

A LIFETIME OF GIVING

Faithful alumnus makes a \$2 million estate commitment to endow a chair in ISyE.



One of Weitnauer's hobbies — to “keep me out of trouble,” he says — is turning wooden bowls, which is also a fitting metaphor for turning out a Georgia Tech student.

“A piece of wood is like a person,” he points out. “When you first see them, you don’t really know what’s on the inside. Then you start working with them and soon you find out what’s on the inside, what the color really is and the grain, and what’s going to happen with that person or that piece of wood.”

Few Georgia Tech alumni can boast a relationship with the Institute that is as long and strong as John Weitnauer’s.

As a Decatur boy, Weitnauer volunteered in the Army Air Force in 1943, but was not called up until 1944. Between 1943 and 1944, he attended Georgia Tech.

After the war ended, Weitnauer returned home — and to Georgia Tech, graduating in 1949. A year later, after graduation, he began working as an industrial engineer at Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills in Atlanta, where he worked for five years.

A mimeographed sheet of job postings, courtesy of the Georgia Tech Alumni Association, led Weitnauer to Rich’s Department Store in Atlanta and a rising career, which would culminate in his position as executive vice president. Weitnauer’s career trajectory then took him to Richway Discount Stores, a chain of 31 stores in the Southeast, where he retired 30 years later as chairman.

Retirement, for Weitnauer, has been more about committee and board chairs than rocking chairs. Both before and after retirement, Weitnauer’s accomplishments include:

- Director and chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta
- General campaign chairman and president of United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta
- Chairman of Metropolitan Atlanta Chapter of American Red Cross
- Served on the Boards of Columbia Theological Seminary and Agnes Scott College

“I’ve also served on several business boards, including the John H. Harland Co., where I was interim chairman and CEO,” Weitnauer said.

Through the years, Weitnauer’s connection to Georgia Tech grew stronger. He met the loves of his life through Georgia tech connections: Peggy, his first wife, from whom he was widowed after 49 years of marriage, and June, from whom he was widowed after 16 years of marriage. He still gets together regularly with lifelong friends from his fraternity, Alpha Tau Omega and Georgia Tech. And he has given his time and energy in a number of capacities as an active alumnus and received many distinguished awards from the Institute (see sidebar).

“Someone told me that as emeriti, you can’t participate in the discussions, but you can still come to the meetings and eat and drink all you want — I don’t think I have missed a meeting since,” Weitnauer said, with a laugh.

His recent estate commitment to Georgia Tech, to establish a chair in the School of Industrial Systems and Engineering, is one more way to give back to a school that he feels has given him so much.

“Chairs enhance the reputation of Georgia Tech and help the school attract and retain distinguished faculty,” he said. “And that’s going to have a positive impact on the students.” ///



DEDICATED SERVICE DISTINGUISHED HISTORY

John Weitnauer, IE 1949

SERVICE

Member, Presidential Search Committee for G. Wayne Clough
Georgia Tech Foundation Board of Trustees (Past President)
ISyE Advisory Board
Vice Chairman of the Georgia Tech Centennial Campaign

GIVING

Founders’ Samuel Inman Club
President’s Marion L. Brittain Club
The Hill Society
John H. Weitnauer Jr. Technology Transfer Chair and GRA Eminent Scholar
Margaret P. and John H. Weitnauer Jr. Faculty Chair, ISyE

AWARDS

J.M. Pettit Distinguished Service Award
Engineering Hall of Fame, 1994
ISyE Academy of Distinguished Alumni



TOM GAY

Keeping a Promise, Leaving a Legacy

When the G. Wayne Clough Georgia Tech Promise Scholarship Program was established in 2007, Tom Gay, IM 1966, was among the first wave of donors to step up with a gift to get the program off the ground, creating the L. Thomas Gay Georgia Tech Promise Endowment.

Now, he is adding to his endowment fund with a significant estate commitment, ensuring that even more Georgia scholars will have the opportunity to obtain a debt-free Georgia Tech education regardless of their family's financial circumstances.

"I have seen the value of a Georgia Tech education," says Gay, who has been president of Gay Construction Company for more than 40 years. "I've seen the value for myself and countless other friends and alumni, and I want to do all I can to make sure that others will have the same opportunity in the future."

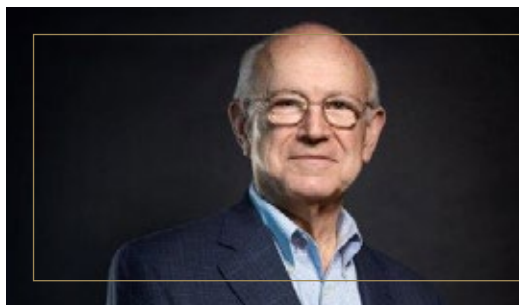
The students that Gay supports through Tech Promise might have the opportunity, like he did, to be involved in the Student Government Association, join a fraternity, or participate in the Navy ROTC program. In fact, he has never forgotten that a Navy ROTC scholarship enabled him to attend Georgia Tech. After graduation Gay went on to receive a commission in the U.S. Marine Corps, where he served for four years.

"That was an important outgrowth of my Georgia Tech experience," he recalls. "All those things I did required that I form study habits, schedule my time, and manage extracurricular activities. They helped me mature, helped me acquire skills beyond academics, and taught me self-discipline."

Under his leadership, his eponymous construction company, founded by his father, Logan T. Gay Sr., Class of 1941, has built a long-standing reputation for excellence and has won numerous awards for its sustainable LEED-certified projects as well as historic preservations. Gay also builds community through gifts and service to cultural, medical, religious, and civic organizations. He has received the Global Community Service Award from Villa International Atlanta and the Silver Beaver Award from the Boy Scouts of America.

