated.”

The highly regulated air taxi service also is highly unusual. Sohacki says there are only two similar businesses in the United States, one in the Northeast and the other in South Carolina.

Navigating a system to set ImagineAir apart is the chief technology officer, 24-year-old Frank Park, CS 04, MS CS 06. He wrote ImagineAir’s software program that enables passengers to schedule personalized flights to more than 600 public airports in the Southeast just hours prior to takeoff and immediately spells out the mileage, flight duration and cost.

“It does efficiency calculations and looks at every single combination,” says Park, who explains that when a flight request is submitted, the online reservation system sorts through potential routes in seconds and comes up with the best options.

Charter services typically bill a client from the time the aircraft is started until the propellers stop spinning. Passengers don’t know the final cost until after they’ve landed. With the software Park designed, air taxi passengers are billed based on calculated mileage and given a guaranteed price at the time of booking.

ImagineAir promotional material sets this scene: Three businessmen can fly from Lawrenceville, Ga., to Charlotte, N.C., for a morning meeting, fly on to Hilton Head, S.C., for an afternoon of golf and return to Atlanta in time for dinner. With the same-day trip discount offered by the service, the total cost of the flight for all three travelers would be just more than $1,500.

This spring Park was accepted into Tech’s doctoral program and come fall he will juggle studies and software. Park has no intention of leaving ImagineAir as he envisions the company one day on the horizon going nationwide.

All three ImagineAir executives met through the Yellow Jacket Flying Club. Sohacki and Hamilton both were club officers and instructors. Park earned his wings through lessons with the club. They logged hundreds of hours taking off from and landing at Fulton County Airport. Hamilton, a former president, plugs ImagineAir in a Buzz Studios-produced film on the flying club’s Web site, www.yjfc.org.

Sohacki and Hamilton share an early love of the open sky. Both took flying lessons before they could legally drive a car. Both say the prominence of the Yellow Jacket Flying Club, founded more than 60 years ago, was a big factor when making their college choices.

Sohacki says the idea for ImagineAir was hatched from the single notion of wanting to start a business that allowed them to soar. “We had talked about opening a flight school.”

Their big break came when they found a financial backer willing to buy planes for them. Paul Fischer, a physician and founding partner of primary care facilities, is the father of the best friend of Sohacki’s former girlfriend. The girlfriend is no longer in the picture, but Fischer now is ImagineAir’s chief financial officer. Fischer has financed the purchase of ImagineAir’s three four-seaters, all brand new Cirrus SR22-GTS models that run just under $500,000 apiece.

ImagineAir expects to start making money when it has five aircraft in service. That won’t be too long, says Sohacji, who had brought home the third plane from a Minnesota factory just six hours earlier. (He stopped once for gas. Prior to takeoff, he scouted around and determined the cheapest gas to be found was at a small airport in Indiana so he filed his flight plan to incorporate that route. Frugality is important at this stage as their salaries are “minimal,” they say.)

Park says passengers can sit back in the Cirrus’ plump leather seats, listen to satellite radio and enjoy complimentary drinks and...
snacks. "It's the fastest of its kind. It's like a luxury car."
Sohacki says the Cirrus, the best-selling aircraft of its size on the market, flies a bit like a smooth-riding luxury car — one equipped with an airframe parachute system that is. "It gets SUV gas mileage but it goes 200 miles per hour."
ImagineAir expects to add its first jet, a six-seat Eclipse 500 capable of speeds of more than 400 mph, within six months.
Billed as "on-demand air service anywhere, anytime," ImagineAir has flown both businessmen and leisure travelers to places such as Destin, Fla., and Nashville, Tenn., for less than $1,000. The District of Columbia and Missouri aren't typical ImagineAir destinations, but the company was more than willing to transport paying customers there.
Thanks to a slick Web site, flyimagineair.com, complete with a six-minute promotional film, "Imagine Being There," and the hiring of a director of sales and marketing, they've made the local press in many of the places to which they fly, from Chattanooga, Tenn., to Charleston, S.C., to Augusta, Ga. Framed articles run the length of the hallway in ImagineAir's suite of offices at Briscoe Field in Lawrenceville, the company's headquarters.
Locating ImagineAir's base at the Gwinnett County airport wasn't a decision pulled out of thin air. "We looked at demographics and demand and a NASA study. We spent about five months on it," Park says.
They work hard to get people to look past their youthful faces to their business acumen, lack of debt, growing fleet of planes and experience as pilots. Both Sohacki and Hamilton are licensed commercial pilots with multiengine, instrument and single-engine ratings.
Still, they do get teased once in a while. An aircraft maintenance worker at Briscoe Field yells out, "You boys sure look 'purty.'"
Sohacki and Hamilton smile and wave, but they are serious about their image and say they always wear ties when shuttling travelers. Uniforms, complete with pilot bars and stripes and the company logo, were scheduled to land in Lawrenceville just days after having their photos taken.
The uniforms will be essential when ImagineAir has more than two pilots. Sohacki is serious when he says ImagineAir expects to have 25 planes and 50 pilots within a year. Imagine that. GT
Kristi Odom married her passion for photography with her love of travel. Separated from Georgia Tech because of the tugs on her heart, she staged a triumphant return to the Institute this spring with a one-woman show of photographs taken during her adventures around the world.

