THE CENTENNIAL ISSUE

THE RISE OF AN URBAN UNIVERSITY

In 100 years, Georgia State has transformed from a tiny school of commerce to a premier urban research institution.
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Join Today!

GSU Alumni Association | 133 Dahlberg Hall | 30 Courtland Street | Atlanta, GA 30303 | 404-413-2190 | alumni@gsu.edu
AILEEN (B.S. ’78, MBA ’81) AND CHRIS VALIANOS have committed a multimillion-dollar planned gift to the School of Music.

“Not only are we gifting back to Georgia State, but we are also demonstrating our appreciation to the School of Music for all the productions we have enjoyed,” said Mr. and Mrs. Valianos.

“The Valianoses realize the value of education and have validated the importance of what we do through their generosity,” said School of Music Director W. Dwight Coleman. “The significance of their bequest cannot be overestimated.”
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ON THE COVER
SINCE ITS FOUNDING, GEORGIA STATE HAS MAINTAINED A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH ATLANTA. THAT SAME ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT THAT FUELED ATLANTA’S GROWTH HAS ALSO HELPED GEORGIA STATE GROW.

Cover illustration by Lauren Harvill, a senior graphic design major in the Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design. Harvill is the recipient of the Andrew M. West Scholarship.
For years, the B&D Cafeteria — given the unfortunate nickname “Bite and Die” by busy students in search of variety — on the second floor of the Student Center was the closest place for students to sit down and have a square meal. (Go to page 28 to read more.) Today, students have dozens of food vendors in the same space. None of which, however, serve “a hockey puck with a golf ball” (a hamburger steak and a hard-boiled egg), a B&D staple.
A CENTURY OF ENTERPRISE

From its modest beginnings, Georgia State has flourished into a premier institution with global influence.

When I think about the 44 young men who gathered a century ago in a classroom in the newly named Evening School of Commerce, I wonder what they would make of Georgia State University today.

Those first pioneers came to learn from Atlanta businessmen — accountants, bankers and lawyers — as they worked toward advancing their careers and making key connections in the city. They came to build better lives for their families and to gain practical knowledge in the then-new science of management.

They would see how Georgia State has changed in so many ways. Their tiny evening business school is now a thriving research university with more than 250 degrees in 100 fields of study. That 44-student class is now a university of 32,000 students from every state in the nation and most countries in the world. Our footprint in downtown Atlanta, once consisting of a rented room in a small building on Walton Street, now spans dozens of city blocks from Peachtree to Piedmont, and beyond.

The changes at Georgia State have been stunning, but I think those first graduates would see how much has remained the same. We’re still providing relevant, practical education for students who are driven to succeed. The spirit of perseverance, pragmatism and independence that defined our founding continues to shape our future. Our connection to and impact on the city have grown even stronger, and our students continue to benefit from having Atlanta as their classroom and laboratory.

Our ability to adapt is in our DNA. We’ve had seven names since our founding, and at every step we have redefined what it means to be an urban university. We have never been afraid of rolling up our sleeves to get the job done, sometimes in remarkable ways. George Sparks, our first president, cashed in his life insurance policy to pay the light bills during the Great Depression. After World War II, as the university struggled financially, he opened a sawmill on the fourth floor of Kell Hall to generate revenue. Throughout our history, we have pushed hard to earn the recognition we deserve as an outstanding public university that is making a difference in its community and for its state.

Some might call us scrappy. I call us enterprising. As Georgia State moves into its second century, we have much to celebrate. Our university has earned national recognition for our ability to graduate students from all socio-economic, ethnic and geographic backgrounds. Our strategic plan creates a path to achieve our vision for leadership in student success, education and research. We will continue to be a national center in addressing the complex challenges of cities, using Atlanta as our laboratory. Our professors continue to find innovative ways to teach students. We will achieve distinction in building partnerships around the globe.

We may look markedly different than we did 100 years ago, but our enterprising culture remains the same as it was a century ago. And we will remain a campus for students from all walks of life who see higher education as the key to a better life for themselves and their families.

Sincerely,

Mark P. Becker
President
MAKING HISTORY FOR 100 YEARS

Since 1913, Georgia State University has provided opportunities for students to elevate their lives through education, and, along the way, has become a vital part of our city and the world. Now it's time to celebrate the important milestones of our past 100 years and look forward to what we can do in the next century.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR KICK OFF

The Centennial kicked off in January with a Centennial Carnival held on the plaza of 25 Park Place. In addition, Sandra Deal, First Lady of Georgia, visited the Georgia State Child Development Center on Jan. 14. A presentation of donated books in her honor was made following her reading to pre-k classes. On Jan. 16, United States Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey opened the Centennial Speakers series with a reading from her newest book, “Thrall: Poems.”

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEB. 16 — LANGDALE HALL DEDICATION
Dedication of General Classroom Building in honor of former President Noah Langdale.

FEB. 26 — PATTON HALL DEDICATION
Dedication of Freshman Hall in honor of President Emeritus Carl Patton.

MARCH 9 — GSU CARES (pantheralumni.com/gsucares)
Georgia State Alumni Association’s inaugural community service day

Events are open to the public; contact Office of Ceremonies & Events for more information at 404-413-1373 or cgeary@gsu.edu.

CENTENNIAL HONORARY CHAIRS
Helen Aderhold | Brad Ferrer | Beth Kenny | Laura Voisinet | Dexter Warrior
THE EARLY YEARS

1913 – 1933

1913: The Georgia Tech Evening School of Commerce is inaugurated.
1914: The institution moves from the Georgia Tech campus and into downtown.
1915: Seven men, all carrying full-time jobs, make up the first graduating class. They each earn bachelor of commercial science degrees.
1917: Annie T. Wise, a Hungarian immigrant, is the first woman admitted.
1931: The institution purchases its own permanent building at 223 Walton St.

LEADERS:
- Dean Wayne Kell (1913-17)
- Dean John Madison Watters (1917-25)
- Dean Frederick Wenn (1924-28)
- President George M. Sparks (1928-57)

NAME CHANGES:
- Georgia Tech’s Evening School of Commerce
- University System of Georgia Evening School (1933)

HIGHLIGHTS

The Evening School of Commerce’s first home was in the Lyman Hall Laboratory of Chemistry at Georgia Tech (left). William Fambrough (right), a Georgia Tech alumnus, helped conceive the idea for the School of Commerce in 1911 and was one of the original champions for the school.
In Business

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY BEGAN ITS FIRST 100 YEARS AS A TINY SCHOOL OF COMMERCE

BY MERL REED

When Georgia Tech established its School of Commerce in 1913, about half of the 44 enrollees were non-traditional students employed in Atlanta’s businesses. Most attended the evening classes, while regular Tech commerce students went to day classes. In 1914, responding to their enthusiasm and hearing student complaints, Tech moved the evening classes to a rented downtown building on Walton Street to accommodate the working students’ busy and conflicting schedules. It was a significant decision. Enrollment more than doubled. This off-campus constituency grew steadily and became a haven for eligible working youths who could not afford regular college. It was also the nucleus for the urban college that became Georgia State University.

Initially, Tech offered a three-year bachelor of commercial science (B.C.S.) degree followed by two years of approved work in business. A certificate of proficiency was awarded for completion of all the courses. All campus collegiate requirements applied to the downtown Evening School. The typical program included commercial law as well as economics, labor problems, banking, cost accounting and finance. In 1915, Tech graduated its first commerce class, all seven carrying full-time jobs. A year later, Tech switched to a four-year degree program, the bachelor of science degree in commerce (B.S.C.), which had a more demanding curriculum, including biology, chemistry, mathematics, engineering, machine shop and a foreign language. This change coincided with the founding of the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business. Downtown Evening School students could receive the four-year degree only by taking additional daytime courses on the Tech campus.

WOMEN AND THE WAR

Like all educational institutions, the Evening School and Tech felt the influence of World War I. But as students and faculty departed for war and enrollments declined, the Evening School remained stable primarily because of the concurrent gender upheaval. Dean Wayne Kell opened the Evening School to women in 1917, swelling enrollment by 40 percent despite the declining male population. About 30 women made up more than 26 percent of the freshman class. By 1918, the enrollment outgrew the Walton Street building. The Evening School moved to a central location at the Peachtree Arcade, just in time for a 1919 explosion in the student body. It doubled to 310 compared to 190 enrolled on Tech’s campus. The Evening School’s first woman student, Annie Teitelbaum Wise, also graduated that year. During the day, the 55-year-old Wise was principal of Commercial High.

Growth continued in the 1920s as the Evening School established deeper roots. Enrollment surpassed 700 by the 1930s, twice requiring moves to new locations before a permanent structure was acquired in 1931. Tech’s acceptance as the 16th member of the prestigious American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business in 1921 surely encouraged Dean John Watters to seek, unsuccessfully, the four-year degree for evening students. Watters’ successor, Director Frederick Wenn, set up a recruitment network among local school superintendents for “bright, energetic boys,” and he found jobs for them in local businesses.

George M. Sparks, a non-academic newspaper and public relations man, replaced Wenn in 1928 and gradually extended the school’s community outreach to the entire state. He took an interest in students and sponsored their publications and numerous organizations. Sparks’ popularity, business acumen and political instincts prepared him well for the economic hard times that arrived at the end of the 1920s.

Sparks’ first major task after the 1929 stock market crash was to move the school out of its decrepit quarters at 100 Forsyth Street. Plagued by miserly state support, Tech, by early 1930, felt the financial strain and warned against any future deficits. Yet the state auditor that June found the downtown Evening School profitable, and Sparks began looking for a permanent home. Two Atlanta businessmen found a 30-year-old former orphanage, Sheltering Arms, on Walton Street. Physically, it fit the bill, and they purchased it.

Even as the renovation continued, Atlanta’s economy weakened by 1930, but the school’s finances remained sound. The school’s wellbeing also depended upon the Atlanta community. A fundraising drive generated publicity and garnered support among business leaders, the Walton Street acquisition planted deeper roots and praise came from local higher education leaders.

ON SOLID GROUND

The Evening School’s fortunes began changing in 1932 after the legislature created the University System of Georgia to save money and streamline higher education. Advice on organizing the new system was solicited from the General Education Board, which recommended that a study be undertaken by a group of educational experts under George Works from the University of Chicago. Works’ report called for the registration and consolidation of the system. The Evening School, newly labeled the University System of Georgia Evening School, was removed from Tech’s supervision and went directly to the new chancellor’s office under an Adult Education Center. Tech’s commerce school was transferred to the University of Georgia and Georgia’s tiny engineering program went to Tech.

Sparks had foreseen that the Works group would free the Evening School from Tech’s control. Ever ambitious, he expanded the Evening School into a state college. Despite serious money shortages, Sparks planned curriculum and graduate work, and increased the teaching staff. By fall 1933 he was enrolling students in a new four-year B.S.C. degree, previously offered only at Tech, and offering master’s degree courses. He told the Atlanta Constitution to expect the largest enrollment in the school’s history. Within three years this bold venture was halted over opposition from the Southern Association of Colleges.

The Evening School, still attached to the chancellor’s office and unaccredited until 1952, survived despite determined opposition. Subsequently, it became Georgia State College of Business Administration in 1955, Georgia State College in 1962 and Georgia State University in 1969.

