“It’s not the load that breaks you down — it’s the way you carry it.”
— Lena Horne, singer-actress-activist

Losing a Loved One: Grieving Is Uniquely Personal

EXPERIENCING loss is universal. Divorce, job loss, good health, or the death of a loved one — everyone has had to, or will at some point, navigate through an agonizing loss, while trying to hold it all together.

“We are whole people. The things we are going through at home come to work with us,” said Sonia Alvarez-Robinson, executive director of Georgia Tech Strategic Consulting.

“When dealing with trauma, it is easy to get stuck in the event,” she said. “While it’s different for each person, many people sometimes feel like they are in chaos, in a fog, or in fight-or-flight mode grasping for answers.”

Alvarez-Robinson knows all too well about loss. In 2013, her husband went into cardiac arrest during what was supposed to be routine surgery. He was in a fog, trying to help others manage change. She has a doctorate in human and organizational behavior, and studied change management for many years. That helped her get her family back on track. She used the same four steps she had used to help others manage change.

The first step is to demonstrate confidence: “Show them that you can lead them through the upcoming changes.”

Second, show them the possibility of a positive new future: “Here’s a new direction that we can go in.”

Third, tell them that what they are feeling will pass in time: “Help them know the sun will come out. There will be days of joy and happiness, mixed in with sadness and pain. They won’t be sad forever, but it is normal that it will be a single mother.

“It’s sometimes easier to help other people deal with their change,” Alvarez-Robinson said. She has a doctorate in human and organizational behavior, and studied change management for many years. That helped her get her family back on track. She used the same four steps she had used to help others manage change.

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Science Takes Center Stage This Week

The Atlanta Science Festival is back, and College of Sciences and Sutherland Chair Dean Paul Goldbart is serving as the festival’s first honorary chair.

“Dean Goldbart exemplifies the spirit of curiosity that we hope to kindle among all festival-goers,” said Meisa Salaita, cofounder and codirector of the Atlanta Science Festival. “He is a strong advocate for science education, public engagement with science, and scientists’ engagement with the public.”

More than a dozen events this year feature Georgia Tech students, faculty, or staff. The two-week festival begins on campus March 9 with a Rise of the Robots, which will feature a panel of robotics experts and a robot petting zoo.

“With astronomer Carl Sagan, I see science as one of humanity’s candles in the dark, furnishing us with bright light that helps guide us to a better tomorrow,” Goldbart said.

See a full list of events at c.gatech.edu/scifest.

Transformative Narratives Continue

Staff Diversity and Inclusion, part of Institute Diversity, is seeking stories from faculty, staff, and students as part of the Transformative Narratives storytelling initiative. Submissions may be selected to become part of the Institute’s digital story library and showcased in a future exhibit. Learn more at c.gatech.edu/stories
**EVENTS**

**HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

**March 6**
Human Resources hosts a Be Well session on Understanding Mental Health and Important Triggers, from noon to 1 p.m. in Room 319, Student Center. RSVP at: hrh.gatech.edu/bewell

**Through March 12**
Fit to Thrive is a six-week series focused on skills related to nutrition, physical activity, mindfulness, and stress management. healthinitiative.gatech.edu/thrive

**SEMINARS AND LECTURES**

**March 28**
The School of Psychology’s Optimal Aging and Social Inclusion Series hosts Emory University’s Bruce Crosson, who will discuss imaging in “Healthy Aging and Dementia: A Bigger Sandbox, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. in the Peachtree Room, Student Center. Refreshments will be provided. psychology.gatech.edu

**March 29**
The Center for the Study of Women, Science, and Technology (WST) hosts its annual distinguished lecture with Daryl E. Chubin, whose remarks will go Beyond Broadening Participation in Science and Engineering. The event takes place at 4:15 p.m. in the Clary Theatre, Bill Moore Student Success Center. wst.gatech.edu

**WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING**

**March 6**
Join experts from Georgia Tech Legal Affairs, Library Archives and Records Management, and Cyber Security for a discussion on how to responsibly spring clean your office files, so you know what to keep and what to toss. The session will take place from 3 to 4 p.m. in the Student Center Theater. legal.gatech.edu

