

= Tech Tower =

The Lettie Pate Whitehead Evans Administration Building , commonly known as Tech Tower , is a historic building and focal point of the central campus of the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) in Atlanta , Georgia , US .

Located at 225 North Avenue NW in Midtown Atlanta , it was erected in 1888 as the Academic Building , with classrooms to complement the hands @-@ on training in the adjacent shop building . It was the second edifice completed on the Georgia Tech campus and it is the oldest surviving one .

Tech Tower has achieved local , cultural , and historical significance . Monuments and plaques commemorating philanthropy towards Georgia Tech adorn the building and surrounding landscape . The red brick , Victorian @-@ style building is the architectural anchor of the Georgia Institute of Technology Historic District , a landmark of tradition and school spirit , and the present @-@ day administrative hub of the Institute . It has been the site of many ceremonies and important events , including a visit by U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt and its dedication in honor of Lettie Pate Whitehead Evans , " Tech 's greatest benefactor . "

Lighted signs spelling TECH hang on each of the four sides of the seven @-@ story central tower , dominating the building 's facade and visible from many parts of the Georgia Tech campus and surrounding area . Georgia Tech students have several times stolen the letter ' T ' from one of these signs , a prank once tolerated but now strictly forbidden .

= = History = =

In 1887 , the state of Georgia acquired 9 acres (3 @.@ 6 ha) of land from Atlanta pioneer Richard Peters that would form the original campus of what was then called the Georgia School of Technology , as well as the site of its first two structures . The state hired the well @-@ known architectural firm Bruce & Morgan to design an Academic Building , containing " ample accommodations in halls , offices , apparatus rooms , recitation and lecture rooms , free hand and mechanical drawing rooms , library and chapel , " as well as a Shop Building , in which " boiler and engine rooms , wood shop , machine shop , forge room and foundry " were located .

Both buildings boasted towers and edifices of similar design . The complementary names and purposes of these buildings reflected the School 's founding principles of valuing both theory and practice , while their similar appearance emphasized the equal standing of these principles . Construction work , contracted by Angus McGilvray with his low bid of US \$ 43 @,@ 250 (\$ 1 @.@ 14 million in 2016) , began with the Academic Building in June 1887 ; the building was completed in September 1888 . The Shop Building , completed shortly afterward , was destroyed by fire in 1892 and rebuilt more modestly without a tower . Following this , the Academic Building , later known as Tech Tower , became the oldest building on the Georgia Tech campus , a distinction it continues to hold more than a century later .

On October 20 , 1905 , U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt visited the Georgia Tech campus . On the steps of Tech Tower , Roosevelt presented a speech about the importance of engineering education . He then shook hands with each of the 500 students present .

Georgia Tech 's Class of 1922 installed the famous TECH signs on all four sides of Tech Tower in 1918 , giving rise to the building 's present nickname . Their purpose , as defined by the donors during their first year at Georgia Tech , was to " light the spirit of Tech to the four points of the compass . " The signs were originally made of wood and painted white and gold ? the Institute colors . In the 1930s , lightbulbs were affixed to the signs to illuminate them more effectively than the earlier ground @-@ based spotlights . In 1949 , the TECH signs were supplemented by neon lighting in metal frames .

In 1978 , Tech Tower and the surrounding 9 acres (3 @.@ 6 ha) of the original campus were added to the National Register of Historic Places as the Georgia Institute of Technology Historic District . Near the entrance to Tech Tower , a historical marker maintained by the Georgia Historical Society commemorates this listing as well as the early history of the Georgia Tech campus .

On May 22 , 1998 , Tech Tower was officially renamed the Lettie Pate Whitehead Evans

Administration Building in a ceremony presided over by Tech president G. Wayne Clough . Although neither she nor her husbands attended Georgia Tech as a student , Lettie Pate Whitehead Evans was a longtime benefactor of the Institute , contributing over \$ 340 million through her philanthropic organization , the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation .

Tech Tower 's continuous use since its completion in 1888 has required occasional maintenance and refurbishment . It underwent extensive renovations in 1965 with a focus on remodeling the building 's interior layout . During this time , the library and chapel were replaced with modern office space and furnishings . In contrast , efforts directed towards the exterior of the building have aimed to preserve its historic appearance . A restoration project called the " Tech Tower Renovation " began in 1987 , spearheaded by alumnus Eugene M. " Gene " Clary 's gift of new copper shingles with which to replace Tech Tower 's aging roof tiles . Clary first suggested gold @-@ colored shingles , but John Patrick Crecine , Georgia Tech 's president at the time , insisted on copper shingles to match the building 's original construction materials . One of these shingles and a small marker inside the Tech Tower entrance lobby commemorate Clary and his donation . Additional restoration of Tech Tower 's exterior and the Georgia Institute of Technology Historic District , funded by the Class of 1950 and Class of 1975 , began in 2000 . As part of Phase I of the Georgia Tech Master Plan of 1997 , the area was made " more pedestrian @-@ friendly " with the removal of access roads and the addition of landscaping improvements , benches , and other facilities .