By Kimberly Link-Wills
SLEEPING SEA LIONS, GALAPAGOS, 2004

SHARKS, GREAT BARRIER REEF, AUSTRALIA, 2000
Kristi Odom's love of mathematics drew her to Georgia Tech. Her passion for photography took her far away. "I absolutely loved Tech and I loved engineering."

"The crazy thing is Tech definitely pushed me in a direction, even though it wasn't the engineering direction," says Odom, Cls 02.

She found her way back to campus this spring for a two-month photo exhibition, "Six Continents, a Girl and a Camera," at the Fersst Center for the Arts. Odom also was a featured panelist for a Women's Awareness Month discussion on females traveling and living abroad.

A newspaper and yearbook photographer at Pace Academy in Atlanta, Odom was shooting for Tech's student publication before setting foot in a classroom.

"The Technique gave me so many opportunities. They had me on the field photographing [Jackets quarterback] Joe Hamilton before I even started school," Odom says. "Because I was one of the only people taking pictures, I was able to get a lot of confidence in myself. It was easy for me to stand out at Tech because there weren't many people who were as passionate about photography as I was."

Odom knew before she enrolled at Tech that she wanted to study abroad.

"I enrolled at Tech in the fall of '98. I applied to do study abroad in the fall of '98," she says, laughing. "I got denied. They said you had to be at Tech for at least a semester before you applied. I applied again in '99 and I got accepted for all of 2000.

"I was 19 years old when I went to Australia. Tech gave me such an incredible opportunity to do that," Odom says.

Despite her appreciation, she found it difficult to return to Georgia Tech in 2001 after a year at the University of New South Wales. "The amount I learned culturally from living in another country and the amount my photography had grown at that point — it had just taken over so much."

In mid-2001, Odom enrolled as an international student at the University of New South Wales — and withdrew from Tech. "I started pretty much from scratch. My Java programming class translated into intro to computing for fine arts students. It took me two and a half years to get a fine arts degree with a concentration in photo media.

"It was hard to move over from 'solve this problem and write a program' to 'go out and do what you want to do and say what you want to say.' It took me a while to excel in fine arts but it was good for me to push my weakness," Odom says.

"Tech gave me such an analytical way of looking at things. I know how to prioritize like crazy. The three years of electrical engineering did not go to waste. It's great to know how things work, know what kinds of questions to ask to get the right result.

"It's crazy that the fact I was on the dean's list at Tech for so many semesters helps me get jobs in the photography industry," says Odom, who also has shot several concerts in Atlanta and Australia for the online edition of RollingStone. "I had no idea that having a Georgia Tech as part of my past could be such a bonus on my resume."

Odom says her parents were supportive of her decision to leave Tech before earning a degree. "I actually thought it was a bit crazy to give up basically a full ride at Tech with the HOPE scholarship to move to Australia. And I was doing pretty well in my engineering degree. I had high marks."

Her parents still didn't think she was crazy when she sent them photos of her hanging off the sides of mountains and swimming with sharks.

"Originally I wanted to be an underwater photographer. I've been scuba diving since I was 12 years old. It was something my dad and I did. We'd go down to Cayman or Bonaire or places like that," Odom says. "Right before my first year at Tech I got to take a class with my National Geographic idol in underwater photography. I worked extra at an ice cream shop to pay for it. That was unreal. I was 18 and I got to study under David Doubilet. I got to actually assist him on a shoot in Cayman Brac that got published in Geographic. He gave me a lot of encouragement."