**March 13**
Workplace Learning and Professional Developments hosts a session on Seizing Your Career the Georgia Tech Way from 9 a.m. to noon in Room 149, Global Learning Center. Register to attend at: trains.gatech.edu

**EVENTS continued on page 3**

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**FACULTY AND STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS**

Vinayak Agarwal, assistant professor in School of Chemistry and Biochemistry, Bilal Haider, assistant professor in the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering, and Lutz Warnke, assistant professor of Mathematics, are among 126 outstanding U.S. and Canadian researchers selected to receive the 2018 Sloan Research Fellowships. Awarded yearly by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the fellowships honor early-career faculty whose achievements mark them as among the very best scientific minds working today.

Sam Coogan, assistant professor in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering and with a joint appointment in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, has received a National Science Foundation CAREER Award for his research project entitled “Correct-By-Design Control of Traffic Flow Networks.”

Tushar Krishna, assistant professor in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, has been selected for a National Science Foundation CISE Research Initiation Initiative Award.

Thomas Kurfess, Professor and HUSCO/Ramirez Distinguished Chair in Fluid Power and Motion Control in the Georgia Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering, has been named 2018 President of the Society of Manufacturing Engineering.

Bojan Petrovic, professor in the Nuclear and Radiological Engineering Program in the Georgia W. Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering, was elected International Member of the Croatian Academy of Engineering.

Raj Sashid, advisor for Fellowships and Sponsored Programs in the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, was awarded a Fulbright Specialist grant during Fall 2017. He traveled to Thailand to study best practices on preparing competitive applications for fellowships and grants.

**In Memoriam**

**Thomas J. Lozano**
Thomas Lozano, a Georgia Tech graduate and longtime staff member, died Thursday, March 1, following a brief illness. He was 38.

Lozano graduated with honors from Georgia Tech in 2002 with a bachelor’s degree in management. He joined the Georgia Tech Athletic Association in 2004 and served in several roles within the athletics department, including in student services, compliance, and communications.

He was also one of the Yellow Jackets’ biggest fans and a staple at a Georgia Tech athletic event for the better part of more than two decades. Most importantly, he was a true friend to many Georgia Tech athletics staff members, student-athletes, and fans that he came into contact with over the years.

“Thomas was a huge part of our GTAA family,” said Todd Stanbury, director of athletics. “His dedication as an alumnus, a staff member, and a fan was unrivaled. He leaves behind an enduring legacy of great courage and character that has touched everyone he has ever come in contact with, including all of the student-athletes and athletics staff who were fortunate to know him. On behalf of the entire Georgia Tech athletics family, I offer our most sincere condolences to Thomas’ family and his countless friends.”

A moment of silence was held prior to the March 1 men’s basketball game against N.C. State. Donations can be made in Lozano’s memory to the International Myeloma Foundation at myeloma.org or the Atlanta Area Multiple Myeloma Support Group at P.O. Box 49041, Atlanta, Georgia 30359.

**Kathryn A. Fuller**
Kathryn A. Fuller, a Georgia Tech graduate and longtime employee in the Office of Development, died Thursday, March 1.

Fuller graduated from Georgia Tech in 1978 with a degree in industrial management, and she was a member of the Alpha Chi Omega sorority.

She began her 38-year career with Georgia Tech in October 1979. After working for a brief time in Development Research, Fuller served as director of Reunion Giving until 1993, when she was named a director of Regional Development, working with alumni and friends across the Southeast.

Fuller was known for her joyful demeanor and life devoted to all things Georgia Tech. This fall would have been her 40th class reunion.

“Kathy was full of life and laughter, and we all knew her in different ways that made her so special to each of us,” said Barrett H. Carson, vice president of Development. “It is a time of sadness here on North Avenue as we honor a life well lived.”

Carson noted that Fuller would be remembered for her sense of humor, her smile, and her laughter.

She assisted in the development and execution of three Institute-wide capital campaigns, helping to raise millions of dollars for her alma mater. Her love and abiding commitment to Georgia Tech were felt by all who knew her.

An endowment fund will be set up in Fuller’s honor; details will be shared by the Office of Development when they become available.

