



The Whistle

WORK AND LIFE AT GEORGIA TECH • April 12, 2021



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A NOTE OF REMEMBRANCE



Photo by Rob Felt

Each year, Georgia Tech remembers students and employees who have died during the past year at When the Whistle Blows. President Ángel Cabrera lights a candle of unity at this year's event on April 7 in Harrison Square. The steam whistle is sounded once for each person honored. See page 3 for a list of those remembered during this year's event, which honored those lost during 2019 and 2020.

Campus Community Provides Feedback on Classroom Experience

PATTI FUTRELL
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

Results have been compiled from the Spring 2021 listening sessions and a survey about the Georgia Tech student learning experience. The Academic Restart Taskforce conducted the research to better understand the impact of course modalities on student learning as well as the broader student experience. The survey and listening sessions were coordinated by Casey Chaviano, assistant director for Assessment and Planning

- Office of Undergraduate Education, and Kyla Ross, assistant vice provost for Advocacy and Conflict Resolution.

A total of 46 undergraduate students, graduate students, graduate teaching assistants, and faculty and instructors participated in the listening sessions. Almost 7,000 undergraduate and graduate students participated in the Academic Restart Student Survey for a response rate of 28%. Students currently enrolled in courses were given the opportunity to participate in the survey.

Read more at c.gatech.edu/survey.

Ready for Emergencies: Meet William Smith

VICTOR ROGERS
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

As director of Georgia Tech's Office of Emergency Management and Communications, William Smith found the perfect career that combines two dissimilar interests: weather and terrorism.

"My father was a meteorologist with the National Weather Service, so I grew up with weather in my prism," said Smith, who studied terrorism as an international affairs major at Georgia Tech, then was deployed to Iraq in 2003 in the Marine Corps. "After 9-11 my interest in terrorism became a little more prevalent, obviously, and I looked for something where I could tie those two interests together. The answer was emergency management, which I didn't really know existed before doing some research."

After earning a master's degree in public administration with a focus on disaster management from Georgia State University in 2005, Smith worked as the operations officer for the Atlanta-Fulton County Emergency Management Agency. In 2009 he began working in emergency management at Georgia Tech and became director in 2015. He describes his job as

see **SMITH**, page 4

CELEBRATE EARTH DAY

Georgia Tech will again commemorate Earth Day this year, but with activities going on throughout the week of April 19. The theme of this year's event is Amplify Impact, a nod to one of the Institute's strategic goals. Those attending in-person events are reminded that face coverings and social distancing are required at all events, and some require advance registration. For more information and event registration, visit earthday.gatech.edu.

Earth Week at the EcoCommons

Monday, April 19

9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Location: EcoCommons

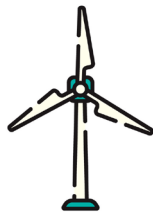
Kick off the week and celebrate the opening of the EcoCommons.

Katharine Wilkinson — All We Can Save: Truth, Courage, and Solutions for the Climate Crisis

Monday, April 19

5 - 6 p.m.

Internationally acclaimed author and advocate Katharine Wilkinson in conversation with Denise Quarles of Siemens and Chandra Farley of Partnership for Southern Equity. They will discuss the anthology co-edited by Wilkinson and Ayanna Johnson, *All We Can Save: Truth, Solutions and Courage for the Climate Crisis*.



Virtual EcoCommons Tour - Explore Georgia Tech's Newest Greenspace with Jason Gregory, senior planner, and Jerry Young, landscape project manager

Tuesday, April 20

Noon - 1 p.m.

The area of the EcoCommons located at the corner of Ferst Drive and Hemphill Avenue is 8 acres of greenspace that aims to mimic a traditional Piedmont woodland. This section of the EcoCommons consists of three living landscape areas to meet the goals of Learn, Engage, and Reflect.



Campus Tree Planting

Tuesday, April 20

3 - 5 p.m.

Location: Krone Engineered Biosystems Building

Join us in transplanting trees that have been growing in the campus nursery to spots on campus. Volunteers will meet in front of EBB.

Wellness Wednesday

11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Location: EcoCommons
Join us for activities, outdoor fun, yoga, bike repair, campus resources, and more. Hosted in partnership with the CRC, Bike Georgia Tech, Georgia Tech Staff Council, and Health Initiatives.