She had the courage to take photos of sharks feeding from an underwater vantage point on the Great Barrier Reef. Her only fear was missing the shot.

"When you're under water and you're shooting with film, you've got 36 shots. I remember shooting that roll in about five minutes. When I got my film processed, there just happened to be this perfect shape and starburst. "That photo has been on my wall for five or six years," Odom says. "My photography teacher told me if you want to know if your shot is good or not, put it on your wall and see how long it sits there."

Odom often finds places for her photographs of sea lions, for which she has a particular fondness.

"One of my first wildlife interactions was with the sea lions off the coast of western Australia," she says, relating the story of an excursion by boat. She had read that the passengers would be able to swim with the doe-eyed creatures. It turns out that the trip was just for above-water viewing and picture taking.

"I just jumped off the boat in front of all the tourists. Right when I got in, four or five pups came up and started swimming circles around me. It was one of the best moments of my life," Odom says. "I looked up in the boat and there were all these Japanese tourists taking pictures of me. Everybody looked at me like I was crazy."
She questioned her own sanity when she booked an around-the-world ticket after graduating from the University of New South Wales. For the next year, with a couple of respites in Atlanta, Odom traveled the globe with only her camera as a companion. The nerves hit hard the day before she boarded the first of many flights.

"I was so scared of being alone and so scared of being different. I was going to all these countries where I didn't speak the language," she says. "But the more I traveled the more I saw similarities that were inherent all throughout humankind, all throughout countries. When I couldn't understand words, I could still see certain reactions. I could still see a mother's love for her child. I could still see people loving music and loving to dance. The trip gave me this great sense that I was part of something bigger."

Odom didn't choose between her loves when she returned to Atlanta.

"With the passion for photography, I've become a professional photographer. With the passion for travel, I became an independent travel consultant. Through my stories and experiences, I helped give other people the confidence to travel."

Most weekends Odom can be found photographing weddings.

"I just love capturing moments," she says. "A lot of people don't think they can make a career out of photography, and I will admit it's hard. And I will admit that my friends from Tech are now making six figures. But I absolutely love what I do."

She also may be picking up ideas for her own wedding, set for May 2008. Her honeymoon undoubtedly will be more exotic than most.

"We're looking at going to Botswana, South Africa and Victoria Falls," says Odom, who spent two weeks in Africa in 2006. "The place that I've just been obsessed with is Africa. Every day I think about Africa. I've only seen a tiny bit, Kenya and Tanzania. I really want to go to Timbuktu. Then there's Morocco and Egypt."

Odom made sure she chose a mate with a similar sense of wanderlust. She refers to a Mark Twain quote: "There ain't no surer way to find out whether you like people or hate them than to travel with them."

She laughs and says, "We went to Italy over New Year's and we traveled really well together."

Good thing, because there are other destinations on Odom's agenda. "I really want to go back to Asia. I want to go to places with religious concentrations. I really want to go to India. The more you see the more you realize you haven't seen. I've only seen a little percentage of what's out there."

"I use my camera as a tool to see beauty in the world," she says. "It's a way to cut out everything on the outside and just watch." GT
Homespun Pecan Pie

Clint Zeagler’s fashion line blends Southern ‘tacky’ with style

By Leslie Overman

A native of Sylvania, Ga., Clint Zeagler always loved the South, but it took a move to the big city for him to truly appreciate his small-town roots. Nearing the end of high school and preparing to attend Georgia Tech, he “was so ready to get out. ‘I need to get out of this small town. I can’t stand it anymore. I want to go to the big city,’” says Zeagler, recalling his teenage restlessness.

“About halfway through college I was like, ‘You know, I like Atlanta and I love Atlanta, but I’m going to embrace the fact that I’m small town,’” Zeagler says. “I’m going to be the tacky Southern guy I am and I don’t care what people think.”

People think Zeagler is anything but tacky. With his clothing line, Pecan Pie Couture, the Atlanta fashion designer serves up some of the world’s latest trends with a Southern twist. In 2006, he was voted Best Local Clothing Designer by the readers of Atlanta’s Creative Loafing newspaper. Earlier this year, he was named one of The Atlantan magazine’s 2007 Men of Style.