= = Structure and appearance = =

Tech Tower is built in the Victorian style with Romanesque Revival influences . The building 's original specifications , according to Georgia Tech 's first Annual Catalogue Announcement published in 1889 , are listed as 130 feet (40 m) wide and 120 feet (37 m) deep . It is constructed primarily of red brick and trimmed with granite . The gabled roof , originally terra cotta , was later replaced by copper shingles . The main complex of the building stands four stories high plus a basement . The tower portion stands seven stories high and is topped with four lighted TECH signs (one on each side) and a high pitched roof . The main entrance to the building is accessed by ascending a small staircase and entering a small porch which forms the base of Tech Tower . Most of the building 's windows are simple rectangular frames , with the exception of those on the third floor , which are arched . The entire complex sits on the crest of a tree @-@ dotted hill , giving it the appearance of being larger than it actually is .

= = = Surroundings = = =

As the oldest building on the Georgia Tech campus , Tech Tower has accumulated a number of peripheral monuments and sites of interest over the years . Two walkways encircle the building , including the Tower Walk , donated by the Class of 1950 in 2000 . Georgia Tech 's first class memorial , a marble drinking fountain , was donated in 1911 by the Class of 1903 and is situated east of Tech Tower 's main entrance . Also near the main entrance to Tech Tower is a marbled pair of benches donated by the Class of 1925 in memory of those who died in World War I. A few feet away stands a marbled bench memorial to Paul Howes Norcross , a 1902 Georgia Tech alumnus and former ASCE president who perished in the Norman boat disaster of May 8 , 1925 . The headstone of Sideways the dog is located near Tech Tower 's rear entrance , as is an informational placard detailing Tech Tower 's early history , donated by the Class of 1932 . A staircase donated by the ANAK Society in 1921 connects Tech Tower to the adjacent D. P. Savant Building via a continuous sidewalk . Finally , a steam @-@ driven air compressor , colloquially known as the " steam engine , " sits prominently at the top of the hill near Tech Tower as a reminder of the school 's industrial roots .

= = Modern use = =

As its official name suggests , Tech Tower is primarily used for administrative purposes . It houses

the Office of the Registrar , the Office of Capital Planning and Space Management (CPSM) , the Internal Auditing Department , and offices for the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL) . In addition , the deans of the College of Engineering and the College of Sciences have offices in Tech Tower .

Tech Tower is considered an iconic representation of Georgia Tech and of higher education in Atlanta . It is often featured in marketing materials and merchandise for the Institute and its silhouette is recognized throughout the Atlanta metropolitan area . The Tower , Georgia Tech 's undergraduate research journal , is named after Tech Tower . Kessler Campanile , a stylized bell tower built on the Georgia Tech campus as part of an Institute @-@ wide branding campaign in the mid @-@ 1990s , was designed to look like a modernized version of Tech Tower . The campanile is now featured in all Georgia Tech logos , though some have argued that Tech Tower itself would be a more appropriate symbol .

= = Stealing the ' T ' = =

Students have stolen the huge , symbolic letter ' T ' on the Tech Tower 's TECH signs a number of times . The ' T ' is then returned at the halftime of the homecoming football game , and the students ' achievement celebrated . Tradition dictates that the first ' T ' to be stolen should be the one facing east , as this can most easily be seen from the Downtown Connector . The groups of students responsible for ' T ' thefts generally assume dramatic pseudonyms , such as the " Mystic Marauders " or the " Sneaky Four . " Pervasive rumors of a detailed plan held in the Institute 's archives to execute " the perfect T theft , " crafted by an unnamed Georgia Tech fraternity , are apparently spurious .

= = = Notable thefts = = =

The ' T ' was first stolen in April 1969 by a secret group of Georgia Tech fraternity brothers calling themselves the " Magnificent Seven " . Inspired by a similar prank that had taken place in 1968 at Harvard University , the students planned the theft as a means of commemorating Institute President Edwin D. Harrison 's retirement . The ' T ' was returned several days later via helicopter at the behest of Atlanta mayor Ivan Allen .

On the evening of November 6 , 1997 , the ' T 's were nearly stolen from the north , south and west sides of Tech Tower by five students wielding hacksaws , tin snips , and rappelling equipment . The students were caught by Georgia Tech police acting on a tip provided by an anonymous informant . The stolen north ' T ' was recovered in the back of a blue Ford Explorer that was parked at the Copper Kettle on Howell Mill Road , also in response to an anonymous tip . Each student was required to pay \$ 2 @,@ 446 @.@ 75 in damages (\$ 3 @,@ 607 in 2016) although criminal charges were not filed . The Georgia Tech Office of Facilities reinstalled the ' T ' on January 31 , 1998 , 87 days after its attempted theft .