Unveiling of the Site Marker for the Former Pickrick Restaurant

Wednesday, April 21

1:30 - 2:30 p.m.

Location: EcoCommons
On January 29, 1965, Reverend Charles E. Wells Sr. and three Black Interdenominational Theological Center seminary students (Albert Dunn, Woodrow Lewis, and George S. Willis Jr., who are all now deceased) were denied service at Lester Maddox's Pickrick Restaurant, in the wake of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The four men were verbally accosted and physically shoved away with axe handles by Maddox and white patrons of the establishment. The four men had also attempted to patronize Maddox's establishment on two previous occasions. Maddox refused to desegregate the restaurant and later decided to close it permanently rather than serve Black customers. His actions made him a popular figure among segregationists. He would later

serve as the 75th governor of Georgia.

Years later, Georgia Tech bought the property. A historical marker stood on the site to educate the community about what had happened there. The building was razed to make way for the environmental restoration project now known as the EcoCommons. This event will unveil the marker acknowledging the four men who stood up to segregation and the evolution of a space intended to inspire reflection and connections with nature and with others.

International Earth Day

Thursday, April 22

11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Location: The Kendeda Building Patio
Celebrate Earth Day with sustainable DIY projects (e.g., planting, clothing decoration, green cleaning and personal care products), food, and more.



Earth Day Bird Walk With Georgia Audubon

Thursday, April 22

8 - 9:30 a.m., and 9:30 - 11 a.m.

Location: The Kendeda Building Patio and EcoCommons
Join us for a bird walk and learn about the urban domiciles of the region's birds. You'll pair up with an expert leader to observe birds on Georgia Tech's campus. Participants will also learn about the rising number of building collisions and the importance of building design and bird safe glass. This event is a partnered collaboration between Georgia Tech, via The Kendeda Building, and Georgia Audubon.



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When the Whistle Blows

Georgia Tech's
Remembrance
Ceremony



Wednesday, April 7
Harrison Square

Nothing can replace the joy a loved one or cherished friend brings to our lives, so the Georgia Tech family is always deeply saddened when we suffer the loss of members of our own community.

Each spring, we honor the memory of the students, faculty, and staff who have died in the previous year. Join us as we pay tribute to these individuals who have touched our lives and contributed to our community.

Brandon Adams
Undergraduate Student
Business Administration

Ardavan Afshar
Graduate Student
College of Computing

Shabbir Ahmed
Professor
Industrial and Systems
Engineering

John Bartholdi
Professor
Industrial and Systems
Engineering

Daniel Bauer
Graduate Student
Computer Science

Andrew Collins
Undergraduate Student
Biomedical Engineering

James Cornacchia
Police Officer
Georgia Tech Police
Department

Sarah Day
Undergraduate Student
Computer Engineering

Christopher Delisle
Senior Application Developer
OIT – Enterprise and
Resource Planning

Antonio English
Custodial Supervisor II
Facilities – Building Services

Tim Georges
Digital Media Accessibility
Specialist II
Center for Inclusive Design
and Innovation

JulieBeth Golden
IT Asset and Licensing
Officer
OIT – Resource Management

Jerry Heckman
Senior Research Engineer
GTRI – Electric Systems

Minh Hoang
Graduate Student
Mechanical Engineering

Dennis Jones
Graduate Student
Materials Science and
Engineering

Martin Kistenmacher
Research Engineer
Civil and Environmental
Engineering

Vamsi Konjeti
Undergraduate Student
Mechanical Engineering

Alex Labanowski
Undergraduate Student
Computer Science

Fredy Lanier
Custodian II
Facilities – Building Services

Carey Lawrence
Staging Foreperson
Athletics – Facilities

Darcy Mullen
Brittain Fellow
Literature, Media, and
Communication

Alex Mussa
Research Engineer
GTRI Electro – Optical
Systems Labs

Christopher Slater
Systems/IT Architect
Principal
GTRI Information Systems

James Stroock
Undergraduate Student
Computer Engineering

Kikachukwu Ugboh
Undergraduate Student
Mechanical Engineering

Ifeanyi Charles Ume
Professor
Mechanical Engineering

Corey Wieser
Undergraduate Student
Computer Engineering

Sudhakar Yalamanchili
Regents Professor
Electrical and Computer
Engineering

SMITH, from page 1

being a city manager for an emergency.