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**INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS**

**Annual Integrity and Compliance Campaign**

**Coming Soon**

RACHAEL POCKLINGTON

**Institute Communications**

Ethically challenging decisions can arise at any point in our career. As a result, it is important to remind ourselves what conduct is clearly prohibited at Georgia Tech and where to turn for help and support when we’re unsure.

To keep us mindful of the Institute’s and University System of Georgia’s Code of Ethics — as well as to review policies regarding cybersecurity, alcohol and illegal drugs, and conflicts of interest — Georgia Tech requires its faculty, staff (including Tech Temp), and student workers to complete the annual Integrity and Compliance Campaign.

The campaign opens March 7, and employees will have until April 6 to complete it.

This year’s campaign also features a new tutorial, The Science of Standing Up, which explores the science of individual decision-making including acting with integrity in difficult situations. It will also review the EthicsPoint reporting tool and the Institute’s Non-Retaliation Policy. “The Institute is redefining its approach to ensuring compliance and promoting ethical behavior,” said Pat McKenna, vice president of Legal Affairs and Risk Management. “We are working to provide employees with the resources needed to learn how to apply these ethical principles and take individual responsibility for what they see and do.”

McKenna adds that this approach provides a win-win for the Institute: It enables Georgia Tech to adhere to federal and state laws while providing an environment where employees can feel empowered to act with integrity and truly thrive.

The Integrity and Compliance Campaign can be completed on a desktop or laptop. It should take no more than 30 minutes to complete, and it does not have to be finished at one time. Beginning March 7, employees should visit training.hr.gatech.edu to get started.

Employees who do not comply by April 6 may receive a formal disciplinary notice from the Institute, and their access to Georgia Tech’s network may also be revoked.

For additional information or questions, email ethics.ask@ohr.gatech.edu

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**THE WHISTLE**

Georgia Tech’s Faculty/Staff Newspaper

Editor: Kristen Bailey
Photos: Allison Carter, Rob Felts, Christopher Moore
Published biweekly throughout the year.

Georgia Tech Institute Communications

comm.gatech.edu

Calendar submissions should be emailed to editor@comm.gatech.edu at least 10 days prior to desired publication date.

For more information, call 404-385-7061.

Archives are posted at whistle.gatech.edu.

Georgia Tech is a unit of the University System of Georgia.
“Losing people you love affects you. It is buried inside of you and becomes this big, deep hole of ache. It doesn’t magically go away, even when you stop officially mourning.”

— Carrie Jones, author

Like Alvarez-Robinson, John M. Stein’s work often includes helping people get through hard times. As Tech’s vice president of Student Life and dean of students, Stein and his staff are usually on the front line when a student dies or when a student loses a loved one.

When a student dies, Stein is often the person who calls the student’s parents and guides them through what they have to do. Similarly, when a student loses a family member and needs to go home, Stein and his office will guide the student through the necessary steps to inform their professors of their personal tragedy, and to arrange makeup work.

When the student returns to campus after a traumatic event, Stein typically likes to meet with the student.

“I ask how it feels to be back,” he said, “and I remind them that the Counseling Center runs a grief group, and that they can get involved if it fits into their academic schedule, or if they need to meet with a therapist individually.”

Stein recalled a student who returned to campus after a death in his family and said that people did not know how to relate to him.

“They didn’t know what to say or if they should say anything,” Stein said. “Nobody knew how to approach him, and that was the hardest thing. He didn’t want any other students to feel that way, so he created an initiative that is still being used today, even though he graduated years ago. The initiative is called Dear Fellow Yellow Jacket.”

The Dear Fellow Yellow Jacket initiative generates postcards with messages from student peers acknowledging that “we are aware that you have experienced a loss, and we want you to know that we are thinking about you. We are here if you want to talk to someone.”

For confidentiality reasons, students who fill out the cards do not know who is experiencing grief or who will receive the cards. “Students receiving the cards are shocked and overwhelmed in a positive way that other students thought of them,” Stein said.

In addition to informing the family that their son or daughter has died, Stein and his office inform President G.P. “Bud” Peterson and others on campus, and they work with Institute Communications to write a message to campus. Regarding whether to include the student’s cause of death, Stein follows the lead of the family and respects their wishes.