One of the most theatrical thefts of the ' T ' occurred over the summer of 1999 . The ' T ' on the north face of Tech Tower was stolen by a group of " six or seven people " on the morning of June 3 , 1999 . The perpetrators wrote a letter detailing the theft to the editorial staff of The Technique , Georgia Tech 's student newspaper . The letter , an abridged version of which was subsequently printed in the summer issue of The Technique , described the process of stealing the ' T ' by lowering it via a rope and moving it to a secret location . The letter also included a photograph of the ' T ' " on vacation " in Berkeley Springs , West Virginia . Finally , the perpetrators indicated plans to return the ' T ' during the Georgia Tech Homecoming Parade , according to tradition , as long as no criminal charges would be brought against them . The letter was signed by fictitious Georgia Tech alumnus George P. Burdell . However , the Institute released a notice that those who stole the ' T ' would be harshly punished , and therefore the ' T ' remains to this day at an undisclosed location .

The replacement ' T ' on the north face of Tech Tower was stolen on May 28 , 2001 by three students , two of whom were found guilty of numerous conduct code violations by the Undergraduate Judiciary Cabinet and subsequently suspended . The students had successfully

removed the ' T ' from its mount but were caught in the act by authorities when the removal triggered an alarm . In October 2005 , a replica of the ' T ' was stolen from the Student Services Building and returned two days later .

Around midday on March 18 , 2014 , it was discovered that the north @-@ facing ' T ' had been stolen from Tech Tower . In this case , the thief admitted guilt after detectives approached him at his residence that afternoon , and was suspended through the following summer , while also having to pay a restitution fee and tuition to retake his nearly completed Spring 2014 classes . To handle this financial burden , the restitution fee alone totaling \$ 14 @,@ 823 @.@ 98 , a GoFundMe was created by a friend of the thief that was well known on campus , to assure its legitimacy , without revealing the thief 's identity (the friend 's name has since been removed from the post because of negative pressure from the GT administration) .

The tradition of stealing the ' T ' from Tech Tower has inspired copycat crimes involving other signage . During a Georgia Tech ? NC State football game on November 4 , 2006 , the second ' T ' from a large nc state university banner mysteriously vanished from the upper deck of Carter @-@ Finley Stadium where it had been hanging . It was widely assumed across the Tech campus that the prank was pulled off by a group of Georgia Tech students in an homage to the longstanding Tech Tower tradition ; however , it is possible that the T in the banner came loose and fell to the stands below . Another copy cat incident occurred some time after the 2012 football game with Virginia Tech when vandals , believed to be Yellow Jacket fans , pried a T off of the sign in front of Virginia Tech 's Lane Stadium . The ' T ' was later dropped off at night to the Georgia Tech Police Department . The Georgia Tech president returned it to the Virginia Tech president in September 2012 along with an apology .

Similar copycat crimes have occurred on the Georgia Tech campus . In late 2001 , a group of Georgia Tech students calling itself the " Caldwell Liberation Army " stole 32 ' T 's from signs on 16 campus buildings over a period of two nights . The students , who were not caught , vandalized the signs to express their bitterness at being displaced from Caldwell Residence Hall while renovations were taking place . In February 2006 , it was noticed that small vinyl ' T ' stickers were being stolen from informational signs located around the Georgia Tech campus , creating confusion for visitors and new students . According to the Georgia Tech Student Government Association (SGA) , ' T ' thefts across campus cost the Institute over \$ 100 @,@ 000 from 2010 ? 11 . The SGA discouraged these thefts , which they emphasized did not constitute a true Georgia Tech tradition : " The tradition is stealing the ' T ' from Tech Tower ? no other ' T 's were ever a part of this tradition . " The campaign drew national press coverage .

= = = Institute reaction = = =

The Georgia Tech administration 's position on stealing the ' T ' from Tech Tower has varied over the years . When the ' T ' was first stolen in 1969 , interim Institute President Vernon Crawford was so upset he considered canceling classes until it was returned . Afterwards , subsequent presidents opted to turn a blind eye to the practice , with one president , John Patrick Crecine , going so far as to endorse it .

Today , stealing the ' T ' is prohibited and is officially punishable with expulsion , although this has not happened in practice . After a Georgia Tech visitor was accidentally killed while climbing the Alexander Memorial Coliseum in 1999 , Institute President G. Wayne Clough banned stealing of the ' T ' and the climbing of any Institute building , due to the risk of fatal falls and the potential for damage to the building . Clough also expressed concern over the " incredibly expensive liability litigation " Georgia Tech could face in the event of an accident . To discourage climbing , security features such as pressure @-@ sensitive roof tiling , fiber optic cabling running throughout the letters , and an audible alarm have been added to the ' T ' to help prevent its theft .

In 2011 , the Georgia Tech Student Government Association (SGA) launched a " Keep the ' T ' in Tech " campaign to discourage thefts of ' T 's from signage around the campus . The week @-@ long campaign took place from September 26 ? 30 and included an online petition to be published in The Technique , an open forum for discussing the issue , an amnesty day for returning stolen ' T 's ,

and " Live the True Tradition , " an evening event focused on the tradition of stealing the ' T ' from Tech Tower .