Enrollment surpassed 700 by the 1930s, twice requiring moves to new locations before a permanent structure was acquired in 1931.

Merl Reed is professor emeritus of history and author of “Educating The New Urban South: Atlanta and the Rise of Georgia State University, 1913-1969.”
THE FIRST BENEFACCTOR

ROBERT R. JOHNSON RAISED THE FUNDS FOR GEORGIA STATE’S FIRST PERMANENT BUILDING

BY LAUREL BOWEN

The newly formed Evening School of Commerce relocated to the downtown Atlanta business district in 1914. Enrollment grew rapidly, requiring the school to move frequently. The school had four locations from 1914-31 (see sidebar). Rooms were rented in these locations, with classes and school administration often sharing the same room.

The rooms at Forsyth Street were “dingy,” “overcrowded, unsanitary” and “a serious fire hazard,” according to Merl Reed in “Educating the Urban New South.” As then-president George Sparks searched for a new building, he found welcome support from Robert Rosser Johnson, an Atlanta coal company executive. In the spring of 1930 the two men found a solidly constructed building at 223 Walton St. which, when renovated, could provide 19 rooms for the growing student population.

The Technite, the Evening School’s student newspaper noted, “In addition to 14 fine classrooms, four sanitary and modernly equipped restrooms, study halls, reception rooms, the building is to house a modern coffee shop and a roof garden on top for recreation purposes.”

Johnson became chief fundraiser as building committee chair. His task included raising $17,500 for the mortgage and an estimated $10,000 in services and building materials for renovation. It was not easy that hot summer, as the Depression took hold, but Johnson continued, month after month, serving also as unofficial purchasing agent and bursar.

Even in the midst of the Depression, Johnson was able to raise funds from individuals and two corporate sponsors — Coca-Cola and Retail Credit, now Equifax.

When the completed building was dedicated in May 1931, Johnson had raised $33,528 in pledges and in-kind donations for the building fund, personally pledged $10,000 (by far the largest pledge of any donor) and signed a note for $8,500 to cover unpaid invoices.

The Evening School now had its own building, and nearly 700 students enrolled that fall, the largest number ever. Sparks commented gratefully: “Homes throughout the land will be blessed because Robert Johnson and his loyal friends wrought well for those less fortunate — but who are now to have an attractive school home for modern business training.”

Five years later — in 1936 — Johnson paid off the remaining $14,000 indebtedness on the building. His personal contributions to the $80,000 building were estimated to be $40,000.

The next year, on Dec. 10, 1937, Johnson died after a brief illness. He was 53 years old. Grieving students, now more than 1,100 strong, respectfully dedicated their 1938 Nocturne yearbook to Robert Rosser Johnson, “Friend and Benefactor of the Evening College.”

Laurel Bowen is Georgia State University’s Digital Archivist.

OUR EARLY HOMES

1913-14: Lyman Hall, Georgia Tech main campus
1914-16: Walton Building, Walton St. N.W. at Cone St.
1917-21: Peachtree Arcade, Peachtree St. at Wall St.
1921-26: Murphy Building, 18 Auburn Ave.
1926-31: 106 Forsyth St. N.W.
1931-38: Sheltering Arms, 223 Walton St. N.W.

In 1931, the Evening School of Commerce purchased and moved into the Sheltering Arms building at 223 Walton St., shown here before its renovation. If the building were standing today, it would be in the center of Centennial Olympic Park.

Visit 100.gsu.edu for a Centennial Timeline.

Laurel Bowen is Georgia State University’s Digital Archivist.

Robert R. Johnson raised the funds for Georgia State’s first permanent building.
Wayne Kell, a Georgia Tech professor of metallurgy and geology, was the very first dean of the Evening School of Commerce. In order to improve his business training, he took up accounting and finance, and eventually became the third Georgian to become a certified public accountant.

The Evening School of Commerce had the faith and confidence of Georgia Tech’s administration, but the school received little financial support from the mother institution, or even the state. Nor was it the only program set up for busy working adults to obtain an education in downtown Atlanta. Emory University had its own extension program downtown, established in 1919, but it charged more than $100 per term — out of the reach of the typical student of the Georgia Tech Evening School of Commerce. Emory’s program did not survive the Great Depression and closed in 1932. The Evening School did survive, as faculty pitched in to perform multiple jobs, even helping to run the school’s coffee shop, a 1932 edition of The Technite reported.

By the early 1930s, even after Emory ended its own downtown program, it accepted academic credits from the Evening School, as did other Georgia institutions.

**Student Life**

Even though the Evening School of Commerce’s student body was composed of busy working adults in downtown Atlanta, there was still plenty of student life to participate in, from student media and a student council established in 1930 to fraternities, sororities and dances.

The Technite served as the school’s student newspaper, starting in 1926 and existing until the school’s separation from Georgia Tech. Today, only issues from 1926 and from 1930-1932 exist in the Georgia State University Archives. According to Marilyn Somers, director of the Living History program at the Georgia Tech Alumni Association, the Evening School had its own yearbook, The Owl, but no full copies remain — only a sole page, torn out of the book, located at the Tech archives today.

The first fraternity at the Evening School was the Alpha Kappa Psi business fraternity, established in 1917. Other organizations included the Venetian Club — where a 1931 issue of The Technite reports of an initiation ritual where “pledges will display lollipops and balloons, and wear baby caps. Neophytes are supposed to emerge from the fracas with at least one balloon unbusted.” The fraternities, sororities and the Venetian Club were involved in the Buttermilk Ball, a longstanding, invitation-only costume ball that remained with Georgia State through the next few decades.

**ATLANTA AND THE DEPRESSION**

**What it cost...**

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* according to the U.S. Department of Energy
For decades, the Evening School of Commerce was the only place at Tech — and indeed among any state institution of higher education — where women could attend undergraduate classes. And they weren’t always welcome. Playing off of the school’s fight song, they were subject to remarks like “Nell of an engineer” and “I’m a Ramblin Wreck from Georgia Tech and I keep my lipstick near,” according to a 2002 article in BuzzWords, a publication of Georgia Tech’s Alumni Association.

Before the Evening School started downtown, two women, Beth Wall and Eula Lang, enrolled in the School of Commerce in 1912 when it was housed at Lyman Hall on main Tech campus, but they did not graduate. Women were only allowed by the state government in 1916 to attend graduate programs at the University of Georgia and technically, women were not allowed to attend any undergraduate classes at any state institution until 1920, when the Georgia General Assembly legalized it for the Evening School’s downtown location only, BuzzWords reported in 2002.

But women first arrived at the Evening School, under the radar, in 1917, and it was women who helped to keep enrollment steady at the Evening School as men were called into action during World War I. Women represented 26 percent of the Evening School’s freshman classes during the war, while women represented only 10 percent of the student bodies of other commerce schools in the southeastern United States.

The Evening School’s first female graduate, Annie Wise, a Hungarian immigrant who attended Columbia University and the University of Paris, graduated in 1919 with a bachelor’s degree in commerce. She also became the first female graduate from any state-supported college or university in Georgia. She would later go on to become the school’s first female faculty member as an instructor in commercial science and was principal at Commercial High School of the Atlanta Public Schools.

Women who attended what became Georgia State, like the other working adult students of the school, were tough and determined in obtaining their education. In The Technite, student E. Louise White wrote in 1926 about the “Tech Night Girl,” noting that the women of the school were “… no longer the little [ladies] who sat demurely obscure in grandmother’s days, she is rather a personage who has enlightened, ennobled and enriched civilization … it is a better, greater world that gives to her today an equal chance to grasp those golden opportunities that have at last poured her dreams into the melting pot of equalization and realities.”

Juliet Dowling, one of the last women to graduate from the Evening School of Commerce before the newly created Board of Regents separated it from Georgia Tech, ordered a man-sized graduation ring when she obtained her degree in 1932. “I figured I’d done a man-sized job, graduating from Tech,” she said, according to Tech Topics.

Merl Reed’s book, “Educating the Urban New South: Atlanta and the Rise of Georgia State University, 1913-1969,” traces the history of Georgia State University from its founding in 1913 as Georgia Tech’s evening school to its university status in 1969. Reed, a professor emeritus of history, was also instrumental in establishing the Southern Labor Archives in the library’s Special Collection Archives.
During the formative years of the Evening School of Commerce, not everyone could afford an education there, or at any institution of higher learning for that matter. But many students in Atlanta’s school system showed promise. Frederick “Freddie” Wenn, a beloved Georgia Tech management professor, worked with high school superintendents to find intelligent students in their ranks who couldn’t pay for college.

Wenn saw to it that these students were able to attend the Evening School by helping to find them daytime jobs in downtown Atlanta. It was his way of ensuring that promising students had a chance to thrive.

Wenn lost his father when he was just 7 years old and one of five children, which fed a lifetime sense of responsibility and obligation. Professor Wenn continued to take students under his wing, guiding students to purchase defense stamps and donate them to a fund to build a student center — raising $250,000 for a student center that remains on the Tech campus today.

Wenn served the school as director from 1925-28.
Downtown's tallest structures are the Hurt, Candler and Healey buildings. Short brick shops fill Woodruff Park. Electric trolley tracks run from downtown to the suburbs of Inman Park, Virginia Highland and the West End, and there are no interstates or MARTA rail.

Broad Street and Auburn Avenue are the centers of thriving, yet separate, retail and entertainment districts for the city's white and black communities. A bustling Union Station spews pedestrians onto Marietta and Peachtree streets. The Great Depression shadows all.

This is the downtown Atlanta freshman Ralph Moor saw 80 years ago while riding the streetcar from his home on Marietta Square to the Georgia Tech Evening School of Commerce. Moor, like Georgia State, celebrates his 100th birthday this year.

Although disinclined to acknowledge it, his intentional journey as a public servant — which found him in the employ of a general, a U.S. senator, university presidents and several Georgia governors — is a model for students today.

Moor graduated in 1937 with a bachelor of science degree and a major in commerce. “Business courses were my interest, and the Evening School was my only choice,” he says during an interview in the well-appointed library of his Buckhead senior living facility, the fire beside his motorized chair crackling and popping.

Working as a secretary at the B. Mifflin Hood Brick Company during the day, he attended classes at night. President George Sparks, Moor remembers, often walked the halls, greeting students and encouraging them in their studies. “He was interested in where his students came from” Moor says, “and would take us along to assist him on his trips. We'd drive to Board of Regents meetings in Milledgeville or Valdosta or other places, and I’d record the motions.”

Upon graduating, Moor was awarded a graduate scholarship and taught typing, shorthand and commerce courses under President Sparks.

Certain by 1939 he would be drafted into the Army, Moor toured upstate New York and Canada and saw the New York World’s Fair. He says this trip fostered his interest in personnel administration.

Moor was commissioned in 1940. He was a casualty correspondent for the War Department in Washington, D.C., and briefly at General Douglas MacArthur’s Pacific Headquarters in Manila. He later joined the Army Reserve and retired a brigadier general.

While in Washington, Moor worked toward a master of arts degree in personnel administration at George Washington University.

A fraternity brother whose twin worked for Sen. Richard Russell helped advance his goal, introducing Moor to the senator. Moor was Russell’s executive secretary from 1946 to 1948, earning his degree in 1947.