As a student at Tech, Zeagler designed T-shirts for the industrial design program and Theta Xi fraternity. When he returned to Atlanta from Italy, Zeagler started making T-shirts for his friends. After they received positive response at clubs and restaurants, he decided to try selling them.

“I just started designing my own cut of shirt and sourcing out where the cotton came from and all that sort of stuff. What was just a project turned into a business.”

In Georgia, nearly 10 boutiques, including Veruca in Midtown Atlanta and Sandpiper in Vinings, now carry Zeagler’s shirts. They soon will be available through the Museum of Design Atlanta.

Zeagler’s creations range in price from $60 to $150. Compared to the garden-variety T-shirt, Pecan Pie Couture’s scoop-necked shirts are cut longer on the torso, have slightly longer sleeves and are tailored for a slimmer fit. “They’re cut in a pretty way to make women look good,” the designer says. “I think that has a lot to do with how well the shirts are selling in the stores too, because they fit well.”

Homespun Organic

But there’s something else that sets Pecan Pie Couture’s shirts apart from the average T-shirt — they’re homespun Southern.

“Our T-shirts, from seed to shirt, are a hundred percent Southern, which is one of the things that’s interesting...
about my company,” Zeagler says. “The cotton is grown here. It’s made into fabric here. It’s all organic. It’s sewn into T-shirts here. We take the T-shirts and hand-dye them with natural dyes. ... And we hand-screen print them. So there’s a craft in the handwork element to the shirts that people really like.”

Pecan Pie Couture’s summer 2006 line, inspired by the excess of the 1980s and Marie Antoinette’s lush reign in the late 1700s, included T-shirts with knitted details crafted by the staff of VR Knitters in Villa Rica, Ga.

“Not only is it helping the mill out, because it’s the last one there, but it makes you feel good when you go in there and you talk with them and you work with them,” Zeagler says.

“Those people are like family to me now. That’s why we keep our stuff here, keep it made here. Not just a made-in-the-USA value, but there’s an intrinsic value to buying stuff that’s made from where you are.”

No Place Like Home

It took a trip across the Atlantic for Zeagler to realize that, for him, the best place to pursue a career in fashion was sweet home Atlanta. While studying in Italy, Zeagler realized “how distinctive and rich Southern culture is. We have a very rich culture and part of what I loved about Italy was sharing that with the people there,” he says.

“I knew that if I was going to do fashion design, if I moved back to Atlanta I’d be able to be myself and do what I wanted to do. And if I was being honest about who I was and doing what I wanted to do and being myself, people would gravitate toward that faster than if I was trying to do the same thing in New York and do what everybody else was doing and be one of hundreds of millions of kids trying to do fashion in New York.”

Even though Zeagler isn’t working out of New York, Paris or Milan, he still knows what’s hot and what’s not in the fashion scene. “I look at what’s going on in the world globally and see what the national trends are and what the global trends are and then take them and kind of put the Southern filter on them.

“If Marie Antoinette is going to be a trend like it was three seasons ago, then I look at that and say, ‘She has big hair and a big dress and she eats a lot of cake.’ Well, Southern belles have big hair and big dresses and eat lots of cake. So there’s a correlation there. Even though it’s Marie Antoinette, there’s still a Southern, sassy, tacky, tongue-in-cheek way to look at it,” Zeagler says.

“At Pecan Pie Couture, we don’t really take ourselves too seriously. It’s about having fun and not being pretentious and, at the same time, wearing something that has a lot of sentiment and value to it.”

“We don’t really take ourselves too seriously. It’s about having fun and not being pretentious and, at the same time, wearing something that has a lot of sentiment and value to it.”
An advantage to working in Atlanta, Zeagler says, is the laid-back nature of the city's runway shows. “When you do a show in New York or L.A., you’re doing a show for buyers and for the press. So the people who are there in the audience are there looking at the clothes to buy. In Atlanta it’s kind of different, because there isn’t that fashion-show culture here. So when you put on a fashion show here, it’s really just for entertainment and to get your name out.

“Maybe it's that I’m not interested in just seeing clothes walk down a runway. I want a spectacle. I want a circus of a show. I want to leave there having been surprised in some way, some razzle-dazzle. I always try to do things in my show that show off the clothes and leave you with something that also expresses the emotion of the clothes.”