Scholarship support for deserving students is more important than ever, Gay points out, now that rising costs are pricing more and more families out of the life-changing advantages of higher education in general and Georgia Tech in particular.

"Tech Promise is a wonderful legacy we can leave that will enable future generations to also have these opportunities," he says. "It's a great way to acknowledge the impact that Georgia Tech has had on our lives." ///



In recognition of his generous philanthropy to Georgia Tech, L. Thomas Gay, IM 1966, is a member of Georgia Tech's Hill Society. He has also provided invaluable volunteer service to the Institute as a member of the Georgia Tech Foundation Board of Trustees; the Alumni Association Board of Trustees; his 50th, 40th, and 25th Reunion Committees; the Ernest Scheller Jr. College of Business Advisory Board; and the Alexander-Tharpe Fund Board. He is a recipient of the Joseph M. Pettit Distinguished Service Award — the highest award given to alumni by the Georgia Tech Alumni Association.

MORRIS L. BENATAR GATE HONORS ALUMNUS' SON

Louise and Leo Benatar, IE 1951, MBA 2016, have made a naming gift to Georgia Tech in honor of their son, who died unexpectedly in 2016 at the age of 58.

Starting this fall, the North Avenue entrance to the west stands of Bobby Dodd Stadium will bear the name of Morris L. Benatar, a Yellow Jackets football fan from the tender and terrible age of two, according to his family. Morris is also remembered for his love of community and family, including his wife, Diane, and two children; his Jewish faith; his concern for others; and his affection for dogs. Morris earned his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and his MBA from the University of

Virginia. He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Tau Epsilon Pi.

In addition to funding the gate and providing \$1 million in unrestricted support for Georgia Tech Athletics through the Alexander-Tharpe Fund, \$250,000 has been designated for the Leo and Louise Benatar Endowment for the H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering, which was originally established in 1998.

"Georgia Tech has been a special place in our lives," Benatar says. "I enrolled in 1947 and couldn't afford to live in a dorm — with the assistance of Dean George Griffin and Fred Ajax, jobs were found for me to help pay my tuition and books, mostly used. The gifts we have made during the years are

but a small acknowledgement of my debt to Tech."

Georgia Tech basketball fans might recognize the name "Benatar" from the east entrance of McCamish Pavilion, which bears the couple's name. Louise and Leo are members of the Hill Society, Georgia Tech's most prestigious giving society, and Leo has served on the ISyE Advisory Board as well as the Georgia Tech Foundation Board.

Yellow Jacket fans entering the west stands of Bobby Dodd Stadium at North Avenue will pass through the Morris Benatar Gate.



FINISHING WHAT HE STARTED - 59 YEARS LATER



A six-decade delay in receiving his master's degree didn't hinder Leo Benatar's career success.

had returned to Georgia Tech after a stint in the Navy. He completed all the coursework for a master's by 1957 and was preparing his thesis defense. At this point, the first of many obstacles came between Benatar and his degree: his thesis advisor left the Institute, and Georgia Tech was unable to find someone with the requisite knowledge of Benatar's thesis topic to hear his defense.

Benatar continued taking classes and waited. The next year, a qualified replacement advisor had still not been found, so Benatar opted to leave Tech to begin his career. The lack of a master's didn't hinder Benatar's career success. He is a former chairman of

The Federal Reserve (6th District, Atlanta); a principal of Benatar & Associates; and currently serves on the board of Aaron's Inc. He retired in 1996 as chairman of the board of Engraph Inc., a \$500 million manufacturing company.

Despite his impressive career success, Benatar still wanted the sense of fulfillment that finally receiving his master's would provide. "I'd done the work and gone to the classes — I'm the type of person who wants to complete everything that I start," Benatar said. A few years after he left Tech, Benatar learned the Institute had dropped the thesis requirement for his degree. He made inquiries about finally

receiving the degree, but those requests fell through the cracks. Every so often after that, Benatar would check in and ask. Finally, Benatar mentioned it to Edwin Romeijn, current chair of the H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering, and the obstacles began to fall away. Benatar got the word that he would officially walk with the Class of 2016.

"Psychologically, it's a tremendous feeling for me," Benatar said. "Completing this gives me a tremendous sense of satisfaction." The east entrance of McCamish Pavilion, the graduation site, is named for Benatar and his wife, Louise, in honor of their tremendous generosity to the Institute. ///

When Leo Benatar, IE 1951, MBA 2016, began his graduate studies, Dwight D. Eisenhower was President and Elvis Presley was starting his musical career. It was 1954, and Benatar

Technology Square Phase III

When it opened in 2003, Technology Square forever altered not only the Georgia Tech campus but also the Midtown area's innovation ecosystem. Today Tech Square is fertile ground for launching inventive ideas that improve human life on a global scale. With Phase II of Tech Square set to open next year in the form of the 21-story Coda building on Spring Street, preliminary plans are now underway for Phase III. To be located on the northwest corner of West Peachtree and Fifth streets, Phase III will feature a two-tower complex with a shared elevator opposite the Ernest Scheller Jr. College of Business building. One tower will be dedicated to graduate and executive education for the Scheller College, while the second tower will house the H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering. The project will also include a large plaza with street-level retail and an underground parking deck.

*To inquire about naming opportunities within Phase III of Technology Square, contact Vice President for Development **Barrett H. Carson** at barrett.carson@dev.gatech.edu or 404.894.1868.*