Moor returned to Georgia at the invitation of South Georgia College’s President Will Smith, another friend from Evening College. As academic dean, he taught economics and developed a course in personal finance for two years. He then served with the U.S. Office of Education.

When he was called to lead Georgia’s Office of Personnel Management, the law establishing the Georgia Merit System had been in effect nearly a decade. Commissioner Moor brought a heightened level of professionalism to the state's employment practices, directing the design and implementation of the human resources tools necessary to implement the new system.

Before retiring in 1975, Moor also helped establish the state's retirement system.

Through the last 80 years, Ralph Moor has spent the last three decades lecturing at Georgia’s high schools and colleges, working to “poverty proof” students by improving their understanding of personal finance.

At Georgia State he established an endowment to further the teaching of personal economics.

“The desperate financial conditions of many people — bankruptcies, crime, homelessness, repossessions — have been matters of much concern to me in recent years,” he said to the Georgia State University Foundation.

To teach others how to avoid these circumstances, he has helped establish courses in personal economics.

Economics Professor Paula Stephan has taught classes in managing credit card debt to more than 3,000 students in Georgia State University’s Freshmen Learning Communities. She says the courses supported by Moor have encouraged students to think more carefully about debt.
**2012-2013 SERIES**

**CONGRATULATIONS TO GSU ON THEIR 100TH YEAR!**

*Free Parking for Rialto Series shows in the Equitable Deck on Fairlie Street.*

### Where Atlanta Meets the World

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<td>Mingus Big Band</td>
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<td>Benjamin Britten’s <em>The Turn of the Screw</em> Georgia State University School of Music Opera Theatre &amp; Symphony Orchestra</td>
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[www.rialtocenter.org](http://www.rialtocenter.org)  
404-413-9TIX(9849)  

*Free Parking for Rialto Series shows in the Equitable Deck on Fairlie Street.*
AN ERA OF PROGRESS
1933 – 1957

1938: The National Alumni Association of the Georgia Evening College is formed.
1943: The Evening Signal and the Junior Collegiate merge to form the University Signal.
1956: The Panther becomes the official school mascot.
1957: George Sparks retires after 29 years of service.

CAMPUS EXPANSION:
• Indian Creek Lodge (1939)
• Kell Hall (1946)
• Sparks Hall (1955)

NAME CHANGES:
• The University Extension Center, including the Atlanta Junior College and the Georgia Evening College (1935-47)
• Atlanta Division, University of Georgia (1947-55)
• Georgia State College of Business Administration (1955)

HIGHLIGHTS
1956: SPIRIT STUDENTS HANG OUT AND ENJOY THE RISING ATLANTA SKYLINE
A Resourceful Institution

GEORGE SPARKS, THE SCHOOL’S FIRST PRESIDENT, INVESTED IN AND OVERSAW RAPID GROWTH AND CHANGE AT THE DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

BY KATHLEEN POE ROSS

George M. Sparks didn’t have the academic credentials expected of a higher education leader when he became director of the Georgia Tech Evening School of Commerce in 1928. He had made a name for himself as a field journalist for the Macon Telegraph, covering the activities of Georgia’s National Guard troops in the Mexican Revolution from the border and reporting on World War I from the nation’s capital. He later served as the paper’s city editor. Sparks found his way into academia as a publicity director and journalism lecturer and eventually realized, at age 39, that college administration was his life’s work.

What Sparks lacked in experience he made up for with enthusiasm and dedication to the downtown Evening School and its nontraditional students. He established the Evening School’s library in 1931 with a donation of books from his own collection. He gave students loans out of his own accounts so they could pay tuition.

“He was a very generous man with his time, with his energy and with his efforts on behalf of the students who were coming to Georgia State,” says Jean Thomas, a 1943 graduate and former assistant dean of the Evening School began to attract students even by 1943.

Sparks introduced a defense-focused curriculum, shifting academic schedules to accommodate draftees and made a push to attract and retain female students. As a result, the institution not only remained afloat, it thrived. At the end of the war, the school was poised to welcome veterans back for success.

New areas of study proliferated, and the school’s full-time faculty grew from three professors in 1934 to 101 in 1954.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Throughout the school’s evolution Sparks proved a creative and resourceful director, networking with Atlanta’s business leaders as well as Evening School alumni and faculty. In many cases, those connections helped the school procure financial assistance, building materials, donated equipment or valuable parcels of land. For the students, Sparks established a textbook rental system and a credit union to make the cost of getting an education more manageable.

A SENSE OF PLACE

When World War II began, depleting university enrollments all across the country, Sparks introduced a defense-focused curriculum, shifted academic schedules to accommodate draftees and made a push to attract and retain female students. As a result, the institution not only remained afloat, it thrived. At the end of the war, the school was poised to welcome veterans back to school by the thousand.

Cultivating community and school pride among students and faculty was another key part of Sparks’ vision. He sponsored student clubs and organizations, which gave an air of collegiate normalcy to the unconventional campus, and attended their banquets and festivals through the years. In 1939, he arranged for the school’s purchase of the Indian Creek Lodge, to this day an off-campus home for student and faculty recreational activities. In later years, it was not unusual to find Sparks surrounded by a group of students in the school’s snack bar, spinning a tale over a Coke.

“He could tell a story and just captivate you,” Suttles remembers. “We learned so much from him that no university could ever teach you because he knew mankind, he knew people.”

When he retired in 1957 Sparks had overseen construction of the school’s first new building — eventually named in his honor — and announced plans for other facilities to be constructed. In the yearbook dedication to him that year, the Rampway called Sparks the “master builder of Georgia State College.”

Change was a hallmark of Sparks’ 29-year tenure as president. Names and locations changed, and accreditation and degree programs came and went as the school was passed back and forth among Georgia Tech, the Board of Regents and the University of Georgia. Through all of these institutional growing pains, Sparks was steadfast in his goal to serve the nontraditional students — the workers, the veterans, those looking for a second chance — who came to the evening college.

A dinner celebrating the school’s silver anniversary in 1939, words of effusive praise from Atlanta’s civic leaders showed the school was becoming an institution of significance to the city and the state. When it was Sparks’ turn to address the gathering, he asserted that the conventional trappings of higher education were not requisite for success.

“It is a challenge to other colleges to do away with tradition,” Sparks declared. “Just because they have a campus with a sun dial and a bird bath and trees, it doesn’t follow that they need them to get an education.”
When the Evening School moved into 223 Walton St. in 1931, it was thought the space would accommodate the student body for some time. However, the building’s 14 classrooms were overflowing by spring 1934. Extra space was created by dividing the roof garden of the building into rooms. The introduction of the Atlanta Junior College in 1935 brought daytime classes, which relieved some crowding, but it was clear the school needed more room to grow. In fall 1938 classes began in the institution’s new home at 162 Luckie St., a former hotel next to the Baptist Tabernacle (now a popular downtown concert venue).

In 1946, the school moved once again to make room for the flood of veterans returning to college with the aid of the GI Bill. Sparks had found an old garage structure on Ivy Street — famously with ramps between floors instead of stairs — bought it and renovated it with surplus building materials and equipment from the U.S. government. Students today know the old six-story garage as Kell Hall. Government surplus also provided the school with a gymnasium-auditorium in the form of an available airplane hangar from Oak Ridge, Tenn., which opened in 1947.

Under Sparks’ direction, the school planned and constructed its first building at the corner of Gilmer and Courtland streets. Faced in white Georgia marble, the building, occupied in 1955, was the first completely air-conditioned unit in the University System of Georgia — a claim often highlighted in advertisements for the college. By the time Sparks retired in 1957, there were plans for a recital auditorium adjacent to then-new building that now bears his name.

As they still do today, students back in 1949 also had to hike up and down the ramps of Kell Hall on their way to class. President George Sparks was able to negotiate a price of $300,000 for the former Ivy Street Garage in 1945 and transformed it into classroom space for a third of the cost of constructing a new building.

RAMPING UP

The student body of the Evening School was eager to establish its own identity when it became independent from Georgia Tech. A school-wide vote in the fall of 1933 established new school colors: red, borrowed from the University of Georgia, and white, borrowed from Georgia Tech. In 1938 these colors and a new school symbol, the owl, were made official. Sports teams that had been variously called Redbirds and the Nightsters became the Georgia Evening College Owls.

When the school came under Athens’ wing in 1947 as the Atlanta Division of the University of Georgia, change was inevitable. Owls gave way to Ramblers as mascots starting in 1948, and in 1949 the school colors switched to the red and black of the University of Georgia.

With the final split from the University of Georgia in 1955, though, went both school colors and mascot. By early 1956, the Panthers had been adopted as a mascot, by student vote, over the Bears, Eagles, Lions and Penguins. Penguins polled well early on, but the Panthers won out, according to the University Signal, partly due to “foresight on part of the school’s reputation.”

GO PENGUINS?

VISIT 100.GSU.EDU FOR A CENTENNIAL TIMELINE.
Lofty Plans

Campus as we know it today began to take shape in 1946 with the occupation of the Ivy Street Garage, also known as Kell Hall. Today we can see how Georgia State’s expansion and growth ultimately panned out, but there were several scuttled plans along the way that would have had things looking a little different downtown.

Two such notable proposals surfaced in the late 1940s as the university worked on plans for its first new-construction building, billed as a library-research center at the southwest corner of Gilmer and Courtland streets (now Sparks Hall). In December 1947, the University Signal reported that President Sparks had announced plans for a “Cathedral of Learning,” an expansion to be built on top of the new proposed building, adding stories as funds became available. This so-called cathedral would include not only additional classrooms and lab space, but also a “regulation swimming tank.”

Just two months after that announcement, Sparks made public his plans for a “campus in the sky” atop the six-story Atlanta Division building. The gravel covering the 20,000 square feet of rooftop space would be scraped off and replaced by a sun-resistant, waterproof plastic material, providing a smooth floor “suitable for moonlight dancing and other activities.” Part of the rooftop would be covered in sand during the summer to create a temporary beach for sunbathing, and the rest of the space given over to nearly a dozen tennis, badminton and shuffleboard courts. A fence would be constructed to prevent students from falling off the roof.

By fall 1948, both of these developments were up in the air, so to speak. The campus in the sky faced a “bigger problem than was expected,” Sparks said, because of logistics and scarcity of materials. As for the Cathedral of Learning, school officials decided to look to other downtown colleges across the country to see what kind of building would best suit the Atlanta Division’s needs before proceeding. In the end, these plans were set aside. Georgia State’s campus continued to expand in many directions, but up was not one of them.

STUDENTS IN PRINT

When the Evening School became independent in 1933 it replaced the Technite, the student newspaper from its Georgia Tech days, with the new monthly Evening Signal, and planned to publish its first annual, called Nocturne. The year 1935 saw the opening of the Atlanta Junior College, which brought with it another monthly student newspaper, the Junior Collegiate, and an annual named Gateway. The first joint effort of the schools appeared in 1938: a thrice-yearly literary magazine titled Flambo — an alternate spelling of the French “flambeau,” or torch — featuring poems, essays and works of fiction. Although that publication survived only for a decade, the newspapers and annuals made it through the tumultuous wartime years when resources were few and many involved students went off to serve. The newspapers merged in 1943 to create the University Signal. Likewise, the yearbooks came together in 1946 under the name Rampway, after, according to the paper, “the one thing that identifies our school more than any other physical characteristic — the ramp.”