For Pecan Pie Couture’s summer 2007 collection, Zeagler had his models parade through the gymnasium of Atlanta’s Grady High School — a fitting venue considering the season’s theme is “marching band glam.” Clad in a T-shirt proclaiming “I am a Parade,” Atlanta street personality Baton Bob led the procession, which included Atlanta Ballet dancers in T-shirts with such phrases as “I Toot My Own Horn” and “Shut Up and Twirl.” The models were joined on the runway by the Grady High marching band and cheerleaders. The event raised nearly $4,300 for the school’s fashion program.

“One of the best things about the show was some of the fanciest people in Atlanta came to Grady High School and sat on the wooden bleachers in furs,” Zeagler says. “The irony in that is even beautiful to those people. They knew the attitude to come with — that excitement about being low-key and being fancy in a gym. I loved it and they did too.”

**Style with a Story**

When asked about his favorite fashion designers, Zeagler cites Vivienne Westwood, Viktor and Rolf and Alexander McQueen, designers whose collections tell stories, he says. Zeagler’s designs tell the story of his Southern upbringing.

Zeagler learned how to sew from his paternal grandmother, who owned a fabric store. His mother “is the strongest woman” he’s ever met. But it was his maternal grandmother, Theola Treado, known more affectionately as Nana, who taught him about personal style.

“Nana didn’t leave the house, she didn’t step foot out the door unless she was put together,” Zeagler says. “And in a way that taught me a lot about life, not just clothing and how to carry yourself, but that you only get one chance to show who you are to the world. Every day is your one chance, but you know, you have to be a good person and present yourself well and just be who you are. She taught me that.”

Nana, who with Zeagler’s grandfather ran the Town House Restaurant in Sylvania, was known for her pecan pies, which at one time were shipped throughout the Southeast. “That’s kind of where Pecan Pie Couture came from,” says Zeagler, who has incorporated slogans and images from the pie packaging into his T-shirts.

“I named the company Pecan Pie Couture because it’s got that tongue-in-cheek Southern reference to it, but it’s also got that irony of juxtaposition of pecan pie, which is this Southern staple, and couture, which is high French fashion. In a way, that’s kind of who my Nana was. She was down-to-earth and Southern and understood not taking herself too seriously, but she was also fancy and high fashion,” he says.

“I've just been surrounded by this wonderful group of Southern women and I think that that's why I love making clothes for women and I love helping women express themselves and who they are. And that's kind of where my point of view comes from.”

**Wearing the Future**

When he’s not dreaming up his latest T-shirt design, Zeagler can be found back in the classroom at Georgia Tech — this time as an instructor. This past spring, he taught a course on wearable designs in the College of Architecture’s industrial design program.

“One of the main issues with the fact that people aren’t wearing wearable electronics is the fashion engine doesn’t know how to put them into the fashion engine,” Zeagler says. “Fashion designers don’t know technically what to do with them and technical people don’t know what color they should be or where they should go on a garment or why they should be on a garment.

“There are not too many people like me who are bridges between those. There are not too many fashion designers who have taken Calc 5 and Organic 2. And I hope that I get to the place someday where I can do that. ... I think that’s where we’re headed with fashion, with technology. It’s going to find it’s way onto the body. Hopefully I can do that in some way,” he says.

Zeagler also has plans to expand Pecan Pie Couture’s line. “In the next five years, I’d love to be making garments, having a full fashion line, which is pants, skirts and dresses and jackets. And you never know where you’re going to go from there,” he says.

“I have an idea for a fragrance, I have an idea for handbags.” Zeagler pauses. “You know, I want to be the rule the world, but I don’t want to go too fast. My definition of success is putting good things in the world and people loving them. And that makes me happy. As long as I can pay my rent, I don’t have any ambition to be a super millionaire. I’m having a blast, and that’s what really counts.”

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the first edition of the Blueprint appeared, the ANAK Society was founded, the Georgia Tech band was formed and enthusiastically embraced the Ramblin' Wreck fight song, and Fulton County granted an ambitious group of persistent alumni a charter to launch the

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Georgia Tech's athletics facilities went from among the worst to among the first. The four-story Arthur B. Edge Intercollegiate Athletic Center opened for business and gave the Yellow Jackets bragging rights for having one of the finest athletic complexes in the country. The facility is home of the Georgia Tech Athletic Association.