“We also send Counseling Center staff to where the student was engaged and involved — departments, classrooms, fraternities and sororities, residence halls — if those places and people want someone to come and help them process the loss.”

Honoring the Memory

English novelist George Eliot said, “Our dead are never dead to us, until we have forgotten them.” For some who are grieving, it is helpful to create something tangible to honor the memory of the deceased person. At Tech, many families have established scholarships, created endowment funds, or donated gifts in the name of their son or daughter. Sororities and fraternities sometimes choose their philanthropic endeavors based on the cause of death of their fellow student. Others have raised money in support of suicide prevention. Faculty and staff have taken similar steps to honor deceased colleagues.

When Doug Holley died suddenly in 2003, the Office of Development created an annual tradition to honor his memory. Holley, who had just been named director of development for the College of Engineering, was a supporter of the Georgia Baptist Children’s Home, which helps children in crisis. The Office of Development decided to pick up the mantle and support the organization by buying Christmas presents for the children. Each year, Development adorns the “Holley Tree” with ornaments that have the name of a child, along with a gift the child wants. Development staff members select ornaments and purchase two gifts for each child. Over the past 14 years, the tradition has supplied gifts to nearly 600 children.

In spring of 2013, Institute Communications also lost a colleague and friend, Elizabeth Campell, who died suddenly. Campell was a client manager, and a media relations specialist before that. She had worked with departments all over campus.

“Elizabeth was the first person I met as I arrived at Georgia Tech for my interview in 1998,” said Joy Taylor, assistant vice president, Institute Communications. “She was so welcoming and encouraging, quickly putting me at ease. That was the beginning of a friendship lasting more than 20 years.”

For several weeks after her death, Campell’s name remained outside her office. Her manager did not realize for her position right away, choosing instead to temporarily divide Elizabeth’s work among herself and other staff. When Elizabeth’s office was closed, with its contents exactly where she had left them. Her manager and colleagues were reluctant to clean out her office right away.

“We lost not only a colleague but a close friend,” Taylor said. “We had shared our professional and personal lives together every day — eating lunch projects, work challenges, dating, marriages, family health issues, birth of children. The thought of packing up Elizabeth’s personal items from her office was one more painful and permanent goodbye.”

We waited several weeks before we undertook this task and then left the office vacant and the door open for several more weeks as a transition before we could envision anyone ever filling that void.

To honor her memory, Institute Communications dedicated a bench and planted a tree in Campell’s honor at the Campus Recreation Center — where she met her husband, who was a Tech student at the time.

Each spring, Georgia Tech honors the memory of enrolled students and employees who died during the previous year with an event called When the Whistle Blows. During the ceremony, a unity candle is lit to represent the Tech community, and a family representative is invited to light a candle on behalf of their loved one. This year’s ceremony will be held April 4, from 5:15 to 6 p.m. at Harrison Square, near Tech Tower.

Above Photo by Christopher Mark // Below Photo by Rob Felt

The Office of Development reuses ornaments each year with new donations for children on their “Holley Tree.” (Below) When a colleague died suddenly in Institute Communications, staff members chose to dedicate a bench on campus in her honor.
Williams Finds Complementary Careers as Lecturer, Pastor

SHELLEY WUNDER- SMITH
INDUSTRIAL AND SYSTEMS ENGINEERING

The way Damon P. Williams, a 2002 industrial engineering graduate, tells it, he was destined to come to Georgia Tech — and destined to return years after he graduated.

A Maryland native, Williams was a high school senior when he first considered engineering for his college major. This meant choosing between the “two best engineering schools in the country: northward to MIT and southward to Georgia Tech.”

It was 1998, two short years after the Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta, and Georgia Tech’s campus had been spilled up to welcome the world. Williams remembered touring the Institute, seeing the brand-new dorms and swimming pool, and becoming enamored with the campus.

“Georgia Tech was where I wanted to go,” he said. And industrial engineering was a natural fit, because he’s always been the type of person interested in solving problems and improving on solutions.

While an undergraduate student, he completed two co-ops for a company that manufactured cellphones. Williams’ co-op experiences were enlightening, to say the least, as he became disheartened by the company’s “get it done as fast as possible” approach to solving problems, which favored where a worker came up with quick solutions, regardless of whether the solutions were the right ones.