These publications — the newspapers in particular — paint a vivid picture of student life at a given time. In addition to the usual business of the school, over the years the paper disseminated a wide range of content, including marriage announcements, recaps of intermural sports matchups, a wartime column called “Breezes from the Draft,” trend articles from the Intercollegiate Press wire service, editorials on polio prevention and more.

The Gateway, the yearbook for the Atlanta Junior College, was named for the swinging gates leading into the school’s former home at 162 Luckie St.
THE VETERAN EXPERIENCE

GI’s returning from WWII found a home — warts and all — at Georgia State

BY JOHN C. POPE (B.B.A. ’57)

I went into service immediately after high school when the war was just getting started, in August of 1942. I was discharged in 1946 and in 1948 entered the University of Georgia in Athens, where I lived on a government subsidy augmented by my poker winnings from the Marines. When those ran out, I moved my credits to what was at the time known as the Atlanta Division of the University of Georgia, located in the old parking building behind the Hurt building, so I could work and go to school at the same time. I got a job at a company called the Tennessee Corporation, which was in the Grant Building, about three or four blocks from the school. The student body at the time was real heavy with veterans because all of a sudden we just flooded the schools, you know? And some of us were older than the professors. All I’ll say about that is that some of those guys teaching, in fact a good many of them, felt like a lot of us didn’t belong in college. In fact, I had one who had the audacity to announce to us one day that most of us didn’t belong in college, that we were sons of the soil — implying that we should go back to the farm and plant potatoes, leaving higher education to people like him.

One of the men stood up and said, “I may be a son of the soil, but you’re a son of a bitch!” and just walked out of class. And I remember one who gave me an F for spelling the word ax a-x-e. He wrote me a note that said, “It’s a good composition, but university students ought to know how to spell.”

But, then again, one of the professors commented to me that there was a difference because we were more serious and we were there eager to learn. She had been teaching for a long time, and she was pleased at the opportunity to teach veterans because after serving three or four years we seemed to be a little more mature than what she was used to.

I was in the Delta Sigma Pi fraternity, and we were great competitors with Alpha Kappa Psi. We had bought some property out around Tucker and built a lodge out there — and we lorded it over the AK Psi boys because we had that lodge — so the big thing on Saturday night was having an invitation to Delta Sig lodge. It had a great big room with a fireplace on both ends. The pledges always had to cook for the brothers and their dates, and then we’d have music and card games and dancing — always a big crowd on a Saturday night.

The school wanted for us evening students and veterans to be part of the student body, and that’s where the fraternities and some of the social activities fit in. We didn’t feel separated from the other group at all. In fact, a lot of the evening students had been full-time students earlier and now they had an opportunity to switch to three nights a week and still work. There was great emphasis put on the fact that they didn’t cut us any slack. We had to measure up. They weren’t easing up on us just because we’d been to work or because we were veterans.

I met fellow student Betty Turner at the fraternity lodge one night in 1950, and after that she was the only one in the world for me.
ON THE HOMEFRONT

During World War II, the Georgia Evening College and Atlanta Junior College led the University System of Georgia in implementing a cutting-edge defense curriculum. In early 1942, the Junior Collegiate and Evening Signal both reported that several courses were already being offered, such as Diplomacy and Propaganda, Civilian Protection in War, Human Biology in National Defense and Trigonometry (Applied to Military Training).

In subsequent semesters, the Department of Physical Science, under the direction of Joseph LeConte, announced introductory and advanced courses in radio as well as a class called Chemistry of Explosives — available only to advanced chemistry students. LeConte, later commissioned by the U.S. Army as a captain in the chemical warfare division, authored a booklet on chemical warfare that was integrated into physical science curricula system-wide.
IDENTITY CRISIS

Looking back on the early decades of Georgia State, it seems like the school’s name and affiliation changed almost as often as its location did. What began as Georgia Tech’s Evening School of Commerce became the independent University System of Georgia Evening School in 1933 following the recommendation of a report commissioned by the newly created Board of Regents. With the addition of a day division in 1935, the school was dubbed the University Extension Center in Atlanta — variously referred to as the Atlanta Center and University System Center — which included the Atlanta Junior College (for daytime classes) and the Georgia Evening College (for night school).

This nomenclature remained in place until 1947 when the Board of Regents consolidated the center with the University of Georgia in Athens. The downtown campus was renamed Atlanta Division, University of Georgia (sometimes confusingly abbreviated as UGAA — University of Georgia at Atlanta). Just eight years later a complicated divorce from the university in Athens played out over several months. Effective in the fall quarter of 1955, the Atlanta Division was once again an independent unit in the University System of Georgia and was renamed the Georgia State College of Business Administration.

GROWTH AND RECOGNITION

With 1,748 students enrolled for the 1938-39 school year, the institution was the largest school of commerce in the South and the fifth largest in the nation.

A NETWORK OF SUPPORT

In 1937, Georgia State established the first credit union in the world organized by and for university students.

Twenty-five years into the school’s existence and five years into its first stint as an independent entity, Evening School alumni made their first push to organize. A committee of alums drafted a constitution in March 1938 and formally established the National Alumni Association of the Georgia Evening College. The Evening Signal reported that students were “unanimously enthusiastic” at the prospect of having an alumni body to stand behind the school as it continued to grow. In fact, the final separation of Georgia State from the University of Georgia in 1955 was precipitated in part by the alumni association’s request for complete independence from Athens.

The first alumni association magazine, the Atlanta Alumnus, went out to alumni in October 1950, featuring CBS news anchor Douglas Edwards (B.C.S. ‘37) on the cover. The magazine published quarterly. In its first four years, circulation grew from 500 to 5,000. The magazine changed names along with the school to become the Georgia State Alumnus in 1956.
Spend a night on the town, upgrade to first class, or donate to your favorite charity...whatever moves you most.

As a Georgia State alum, you could save up to $343.90* on your auto insurance with Liberty Mutual. You could also enjoy valuable discounts tailored to the way you live today and save even more by insuring your home as well.

Responsibility. What's your policy?

CONTACT US TODAY TO START SAVING

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*Discounts are available where state laws and regulations allow, and may vary by state. To the extent permitted by law, applicants are individually underwritten; not all applicants may qualify. Savings figure based on a February 2011 sample of auto policyholder savings when comparing their former premium with those of Liberty Mutual’s group auto and home program. Individual premiums and savings will vary. Coverage provided and underwritten by Liberty Mutual Insurance and its affiliates, 175 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA. © 2012 Liberty Mutual Insurance.
GROWTH AND PROSPERITY

1957 – 1988

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1961: Georgia State College of Business Administration is renamed Georgia State College and it begins to add new degree programs.
- 1962: Georgia State integrates.
- 1963: Georgia State Athletics joins the NCAA.
- 1969: Georgia State College becomes Georgia State University.
- 1988: Noah Langdale retires after 31 years.

CAMPUS EXPANSION:
- Pullen Library (1966)
- Business Administration Building (1968)
- Classroom South (1968)
- University Center (1969)
- The Arts and Humanities Building (1970)
- General Classroom Building (1971)
- Sports Arena (1973)
- Urban Life Building (1974)
- Title Building, College of Education (1982)
- Library South (1988)

COLLEGES FORMED:
- College of Arts and Sciences (1957)
- College of Education (1967)
- College of Urban Life (1968)
- School of Nursing (1972)
- College of Law (1982)
An Urban University Emerges

UNDER NOAH LANGDALE, GEORGIA STATE GREW ACADEMICALLY AND PHYSICALLY
AND ACHIEVED UNIVERSITY STATUS

BY MICHELLE HISKEY

A good half-century before it would start a football team, the Georgia State College of Business Administration needed a president who could defend the ground it had already gained. This leader needed boldness and savvy to compete politically against University of Georgia and Georgia Tech, the pedigreed siblings in the university system.

The right man would navigate with a vision sensitive to urgent social issues such as civil rights, integration and a swelling campus movement against the war.

Enter Noah Langdale Jr. A burly orator and surprise choice for the presidency, the 37-year-old emerged from a far-off corner of the university system — the Social Studies Department at Valdosta State. Langdale had family connections to local politics and had starred at tackle for the Alabama Crimson Tide. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa and chose the Navy over the National Football League's Green Bay Packers. He would stay at Georgia State 31 years until his retirement in 1988.

Langdale dug in and brought attention, support and respect to a two-building business college. He would lead massive growth in curricula, faculty and the physical campus. Under his watch, the institution would shorten its title to Georgia State College in 1961 and then become Georgia State University in 1969. He was a big man, in body and presence, for an era of big growth.

“He was the size of a door, a huge man with a shock of white hair and an extraordinary vocabulary,” said John Hanson (B.A. ’77). Langdale was a walking, talking force for what his school aspired to: a source of pride, intellect and energy made him equal to the challenges of moving past segregation and student unrest. One big sticking point was a state law imposing age limits on college students, a legislative tactic intended to keep out non-white students. Even in the 1950s, the campus attracted older, working students with nontraditional backgrounds. Their options beyond Georgia State were limited.

Langdale fought the unfair law and created pathways to change. In 1962, the college admitted its first black student, in 1966 its first black faculty member. Multiplicity of races would become one element of the diversity that today distinguishes Georgia State.

Amid the conflict of the Vietnam War and the growth of the Cold War, “Noah Langdale was very, very supportive of foreign students,” recalls Barbara Winship (the most diverse institution in the University System of Georgia.) He helped Georgia State grow up by appealing to and accommodating grownups: at his retirement, 78 percent of the student body was working, 53 percent were employed full time and the average age was 27.

“A community of learning has created a place for itself in the heart of Atlanta,” reported the Rampway.

When asked what was the most important thing about his tenure, Langdale sighed and replied, “Over the years, we’ve been able to educate a great number of people who would otherwise never have been able to go to college. In the history of our successes, there is glory for all and no one person had a monopoly on the claim of achievement.”

Langdale's presidency, remarked current Georgia State President Mark P. Becker, provides a benchmark for a campus that continues to dream big: “As the leadership of Georgia State focuses on the future, the profound legacy of our longest-serving president sustains our efforts and guides our progress.”

Michelle Hiskey is a former writer for the Georgia State University Foundation.
THE FIRST MASTER PLAN

The Charles Center subway station in Baltimore, Constitution Plaza in Hartford, Conn., and Midtown Plaza in Rochester, N.Y., all feature expansive plazas that anchor the development around them.

These outdoor spaces served as models for Georgia State University’s first master plan, which the Board of Regents tasked Andrew Steiner of local architectural firm Robert and Company to create in 1966.

The resulting document emphasized a pedestrian-friendly design, suggesting “a new elevated ‘ground level’ above the hazards of street traffic” and the creation of a plaza and several courtyards, walkways and stairs to “[encourage] the unplanned meetings that are an important part of university life.”

Whether the university decided to follow the 1966 master plan or deviate entirely, the designers made it clear Georgia State’s presence in downtown Atlanta and its mission to offer a quality education to its students would be vital in tackling the biggest issues facing the city at the time.