After a 17-month search, 41-year-old Edwin D. Harrison was named the sixth president of Georgia Tech on June 26. Harrison, who had been dean of engineering at Toledo University in Ohio, told the Georgia Tech Alumnus, "Until two weeks ago, I had no idea I was being considered for the presidency of Georgia Tech. And now here I am." He added, "This has been the greatest day of my life."

The first European Georgia Tech club was announced in the April 1932 alumni magazine by two Coca-Cola Co. executives — whose tongues were firmly lodged in cheeks. Al Staton, ME 22, who started his career as the first chief executive officer of the Alumni Association and editor of its magazine, said he and Bill Hyers, ChE 21, had formed the Georgia Tech Club of Brussels, Belgium. Accordingly, Hyers was president, Staton vice president; Hyers was secretary, Staton treasurer; Hyers was chief marshal, Staton sergeant-at-arms. The members were listed as Hyers and Staton.
"We are on a roll," says Ward O. Winer, who will be retiring this year as chair of the George W. Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering. "We have outstanding faculty, staff and students and are in a very important area of technology for the future."

Winer, who joined the mechanical engineering faculty 38 years ago and served as its chair for nearly 20 years, says mechanical and nuclear engineers will solve many of the technological issues facing society today.

When the National Research Council ranked graduate programs in 1972, Winer says, mechanical engineering at Georgia Tech fell somewhere between 26 and 50 — it was uncertain where because the group was listed alphabetically. In the current U.S. News & World Report ranking, the school's undergraduate program ranked No. 6 and the graduate program No. 7 in the country.

"These are extraordinary changes over a short period of time, especially because academic reputations are very difficult to change and have enormous inertia."

Winer attributes the school's success to outstanding support from the Institute, the state and alumni and friends. "The George Woodruff endowment has made a fantastic difference in what we can accomplish," he says. "In 1988, when I became chair, we had two endowed chairs and three professorships. Today, we have 10 endowed chairs and five professorships. In addition, we have eight outstanding midcareer faculty fellow positions for faculty members whom we work hard to recruit and retain."

When he came to Tech in 1969, Winer says the school had about 25 faculty members. Today, it has about 100 faculty members. The support staff has grown from eight to 50. The number of graduate students has increased by a factor of 10.

When Winer became chair, the school's endowment was about $3 million. "Today the endowment is more than $100 million, thanks to the generosity of alumni and friends and the excellent investment practices of the Georgia Tech Foundation," he says. "This makes a big difference in the kinds of programs and activities we are able to offer our students."

Enrollment in mechanical, nuclear and radiological engineering programs has increased substantially over the last few years, Winer observes. "We are now the largest mechanical engineering and probably the largest nuclear engineering program in the country and the largest undergraduate program at Georgia Tech," he says.

Winer says his greatest success has been hiring "excellent faculty and staff. It is these people who attract outstanding students, which results in outstanding alumni, which, in turn, make the reputation of the school."

Winer says he has enjoyed his time as school chair. "This is a great place and a great group to work with," he says. "I have decided that I want to have more control over my time for the time I have left, and the typical work week of a school chair doesn't give me enough time to do many of the other things I would like to do." GT
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Women Win Tennis Title
Senior Alison Silverio is congratulated by her teammates after winning her final singles match as a Yellow Jacket and dramatically clinching the NCAA championship for Georgia Tech with a 4-2 victory over UCLA. Silverio, who also clinched Tech's win over Fresno State, was named the most valuable player of the NCAA tournament. "I just couldn't be happier," said an exuberant coach, Bryan Shelton, at right in the inset photograph with Athletics Director Dan Radakovich. "For Ali to come through in the clutch one more time in the final match of her career is just unbelievable." Shelton, in his eighth year at Georgia Tech, was named Intercollegiate Tennis Association National Coach of the Year. Kristi Miller, Amanda McDowell and Christy Striplin also won their matches to give Tech its first NCAA title in any sport, although football has won four national championships based on wire polls. The team won its 21st straight match in the NCAA tournament at the University of Georgia's Henry Field courts to end the season 29-4. Silverio was ready. "I was feeling it 110 percent," said Silverio, who defeated 40th-ranked Tracy Lin. Radakovich said, "Obviously for everyone who has been associated with Georgia Tech forever this is a momentous occasion."
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