“I take all of the resources that I have on a daily basis, reorganize them, and repurpose them for an emergency so that we can get back to normal,” he said. “The goal is always to get back to normal. We’re also looking ahead and trying to learn from what we’ve experienced so the next interruption won’t be as significant.”

His department plans for all kinds of emergency situations including inclement weather, road closures, and utility failures such as water main breaks and power outages. They also coordinate with the Georgia Tech Police Department (GTPD) and other departments to disseminate emergency information to the campus community through the Georgia Tech Emergency Notification System (GTENS).

“The nice thing about Atlanta is there aren’t a lot of natural hazards to deal with, so we have that luxury. But we can never sit idly. Typically, 90% of our time is spent planning for the next emergency,” Smith said.

That planning and preparedness was put to the test a year ago when the coronavirus hit the U.S., adding an entirely new set of concerns to manage.

“We started working on Covid-19 planning last January, and it has consumed my life since. I cannot recall a day of work in the past year that wasn’t focused on the pandemic,” he said. “I remember reading the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines and the language they used,



Photo by Allison Carter

Smith outside the GTPD Headquarters on Hemphill Avenue.

saying that this pandemic will change the way we operate our daily lives. At that point it became very real.”

A silver lining, of sorts, is the many lessons learned during the last year. Smith points to how the campus shifted to teaching and working online. Before the pandemic the alternative was to just shut down completely during a snowstorm or other hazardous situation.

“We have learned, as a campus, how to operate without being in person,” Smith said. “There certainly are arguments to be made on the effectiveness of being in person versus working remotely. But we can still do work. We can learn. And we can still conduct research to a certain extent. We may not be able to do it as well as in person, but we learned from the experience because we were forced to do it.”

For Smith, working during the pandemic has been an exercise in continuity. He believes the experience has forced people to consider resiliency as a factor when running an operation.

“That has been the overwhelming best lesson learned from this — seeing resiliency in action. It’s a

testament to the people across campus who made it happen. It’s not me or my office. It’s everyone having to learn quickly how to adapt and continue their operations.”

Smith praised the work of colleagues across campus who are fighting to slow the spread of the virus.

“Georgia Tech has led throughout this pandemic, whether it be from our amazing surveillance testing efforts to our campaign, Jackets Protect Jackets. I expect our community to lead once again with vaccinations,” said Smith, who took the vaccine as soon as it was available. “The vaccine is safe, proven, and effective against Covid-19. I certainly encourage anyone who is hesitant to ask others about their experience and ask experts about the vaccine.”

Smith has experienced a lot of emergencies over the years. The one constant is that no two days are the same, and that’s his favorite part of the job.

“I joke that this year sometimes feels a little bit like Groundhog Day, but typically in my field you never know what you’re going to get,” Smith said.

“Water mains don’t tell you ahead of time if they’re going to break. Construction cranes don’t tell you that they may fail and start leaning precariously. These things happen without any notice. And even the ones that do come with notice, such as weather events, are ever changing, so as much as we think we know what may happen, we really don’t. You’re always a phone call or a text away from dropping everything and transitioning to something else.”

Away From the Office

When he isn’t in the middle of managing an emergency, Smith enjoys fishing near Apalachicola, Florida, where his grandfather bought a house on a sparsely populated beach in the 1950s.

“I spent most of my summers there. Indian Pass is my home away from home, and it’s my happy place. If I’m having a rough day I just picture myself there,” said Smith, who was last there in October.

“I took a break in July, and for the first time in my working career I took two weeks off. I say that, but I was still on conference calls,” he said, acknowledging that it’s difficult for him to completely disconnect from work.

“My phone doesn’t really ever get shut off. The only time that I’m disconnected is when I’m way offshore and out of cell range. It’s nice on the one hand when I’m fishing. On the other hand, when I’m coming back and getting within cell range, I can’t help but look at my phone and see what the day may have brought.”