“Indeed, the great universal questions of our day, such as poverty, ignorance, unemployment and social unrest, can be best solved by putting the best education possible in the center of the largest population areas,” designers wrote in the plan’s foreword. “Thus, great urban universities are mandatory.”

‘PEACHTREE PAPA’

Georgia State University has a long and storied history with the world famous Peachtree Road Race, run every July 4 since 1970 down the main city street in Atlanta.

The “Peachtree Papa” is former Georgia State cross country coach and Dean of Men Tim Singleton (Ph.D. ’76) (left). Before the Atlanta Track Club took over the event in 1976, the first six races were organized by Singleton, and he had massive support from Georgia State personnel, including staff and students.

Singleton was inducted into the Atlanta Sports Hall of Fame in June 2011.
“I believe that every institution will live or die according to the way it meets its challenges.”

NOAH LANGDALE

**GROWING UP FAST**

“When her face is not pretty, she has rampways for stairs, and her classrooms are made of odds and ends from war surplus materials, but she can hold her head high, for she has served a great purpose: she has played a part in educating leaders of tomorrow,” wrote the staff of The Rampway, the Atlanta Division’s yearbook, about the building that started it all: Kell Hall.

When Noah Langdale became president in 1957, the Atlanta Division began physically expanding from its humble beginnings in Kell by moving into what is now known as Sparks Hall. Both the university and the state contributed monetarily to Sparks Hall’s creation, which cost $2.5 million (or roughly $21.6 million in today’s dollars) and solidified the university’s presence in downtown Atlanta.

When it was constructed, Sparks Hall was the first completely air-conditioned building in the University System of Georgia.

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**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT**

President Noah Langdale’s stats as a leader were impressive.

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<tr>
<td>STUDENTS = 5,000</td>
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<td>DEGREE PROGRAMS = 1 (business)</td>
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<td>BUILDINGS ON CAMPUS = 2</td>
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When Atlanta’s first Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) rail line opened between the Avondale and Georgia State stations in 1979, it provided students a new way to travel to campus and a solution to finding parking and avoiding crowded freeways.

**GROWTH AND PROSPERITY 1957 - 1988**
African-Americans seeking admission to Georgia State in the mid-1950s faced a number of roadblocks. They were required to have a superior court clerk’s certification, the endorsement of two alumni, and had to pass a number of aptitude and intelligence tests. Six African-American students applied to the business school’s evening program in 1956 and were turned away — a decision that led to Hunt vs. Arnold, a class action case in federal district court that went to trial in December 1958.

The judge in that case ruled that African-American students could apply, but the university had the final say in who was admitted. However, the judge also ruled the university couldn’t deny admission “to qualified Negroes solely because of their race or color.” But these students continued to face age laws for applicants and the university’s strict admission procedures, including lengthy interviews of each applicant.

In 1962, when the age laws were repealed and the university system no longer required alumni endorsements, Georgia State admitted its first African-American student: Annette Lucille Hall, a 53-year-old Rockdale County public school teacher, who took a summer course called “Americanism and Communism.” Hall’s admission not only encouraged more African-American students to enroll, such as Marybelle Reynolds Warner, the first full-time African-American student, but also paved the way for African-Americans such as Harding Young and Annie L. McPheeters, who joined the business school’s faculty and the library staff, respectively, to apply for jobs at the university.

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WRAS HITS THE AIRWAVES

The 100,000-watt Voice of Georgia State spun its first record more than 40 years ago

BY JEFF WALKER (B.S ’83, M.S. ’88)

Although WRAS is now the most powerful and one of the most highly respected all-student-programmed radio station in the country with more than 50,000 weekly listeners, the station humbly began in the 1960s with a hand-me-down FM signal.

What we now know as WRAS, Album 88 at 88.5 FM, was our second station and signed on the air Jan. 18, 1971, when we were Georgia State College. Very little is known about our first radio station in the 1960s, except that there was a small studio in Sparks Hall broadcasting on WPLO 103.3 FM. At that time, FM stations were barely profitable, so the corporate owners of WPLO allowed our students to broadcast a variety of programming.

By 1969, FM stations in San Francisco, New York and other major markets began tapping into the music of the Woodstock generation, and the owners of WPLO-FM now knew they could turn a profit with their own programming. Students were soon told of the loss of the station, so they lobbied the administration for a permanent solution.

On Nov. 12, 1969, Georgia State University (which had been given university status earlier that year) filed with the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) for a station at 88.5 FM. The FCC granted a construction permit for WRAS in February 1970 to operate at 19,500 watts, with two small studios in what is now the University Center.

Our first chief engineer, Harvey Morris, took such care to create a clean sound that the station was often used to demonstrate “hi-fi” stereo equipment in audiophile retail stores. WRAS also scored a technological first, along with Georgia Tech’s WREK 91.1, when in 1974 both stations aired the world’s first simulcast of The Who’s “Quadrophenia” album in “quadrophonic sound” using technology that gave the listener two front and two rear channels of sound.

WRAS quickly earned the reputation of being one of the most influential and professionally run student stations in the nation. The station’s first general manager, Richard Belcher (B.B.A. ’72), is now with WSB-TV, as is Chuck Dowdle (B.A. ’72), the station’s first sports director. Thousands of students have followed, many remaining in the fields of broadcasting and public relations, as well as in the music recording industry. While most other college stations had poor training and little knowledge of programming, Georgia State students had access to professional equipment and a large audience. Our latest alumni are in leadership positions across the country, from Turner Broadcasting to National Public Radio.

After the station’s power increase to 100,000 watts in March 1987, most of the population of North Georgia could now hear the signal. For more than 25 years, WRAS has been the most powerful student-programmed station, airing more than 300 hours of Panther Sports programming per year and informative programs about Georgia State’s unique research and academic offerings.

The future of WRAS is strong, primarily because of the very nature of its service to the university and its programming. Radio is the ultimate mobile device, with no data caps and no subscription fees, covering the entire metropolitan Atlanta area. In terms of programming, while online services such as Pandora deliver music based on what a listener has already heard and can define, stations such as WRAS cull from among thousands of new releases each year to bring their audience the sounds that will define tomorrow’s musical trends.

Jeff Walker (B.S ’83, M.S. ’88) began spinning records for WRAS as a student in 1976. He is now Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs Administration and WRAS adviser and operations manager.

THEN & NOW

On air since 1971, WRAS remains one of the nation’s most respected sources for new music and underground classics.
Before the Student University Center became a convenient place to eat, study and socialize, Georgia State students had been escaping their academic life at downtown city parks, pubs and eventually on the Plaza, which was built in the early 1970s.

“We mostly hung in the Plaza,” said Melissa Brennaman (B.A. ’89, M.P.A. ’93). “There was a 40-minute break at 10 a.m. then and they would have concerts, pottery sales and book sales. We would also hang out in the B&D cafeteria. I thought the food was good, but a lot of people made fun of the ‘drawer’ burgers, which were burgers pre-cooked and kept warm in a drawer.”

Because it was one of the only places for busy students to grab a bite nearby, the B&D on the second floor of the Student Center was given an unflattering nickname: The Bite and Die.

“Many students, having no other opportunities and little time, always ate one, two, three meals in the B&D,” said McRae Williams (B.B.A. ’70, MBA ’72). “So we even got tired of our own mother’s cooking, much less the B&D’s. Thus, the proverbial nickname ‘Bite and Die’ had to happen.

“But, despite its name, there was a life in that cafeteria. The place had a personality. It was not only the place to eat, it was the place to socialize and meet your friends,” Williams said.

In the 1970s, students could watch art house films in the Lyceum, housed in a room in Classroom South, and visit popular pubs after class, such as the former Ivy Street Library, a tavern that sat across Peachtree Center Avenue (formerly known as Ivy Street) from the Hurt Building.

William Waugh, a professor of public management and policy at Georgia State since 1985, said he invited graduate classes to the “Library” to network and discuss books that were displayed.

“The Library was a unique setting,” Waugh said. “The books lent something of a serious air and the close proximity to campus made it convenient for most students and faculty.”

Formed in 1962, Georgia State University’s Athletics Department consisted of men’s teams in basketball, cross-country, golf and tennis. The teams began to compete in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) during the 1963-64 season, under the leadership of Athletic Director Francis Bridges, who was on the faculty in the Business School of Management.

Georgia State awarded five basketball scholarships during its first year, paying the $175 tuition for student-athletes such as Jim Adams (B.B.A. ’66).

“I distinctly remember practicing at the YWCA and riding to a game in Wilmington, North Carolina in the backseat of a Chevrolet Nova,” Adams recalled. “We started it. We were the first and that’s something that no one can take from us.”

Adams has continued to stay involved with Georgia State athletics for more than four decades. He credits the university for equipping him for a 35-year career at SunTrust Bank.

Soccer and baseball followed soon after the Athletics Department was established, and in 1975 five women’s sports joined the program.
The Cecil B. Day School of Hospitality Administration, the oldest and largest program of its type in Georgia, was named in honor of the late founder of the Days Inn Hotel Company on May 11, 1988.

Day’s wife, Deen Day Sanders (B.A. ’61), donated $900,000 that year to the program that prepared students for leadership roles in the hospitality industry.

“The creation of the Cecil B. Day School of Hospitality Administration and having it named for Cecil has been a source of pride for our family,” Sanders said. But Georgia State had already played an important role in their lives.

“Robert Sparks, the son of Dr. George Sparks, introduced me to Cecil Day in 1952,” Sanders said. “We married very young and both graduated from college after our children were born.”

Georgia State’s College of Law opened to an inaugural class of about 200 students in September 1982.

The opening was the end to a long-fought battle for a law school by Georgia State, which had played out publicly among academics and legislators on the editorial pages of newspapers since the early 1970s. The Board of Regents eventually approved Georgia State’s College of Law in 1981.

“Georgia State was in the position to offer something that simply did not exist in terms of legal education in Georgia, and largely that was missing in the entire Southeast, and that was the general availability of part-time legal education on an accredited basis,” said E.R. Lanier, who has taught at Georgia State since the mid-1970s and assisted Ben F. Johnson, the school’s first dean, in organizing the College of Law.

“We brought to the table the opportunity for a quality legal education for those whose circumstances simply did not permit them to take a full-time commitment.”

During the Vietnam war, enrollment at Georgia State rose from 4,583 in 1963 to 17,990 by the 1973-74 academic year.

The Military Science program was an influential program during this time because all male full-time undergraduate students enrolled were required to participate if they had no prior military service and met the physical, age and other eligibility criteria. Georgia State Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) enrollment surpassed 1,000 cadets during the Korean War and nearly reached that level again during the Vietnam War.

“It is reasonable to assume that any young man who is qualified will serve in the military and we include this exposure to military in our course requirements,” said Kenneth England, dean of students, in an article in The Signal.

Although the number of Georgia State students or faculty members who served in the war is not recorded, Col. James D. Clark, a former lead professor of Military Science, told The Signal that Georgia State candidates had counted on serving two years of active duty during the critical period of 1965 to 1970 of the war, with one year actually in Vietnam.

As opposition to the war grew, so did opposition to the ROTC requirement by student activist groups such as the Committee on Social Issues. The ROTC requirement was lifted and the all-volunteer system was initiated during the early 1970s, around the time the United States withdrew from South Vietnam.
In the second half of the century, Georgia State grew in lockstep with its city.

BY TIM CRIMMINS

Greatestmetropolises beget great universities and Atlanta is no exception. As Atlanta ascended in the second half of the 20th century, it fueled the growth of Georgia State University. At the end of World War II, Atlanta had a metropolitan population of around half a million. Much of it was centered on a downtown that had changed very little since the onset of the Great Depression.

After World War II, Atlanta began to build its expressway system that powered suburban expansion and radically changed downtown. Georgia State played a critical role in the transformation of downtown when, in 1946, it relocated into Kell Hall, a repurposed a parking garage, as it expanded to accommodate demand from veterans taking advantage of the GI Bill.

However, neither the city nor the university could have continued to prosper without an end to racial segregation.

In the 1950s, Atlanta gained national recognition through its relatively peaceful integration. Georgia State quietly admitted its first African-American student in 1962 amid demonstrations by Atlanta University Center students picketing nearby segregated restaurants and lunch counters downtown.

By the late 1960s, the city boasted a population of more than 1 million and was home to the Braves, Hawks, Falcons and Flames. In 1973, the city elected Maynard Jackson as its first African-American mayor.

While Peachtree Center created a new skyline downtown in the 1970s, the major banks and law firms remained in office towers arrayed around Five Points. Georgia State was growing, but was not to compete for office space in the central business district. The first master plan created a five-block campus linked by bridges and plazas that raised much of student and academic life above the streets of the downtown.

Building on its base as a business college near the firms in the heart of the city, Georgia State established programs in education to prepare teachers for jobs in the expanding region. The university also rode the wave of federal funding focused on the urban crisis of the 1960s by creating a College of Urban Life and attracting faculty with expertise in urban issues. A new law school in 1982 increased visibility in the legal community and the General Assembly, where Glenn Richardson (B.A. ’81, J.D. ’84), a graduate of the first class, was elected Speaker of the House in 2005.

The entrepreneurial spirit that fueled Atlanta’s growth also helped Georgia State grow. Using the power of the University Senate, talented faculty who came to the university in the 1970s and ’80s were instrumental in establishing policies that rewarded those who received external research grants. Among the results were two new science buildings and the 1995 establishment of Georgia State as one of four research universities among the units of the University System of Georgia.

By the 1990s a new Atlanta was emerging. Suburban downtowns of offices, hotels, shopping and entertainment were growing around malls like Lenox and Phipps, Cumberland and Perimeter. The banks and law firms began to relocate from the heart of downtown, giving Georgia State the opportunity to fill the vacancies. The College of Education moved into the Lawyers Title Building and the Robinson College of Business into the C&S Bank Building. The 1996 Olympic legacy for Georgia State was the Olympic Village. Its 2,000 beds transformed the student body with a dramatic expansion of a residential population.

At the end of the first decade of the 21st century, Atlanta had grown to be the ninth largest metropolitan area in the United States. Its urbanized region reached into 10 counties. Much of this growth continued to drain businesses from the historic downtown where the university filled the void by expanding onto more office towers and hotel complexes. Fueled by a growing student body that made it the second largest unit in the University System, Georgia State established a housing corridor along Piedmont Avenue and a classroom-office concentration around Five Points. Five colleges occupy or will soon move into five former banking or insurance buildings.

Looking back at its second half-century, Georgia State mirrors the explosive growth of metropolitan Atlanta. Since the end of World War II, each experienced a tenfold population increase. The population of the Atlanta region now exceeds five million, and the university boasts an enrollment of more than 32,000. In its second century, Georgia State will continue to grow with Atlanta, if not in numbers, then, because of its foundation of the past 50 years, in the quality and extent of its academic and research programs.

Tim Crimmins is professor of history and director of the Center for Neighborhood and Metropolitan Studies at Georgia State, where he has been on the faculty since 1972.
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A TRUE CAMPUS DOWNTOWN

1988 – 2013

HIGHLIGHTS
• 1988: Georgia State Sports Arena hosts Olympic badminton competition.
• 1995: Georgia State receives research university status.
• 2002: Aderhold Learning Center opens.
• 2007: Georgia State’s Center for High Angular Resolution Astronomy takes the first images of the star Altair.
• 2010: Georgia State Panthers win inaugural football game.

PRESIDENTS:
• William Suttles (1988-89)
• John Palms (1989-91)
• Sherman Day (1991-92)
• Carl V. Patton (1992-2008)
• Mark P. Becker (2009-present)

COLLEGES FORMED:
• Andrew Young School of Policy Studies (1996)
• Byrdine Lewis School of Nursing (2003) (renamed Byrdine Lewis School of Nursing and Health Professions in 2011)
• Institute of Public Health (2011)
• Honors College (2011)
Expanding — Locally and Globally

THE PAST 25 YEARS HAVE SEEN THE TRANSFORMATION OF STUDENT LIFE AND CAMPUS

BY REBECCA BURNS (B.A. ’89, M.A. ’08)

A sked how Georgia State has most changed over the past quarter century, the average alumnus is likely to note the university’s transformation from an evening commuter school to a 24/7 campus with all the traditional collegiate trappings — dorms, Greek housing and, most staggering of all, football.

A graduate of Georgia State’s class of 1988 accompanying a prospective class of 2016 grad on a campus tour would be surprised as much by the swanky Aderhold classroom building (a far cry from trudging up and down those Kell Hall ramps) as the campus shuttles zipping between University Commons and the Student Recreation Center.

A sked the same question, the average Atlantan would point to Georgia State’s growing visibility as a civic citizen, from the thousands of students now living downtown to notable additions to the cityscape such as the Parker H. Petit Science Center or the University Lofts. Again, football might be mentioned.

As the two men who helmed the university for most of this period, and they both point to an internal change — less obvious to the outsider observer — that served as a catalyst to fuel this change: Georgia State’s 1995 designation by the University System as a full research university.

“…”

Mark P. Becker, who succeeded Patton as president in 2009.

The rate of change accelerated over the past decade. Georgia State wrapped up 2012 with 4,000 beds, Greek housing, a football team slated to play in the Football Bowl Subdivision, tens of millions of dollars in research grants and a student body of 32,000 representing every county in Georgia, every state in the country and 150 countries in the world.

“Literally, the slope and pace of the rise and growth and recognition has been astounding,” says Becker.

CHANGES AT THE TOP

The seeds of this growth were planted in the proverbially rocky soil of transition. Patton’s 16-year tenure followed a series of quick successions in the president’s office. After the 1988 retirement of Noah Langdale, William M. Suttles, whose nearly half-century with the university included stints as executive vice president and provost, served as acting president from 1988-89. He was followed by John Michael Palms (1989-91), who came to Georgia State after more than two decades at Emory University, where he had been dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and vice president for academic affairs. Finally, Sherman Day, whose two-and-a-half decades at the university included serving as dean of the College of Education, filled in as acting president from 1991-92.

Shortly after he took office, Patton made two personal moves that carried symbolic weight and signified both his intention to stick around and his vision for reinvigorating Georgia State’s relationship to its home city. First, he enrolled in the Teachers Retirement System, with a 10-year vesting schedule. Then, he asked the school to sell the president’s residence and moved into a loft in the Muse Building overlooking Woodruff Park. He wasn’t just banking his retirement fund on being at Georgia State for a while. He also planned to live in the heart of the campus.

Patton, whose background is in urban planning, oversaw a dramatic period of growth, including the renovation of the Rialto Theater, construction of a student center and recreation facility (complete with climbing wall and swimming pool) and the Aderhold Learning Center. After the 1996 Olympic Games, Georgia State students moved into the athletes’ village and the era of students-as-residents began.

Georgia State now is “one of the bright anchors” of downtown Atlanta, says A.J. Robinson, president of Central Atlanta Progress, the downtown business and development organization. “The growth, he says, has had a “real positive effect on Georgia State itself, and thus on the community. It’s a more visible, dynamic institution.”

PLAN OF ACTION

If Patton’s experience as a city planner shaped the university’s connection to the city, the next president arrived with a background ready to accelerate its commitment to globalization. Becker, who was executive vice president and provost for academic affairs at the University of South Carolina before joining Georgia State, is internationally acclaimed for his research in public health sciences and biostatistics.

In his first year, Becker worked with a team across the university to craft a five-point strategic plan. Announced in 2010, this template guides decisions at every level, and 100 years from now its blueprint will be visible. Indeed, the best way to encapsulate the university’s recent history is to look at how this fivefold plan already is in play.

The plan’s first goal is to “become a national model for undergraduate education by demonstrating that students from all backgrounds can achieve academic and career success at high rates.”

“We joke that university presidents have ‘edifice complexes.’ But it’s not really a joke. If we don’t have the right buildings, the right space, we can’t recruit the right people.”

President Emeritus Carl V. Patton

continued...
Toward this end, Georgia State, long known for a diverse student body — diversity, Patton says, is “in Georgia State’s DNA” — has deliberately and successfully implemented programs to support minority students, those from disadvantaged economic backgrounds and those who are the first in their families to attend college. In 2011, Georgia State had more African-American bachelor’s degree graduates than any non-historically black college in the country. Georgia State consistently graduates a higher rate of African-Americans, Asian-Americans and Latinos than any other college or university in Georgia.

Kwanza Hall, a member of Atlanta City Council who represents District 2, which includes downtown Atlanta and Georgia State, says: “When most people speak to me about Georgia State’s recent evolution, they remark on its rapid growth as a property owner. For me, the most significant evolution has been in its student body. If you have ever eaten lunch outside on Broad Street on a sunny day when school is in session, you know what I’m talking about. At lunchtime, Broad Street between Luckie and Marietta may be the most international, demographically diverse place anywhere in the city.”

The second goal of the strategic plan is to “significantly strengthen and grow the base of distinctive graduate and professional programs that assure development of the next generation of researchers and societal leaders.”

To this end, Georgia State has built on the reputations of its law, public policy and business schools.

The third goal is for Georgia State to build on its research status, “becoming a leading research university addressing the most pressing issues of the 21st century.” Becker says this means the university should be “not only good at research,” but also sure that “the research is having an impact.”

Strides toward this goal are exemplified in two grants awarded in 2012. A $10 million, five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education will fund research in adult literacy and establish the Center for Adult Literacy. Another $10 million, five-year award for research by reading in children who are deaf or hard of hearing was made by the National Center of Special Education Research of the Institute for Education Sciences and funds the creation of the first national research center for this specialty.

The fourth goal of the strategic plan takes advantage of Georgia State’s urban campus by striving to “be a leader in understanding the complex challenges of cities and developing effective solutions.” The university’s location is distinctive. Few colleges are in the absolute center of the city. Even Chicago and Boston, known as university cities, don’t have campuses in their urban heart like Georgia State. The only truly comparable example is New York University in New York City, say both Patton and Becker.
Georgia State students and researchers are “dealing with the issues of an urbanizing planet,” says Becker. “For Georgia State to become a major player in this area means taking advantage of breadth of strength of faculty and students. Not only finding solutions, but using Atlanta as a place — working with partners — to implement solutions.”

City Council member Hall’s office has partnered with university students and faculty on several projects.

“I have been particularly impressed by the efforts of the Office of Civic Engagement to get Georgia State students involved,” he says. “My favorite activity is the August Freshman Community Plunge, when I get to walk with students through the Martin Luther King Jr. Historic District on our way to a community cleanup in the neighborhood.”

GOING GLOBAL

The fifth and final strategic goal is stated succinctly but has the widest-reaching ambitions: “Achieve distinction in globalizing the university.” This means more than increasing enrollment of international students, but also engaging in research partnerships with global universities and creating degree programs that foster international exchange. For example, a partnership between Georgia State and Gadjah Mada University in Indonesia allows students to earn dual degrees in applied economics—a master of science degree from the Indonesian institution and a master of arts degree from Georgia State.

Becker sees the focus on supporting diverse undergraduates and fostering research as going “hand in hand,” saying that the best researchers are the best teachers, because being an excellent communicator is required for both.

Likewise, engaging with the university’s hometown while expanding its global connections works in tandem. Coca-Cola, he points out, is an internationally recognized brand. It happens to be headquartered in Atlanta.

“Ask people in Atlanta if Coca-Cola is a major citizen in Atlanta and the answer is absolutely yes,” says Becker. “Being engaged in your community and thinking and acting globally are not in conflict. What happens in Atlanta is part of what happens in the world.”

Georgia State’s fivefold strategic plan can be summarized even more concisely in President Becker’s response when asked where he’d like to see the university 10 years from now.

“I want us to be a destination of choice,” says Becker. “When people think of the premier university in a South-eastern city, they should think of Georgia State first.”

Rebecca Burns is an author and journalist. She is former editor of Atlanta Magazine and was a 2007 Georgia Author of the Year finalist for her first book, “Rage in the Gate City: The Story of the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot.”

“"For Georgia State to become a major player in this area means taking advantage of breadth of strength of faculty and students. Not only finding solutions, but using Atlanta as a place — working with partners — to implement solutions."

President Mark P. Becker
In the early 1990s, Richard Koehler, director of the School of Music from 1989-95, saw the then-shuttered Rialto Theater as a golden opportunity. Koehler envisioned the Rialto, opened in 1916 as the Southeast’s largest movie house — and, at one time, home to the largest electric sign above the marquee south of New York — as a first-class performing hall and the cornerstone of a new, vibrant downtown cultural arts center anchored by the Georgia State School of Music.

In 1992, Georgia State President Carl Patton started an initiative to convert the Rialto into a performing arts auditorium and relocate the School of Music to the Haas-Howell Building — built in 1922 and once home to legendary golfer Bobby Jones’ law office — and the Standard Building.

With the help of then-Southern Company President A.W. “Bill” Dahlberg (B.B.A ’70), the university raised more than $14 million for the cause.

Since, more than 750,000 arts patrons have passed through the Rialto’s doors to see performances by Bernadette Peters, the Buena Vista Social Club, Savion Glover and more.

The Florence Kopleff Recital Hall at Georgia State, which underwent a major $2.3 million renovation in 2006, plays host to more than 200 events a year and is the School of Music’s home for recitals, concerts, lectures, workshops and master classes.

The hall’s namesake, Kopleff, whom Time magazine once called the “greatest living alto,” came to Georgia State in 1967 as a music professor and the school’s first artist-in-residence.

“She was one of the great voices of the 20th century,” says Michael Palmer, the Charles Thomas Wurm Distinguished Professor of Orchestral Studies at Georgia State, who was a 22-year-old associate conductor at the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra when he met Kopleff.

Kopleff taught hundreds of singers in her 30 years at Georgia State. In 1982, she was honored with the Alumni Distinguished Professor Award.

In 1984 Kopleff established a scholarship, and she has left a bequest to support vocal performance at Georgia State through her estate. She retired in 1998, and in 2004 the recital hall at the corner of Gilmer Street and Peachtree Center Avenue was renamed in her honor.

Kopleff died on July 24, 2012.
BARBERSHOP DEAL

In 2006, Georgia State had just released a football feasibility study that showed that it could indeed support a football program and was in the market for someone to lead the charge.

Tom Lewis, former senior vice president for external affairs, had just the guy: nine-time Super Bowl participant and former Atlanta Falcons Head Coach Dan Reeves.

Says Lewis of Reeves: “He’s a Georgia boy but has no ties to UGA, no ties to Tech, but is an unquestioned legend and a smart football man.”

But getting the Hall of Fame coach wouldn’t be easy. Luckily, Lewis had a connection — they share the same barber.

“Dan and I were sitting in the shop one day, and we would talk occasionally,” Lewis remembers. “So, finally, I said, ‘Dan, let’s go have a cup of coffee.’”

After that meeting, Reeves signed on as Georgia State’s football consultant. Four years later, the Panthers kicked off their inaugural season.

Remembering back, Reeves said that it was one of the most worthwhile experiences of his storied career.

“It was totally different than anything I’ve done before, but I don’t know that I could’ve done anything more rewarding,” he says.

OLYMPIC METTLE

With the 1996 Summer Olympic Games, the world came to downtown Atlanta and the Georgia State campus. The Centennial Olympics brought with it unparalleled anticipation and energy, as well as the pains of preparation.

As host of the badminton competition, Georgia State had to brace for thousands of visitors. The Sports Arena was revamped and hundreds of padded, fold-up seats were installed.

Downtown streets were closed during the games and classes were cancelled for three weeks in July and August. The winter and spring quarters had to be moved up so that the summer quarter could get in a full five weeks before campus closed, effectively giving summer students a three-week break in the middle of the quarter.

Employees weren’t so lucky. They were told to report at 6:30 a.m. and their days ended at 3:30 p.m.

For the record, Poul-Erik Hoyer Larsen of Denmark won the badminton gold medal in men’s singles, and Bang Soo-hyun of South Korea won gold in the women’s singles competition.

PANTHER FOOTBALL KICKS OFF

The football era at Georgia State began Sept. 2, 2010 with a 41-7 victory over Shorter University in the Georgia Dome.

The program’s first-ever game capped a preparation period that began in 2008 when it was first announced that the school would field a football team.

“I’ve never been more proud of a group of young men than I am of this group,” remarked Head Coach Bill Curry after the win.
Georgia State began its life as a business school and, 100 years later, Georgia State's J. Mack Robinson College of Business is the sixth-largest business school in the United States with more than 8,000 students.

From the Evening School of Commerce's humble beginnings as a “Developer of Efficient Executives,” according to a 1913 advertisement in the Atlanta Constitution, the business school at Georgia State has evolved into a world-class and worldwide institution.

In the century since the business school was founded, it has continued to deliver on its original mission to prepare the business leaders of tomorrow. According to Standard & Poor's, the Robinson College of Business and Georgia State have produced more of Georgia's top executives with graduate degrees than any other school in the Southeast.

The Robinson College has six locations throughout the Atlanta metropolitan area and programs on five continents. Students from 88 countries are enrolled at the college here in Atlanta, and alumni hold leadership positions throughout the country and around the globe.

GLOBAL BUSINESS LEADER

J. Mack Robinson attended Georgia State, back then the Georgia Evening College, for one semester before Pearl Harbor interrupted his education.

He went on to make his fortune in various business endeavors ranging from used car sales, haute fashion — he co-founded the Yves Saint Laurent fashion house — banking, finance and racehorses.

In 1998, he made a $10 million gift, the largest in university history, and placed a bet on the futures of thousands of Georgia State business school graduates.

“I hope to see my gift used to keep attracting top faculty, because if you're going to be at the top of the competition, you have to attract the top people,” Robinson said. “I believe in this city and this college's potential to be the finest business school in the nation.”

J. MACK

INSPIRATION FOR NURSING’S FUTURE

“The shortage of nurses and the lack of training opportunities is a national issue, and one we need to address because nurses play such a beneficial role in our society,” said Ken Lewis, (B.B.A. ’69) former chief executive officer, president and chairman of Bank of America.

To combat the shortage of nurses, Lewis gave $2.5 million to Georgia State University's School of Nursing in 2003. The school was renamed the Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing in honor of Lewis’s mother, who worked as a nurse for 46 years.

“I have always been impressed by her commitment to her family and the profession, and this gift is a wonderful way to pay tribute to that,” Lewis said.

Part of the $2.5 million gift also funds the Byrdine F. Lewis Endowment, which provides money for faculty enrichment, programs, research and student scholarships.

“I never thought of doing anything else but be a nurse — it’s one of the most rewarding jobs there is,” Byrdine Lewis said in 2003. “I don’t think I’m worthy, but [the naming] is a wonderful thing.”
Artistic Legacy

Ernest G. Welch (B.F.A. '99) was Georgia State University’s oldest alumnus when he died in 2009 at 103. He was an Atlanta native who graduated from Georgia Tech in 1928 and served in counterintelligence during World War II, landing in Normandy 10 days after D-Day in 1944.

After serving for decades as a manager for Sonoco Products Company, he enrolled in Georgia State’s art programs while in his late 80s, earning his bachelor of fine arts in photography in 1999 at the age of 93.

He continued his education in 2002, when he enrolled in painting and drawing classes at the university, working with digital photography. His work appeared at the university’s gallery and at the Callanwolde Fine Arts Center.

He supported the art school, which bears his name, through money for scholarships and enhancements to the photography program. Welch and his late sister, Frances, left the school approximately $4 million through their estates.

“I believe he inspired students, faculty and staff alike to stay active, stay involved and to be open to new experiences and new ventures no matter how old you are,” said Cheryl Goldsleger, the school’s academic director. “He had been a successful businessman for most of his life and yet here he was starting down a whole new path with the same excitement as any other freshman.”

AMERICA’S FUTURE DEMOGRAPHIC

About a decade ago, Georgia State University’s graduation rate was just shy of 30 percent. To turn that number around, the university set out to develop programs to address student progress and retention with a multi-pronged approach aided by its diverse student body.

With new initiatives such as the Freshmen Learning Communities, Keep HOPE Alive and extensive programs of supplemental instruction, Georgia State has raised graduation rates 20 percent over the past 10 years.

Today, Georgia State’s campus is roughly 40 percent white, a third African-American, 10 to 15 percent Asian and 8 percent Hispanic.

“We are America’s future demographic,” Georgia State President Mark Becker says. “Students here do and should succeed at similar rates, and that is not what you see across the state or country.”

Indeed, Georgia State’s history is not merely characterized by continual change but also by constant progress, says Tim Renick, associate provost for academic programs and chief enrollment officer.

“We are serving thousands of additional students, and they are succeeding and graduating at higher and higher rates,” Renick says. “Many schools want to get bigger and better at the same time. Georgia State has actually accomplished this difficult feat.”

CONSTANT PROGRESS

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Thinking back about the 2000-01 Georgia State basketball season, I remember, before they ever tipped off, having a really good feeling about Charles “Lefty” Driesell’s team that year.

Kevin Morris, Shernard Long and Darryl Cooper were seniors and Thomas Terrell and Deltorio “Bam” Campbell were juniors, and it was time for them to have that breakout season everyone was expecting. The Panthers served notice there was a new sheriff in town (basketball speaking) in the state of Georgia when they opened the season in Athens, Ga., and ran the host Bulldogs out of Stegeman Coliseum, 91-79.

Having broadcast a number of Georgia State games in Athens that we didn’t come close to winning, this was a shock. We’d never done anything like that before. Who were these Panthers? Driving back to Atlanta that night I had a feeling that a special season was upon us. Georgia State went on to win 15 of their first 17 games and then carried that momentum into winning 10 of their last 11 games heading into the Trans America Athletic Conference tournament, where the Panthers handled Florida Atlantic, Samford and Troy and earned their second-ever NCAA tournament bid.

Going into the Big Dance at 28-4, Georgia State was an 11 seed. There was a part of me that felt confident we could play with our first round opponent, 25th-ranked Wisconsin. But another part of me remembered that the Badgers had been a Final Four team the previous season, and, indeed, they looked like one in the first half of the game. The Panthers fell behind by as many as 16 points, but Kevin Morris drained a long three-point shot right before the halftime buzzer that gave the Panthers momentum heading into the locker room.

In the second half there were so many clutch plays and shots. We were down five, 49-44, with a minute left when Darryl Cooper hit a three-point shot from the right wing and was fouled with 48 seconds to play. “Coop” made the free throw for the four-point play — maybe the biggest play in Georgia State basketball history — and it was a one-point game. He followed that up with a huge steal and pass to Shernard Long, who gave Georgia State the lead 50-49 with a lane-driving shot off the glass.

Wisconsin had a chance to tie or reclaim the lead when Badgers’ center Mark Vershaw was fouled. He went to the line and missed both, and Long got the rebound on the second missed shot. Long missed the first shot of the one-and-one, but Wisconsin missed on a last-second desperation shot. Georgia State had shocked Wisconsin.

Morris led the Panthers with 18 points, Long had 13 and Cooper added 11.

Two days later the Panthers took the court to face Maryland. There was a lot of interest because Coach Driesell forged his reputation while coaching the Terrapins in the 1970s and 80s. Georgia State played them tough and the game was tied at 47 with less than 15 minutes to go before Maryland, featuring five future National Basketball Association players, pulled away for a 79-60 win.

Flying back to Atlanta that night, and just taking in the experience of the whole season, it was something special to see a Georgia State basketball team win 29 games and an NCAA tournament game.
Georgia State University has made great strides toward accelerating its status as a major urban research university.

**CHARA**
Officials broke ground in 1996 at the historic Mount Wilson Observatory in California to build Georgia State’s Center High Angular Astronomy Array. Scientists recorded the array’s first “fringes” — areas of bright and dark spots that produce data about stars — in 2001. Since then, the six-telescope optical/infrared interferometric array, one of the most powerful in facilities the world, has achieved several firsts in astronomy, including capturing in 2007 the first images of Altair, one of the brightest stars visible from Earth and one of the closest at 15 light years away. The image was the first detailed picture of a hydrogen-burning star other than our own sun.

**DRUG DISCOVERY**
In 1994, Georgia State established the Center for Biotechnology and Drug Design, which promoted research in vaccines and diagnostics for diseases, protein engineering, and the creation of new treatments for disease. This led to the university’s Center for Diagnostics and Therapeutics, home to top researchers such as director Binghe Wang, who is working on better diagnostics for cancer; David Wilson and Dave Boykin, who have dedicated their careers to finding new drugs for AIDS-related opportunistic diseases; and Ritu Aneja, who is looking for natural ways to treat cancer.

**LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**
In 2008, Georgia State started the Language and Literacy Initiative, dedicated to research into how people learn to comprehend speech and written words. Researchers investigate the challenges in learning to speak and read among children and adults with autism, cerebral palsy and developmental disorders. In 2012, the university received $20 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Education to start centers to help improve reading in deaf and hard of hearing children, and to aid adults who struggle to read.

**LANGUAGE RESEARCH CENTER**
Founded in 1971 with a facility built in 1981, the Language Research Center studies the origins of language in primates, economic decision-making, vocal communication, metacognition (“thinking about thinking”) and other subjects. Its first project was to investigate how chimpanzees could communicate using symbols. The center also includes rhesus monkeys to assess memory, knowledge of numbers and reasoning, and capuchin monkeys to study social behavior, cooperation and learning.

**NEUROSCIENCE**
Thanks to the National Science Foundation and the Georgia Research Alliance, Georgia State became home in 1999 to the multi-institutional Center for Behavioral Neuroscience. The center focuses on reproduction, aggression, fear, memory and cognition, and has made discoveries in post-traumatic stress disorder, pain management in infants, obesity and autism-spectrum disorders. It spun off the Georgia State Neuroscience Institute. The center brings together areas from across the university — from psychology, biology and physics to mathematics, computer science and even an emerging field called “neuro-philosophy” to tackle the problems of understanding the mind and brain.

**VIRAL IMMUNOLOGY CENTER**
Julia Hilliard, a Georgia Research Alliance Eminent Scholar, first came to Georgia State in 1998 and established the Viral Immunology Center, which studies the Herpes B virus. It is a naturally occurring virus in monkeys that can be fatal to humans if infected through scratches or bites in a laboratory setting. The center investigates the virus and serves as a resource for testing. It also uses a BioSafety Level 4 lab, one of the few university-hosted such labs in the country.

CHARA is a six-telescope optical/infrared interferometric array (above left). Julia Hilliard and the Viral Immunology Center investigate the Herpes B virus (above right). The Language Research Center explores social, cognitive and biobehavioral research (right).
Pete Petit (MBA ’73) launched his first company, Healthdyne, Inc., in 1970, but needed to develop business acumen to move it forward. He started his MBA program in finance, going to night classes, and his company grew over the decades, splitting into three different public corporations.

“If I had not been able to go to Georgia State at night, I probably would have had a business failure somewhere early on,” Petit said.

Petit contributed $5 million to the newest major facility on campus — the science center at Piedmont Avenue and Decatur Street that bears his name. Opened in 2010, the building houses teaching and research laboratories and classrooms, hosting the Neuroscience Institute, departments from the Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing and Health Professions, the Institute of Public Health, the Center for Behavioral Neuroscience, biology, chemistry, the Viral Immunology Center and the Center for Inflammation, Immunity and Infection.

The science center has dramatically advanced research at Georgia State, allowing the university to attract prestigious researchers in their fields and to nurture the next generation of scientists.

“I have just one thought for our students who will use this new center,” Petit said at the building’s dedication. “Embrace science. Science that will add value, create wealth and improve the quality of life in our country, as well as globally. You can make a difference, and I challenge you to do so.”

Helen M. Aderhold (B.A. ’76) continually supports the university by contributing her time and efforts to alumni events, fundraising and numerous activities.

Aderhold served on the Georgia State Foundation Board of Trustees for more than a decade. She is also a longtime member of Georgia State’s Athletic Association and Alumni Association boards, and served as president of the Alumni Association from 1991 to 1992.

Aderhold works to encourage others to actively participate in university life by contributing financially, joining boards and giving of her time. To underscore the university’s efforts to integrate campus and city life, Aderhold and her late husband, John, made a $2.5 million gift in 1998 to the university to construct a new, state-of-the-art classroom building unlike anything the campus had seen before.

The Helen M. Aderhold Learning Center is one of Georgia State’s most prominent classroom buildings and includes a computer lab, 44 classrooms and two 200-seat lecture halls.

A.W. “Bill” Dahlberg (B.B.A. ’70), the retired chairman and chief executive officer of Southern Company, earned his bachelor’s degree in business administration from Georgia State in 1970 while working full-time and raising a family.

A native Georgian, Dahlberg started his career in 1960 as a meter installer at Georgia Power. He later became president and CEO of Southern Company Services in 1985 and returned to Georgia Power three years later as president and CEO. He became president of Southern Company in 1994 and chairman and CEO in March 1995.

Under Dahlberg’s guidance, Southern Company grew from a regional electric utility in the Southeast to an international energy company with operations in 12 countries.

Dahlberg retired from Southern Company in 2001 and became chairman of the Mirant Corp., an independent international energy company. He retired again in 2005.

Throughout his career, Dahlberg maintained an unwavering support for Georgia State. He chaired the university’s first capital campaign, which raised money to restore the Rialto Center for the Arts and build the Aderhold Learning Center.

In September 2010 Georgia State changed the name of Alumni Hall to Dahlberg Hall in recognition of his support.
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LOOKING FORWARD

Becoming an eminent and global university

BY ANDREW YOUNG

Georgia State University’s centennial offers an opportunity for us to look back and celebrate all that has changed and all that has been accomplished in the last 100 years.

However, rather than looking back, I encourage you to join me in looking forward, into our future. Change — positive change — happens much more often when we look ahead. Folks who have a vision for how things should be and act on that shared vision can move mountains. Although Atlanta and Georgia State are models of such a transformation, I also know that the future holds the potential to be even more exciting for both.

Since I moved here in 1961, Atlanta has changed from a smallish, provincial Deep South city into the economic engine of the South with the world’s busiest airport, an Olympic legacy and strong ties to people, communities and companies around the world. We are no longer the next great international city; we are a global powerhouse.

Atlanta’s secret is a governing philosophy and policies that support a public-private framework that promotes economic growth and opportunity across all sectors of our community. We call this “the Atlanta Way.” While our tactics have been downplayed by some as unconventional, our progress is the envy of many of the leaders I meet while doing business around the world.

Similarly, I have watched Georgia State grow from a small night school for mostly white businessmen to an incredibly diverse research university, the second largest in Georgia. Tens of thousands of students and faculty now fill classrooms, labs and new student housing: black, white, Asian and Hispanic, older students and those fresh from high school clutching their hard won HOPE Scholarships, students from Atlanta, from across the United States and around the world.

This dynamic diversity in this public university is emblematic of what makes Atlanta a great city. As we have grown in numbers, we have grown in diversity, prominence and wealth. Our willingness to embrace each other, to go beyond tolerance to a celebration of culture and heritage — out of many, one beloved community is the secret formula to our success.

I am always thrilled to see students of every size, shape, age and color moving briskly through Five Points — Atlanta’s historic downtown — and down Auburn Avenue, the birthplace of Martin Luther King Jr. and the spiritual center of our movement for civil and human rights.

I believe that Georgia State is well on its way to becoming the “Next Great Global University.” Former President Carl Patton expanded the university’s footprint downtown, made Georgia State an important partner with the city of Atlanta and increased opportunities for its students. Under the direction of President Mark Becker, the university is working toward a shared vision: achieving distinction for our undergraduate and graduate programs and as a leading public research university; broadening our global impact; and helping our civic, government and business leaders address the complex challenges of cities.

As you look back at what Georgia State has been, I invite you again to join me in looking forward and working together to help Georgia State become what we know it can be.

These are not conventional times, and it may again take some unconventional tactics to make our vision a reality. But with your help, we will give our grandchildren and great-grandchildren good reason to celebrate Georgia State in another 100 years.

Andrew J. Young was a close associate of Martin Luther King Jr., a member of Congress, Ambassador to the United Nations under President Jimmy Carter and two-term mayor of Atlanta. In 1999, Georgia State’s School of Policy Studies was named in his honor.
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Our first graduates, the Class of 1915 — Back row: Floyd Fenn, A.C. Keise (president) and Lib Goodman; Middle row: P.L. Clower and Sidney Dunn; Front row: W.L. Trussell and George John Blake — all held full-time jobs and earned three-year bachelor of commercial science degrees. Today, Georgia State graduates thousands of students in more than 250 degree programs.