These experiences eventually led Williams to the realization that he wanted to stay in academia. After graduating from Tech, he went on to the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, for his M.S. and Ph.D. in industrial engineering.

In Michigan, Williams’ career path took what some might consider to be an unusual turn: In 2006, while working on his Ph.D., he entered the Christian ministry. After Williams finished his dissertation, his pastor told him it was time for him to go to seminary.

What brought Williams back to Atlanta is ultimately what brought him back to the H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering. He is now a lecturer and advisor. He enrolled in a small Presbyterian seminary, Columbia Theological Seminary, in Decatur. Seminary demands skills that Williams hadn’t used since early in his undergraduate career.

“My brain is wired for math and science,” he said. “Seminary was a lot of group work, a lot of reading, a lot of writing. I hadn’t written a paper outside my dissertation since English class my freshman year. Doing so much writing was difficult for me, and I decided to do something that would take me back to my Ph.D.”

Williams reached out to then-ISyE School Chair Chip White (now the Schneider National Chair in Transportation and Logistics), who had also been a professor at Michigan during Williams’ time there, to inquire about teaching opportunities. White directed him to Chen Zhou, the associate chair for undergraduate studies, who immediately contacted Williams about teaching. The School was beginning to admit a larger number of ISyE majors and, as a result, needed additional lecturers.

Williams agreed to teach two undergraduate courses, took a part-time, post-doctoral appointment with Tech’s then-Center for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (now CTL), and continued with his seminary studies until he graduated with his master’s degree in divinity in 2012. “I like my plate to be full,” Williams said.

As Williams was about to graduate from Columbia, the pastor of his Atlanta church asked him, “Do you think you’re ready to lead a church?”

“Because I was a good Baptist associate minister,” Williams remembered, “I did as I was told and applied for the senior pastoral position at Providence Missionary Baptist Church,” which is a large, historic African-American church in Southwest Atlanta.

“There was no way they were going to hire me,” he said. “At the time I wasn’t married, I didn’t have any pastoral experience, I wasn’t ordained, and I had not yet graduated seminary when I applied. Top people in the field were applying for the job.” But over the next eight months, Williams went through the application and interview process, and the church asked him to be its pastor in September 2012.

At this point, Williams had three jobs: senior pastor, ISyE instructor, and full-time assistant director of CTL. He resigned from CTL but continued teaching for ISyE.

“I love teaching, I love students, I love ‘the ah-ha!’ experience,” he said. “I love taking a student who doesn’t think they can do it and really motivating, and encouraging them and showing them they can succeed.”

Williams’ weekly schedule is packed: Sunday is a work day, with two church services and Sunday School between. He spends Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings teaching early ISyE classes, then heads directly to his church from campus.

Wednesday afternoons are spent at multiple church-related activities; Thursdays and Fridays are generally for sermon preparation; and Saturdays are for any church- or ISyE-related work. In between shuttling from ISyE to church activities, Williams reserves blocks of time to spend with his wife and 22-month-old son.

“Then the week starts over again on Sunday,” Williams reflected. “It’s a seven-day-a-week workweek. But the old adage is true: ‘If you love what you do, you’ll never work a day in your life.’”

Currently, Williams teaches three ISyE undergraduate classes: Operations Analysis (ISYE 3104), which is a breadth engineering elective; Introduction to Probability (ISYE 2027), which is required for all ISyE students; and Probability and Statistics (ISYE 3770), which is for non-ISyE majors. As an advisor for ISyE, he has also recently added student success initiatives — such as study techniques and time management — to his roster, specifically focusing on ISyE students who are struggling in their classes. He aims to increase students’ capacity for academic success.

“We have the best professors at the best college and the best students. ISyE students should get the best education,” Williams said. “If they’re not, I want to slide in there and figure out what can be done to make sure they’re getting the best education and the best experience.”

When asked if his two roles complement one another, Williams agrees. “At ISyE, I study how to optimize large-scale systems. What is a church? A church is a large-scale system in a community. It has to be optimized and improved. People’s lives have to be improved; people’s relationships have to be improved. Are people’s lives improved? Absolutely not. But can I apply some of the principles that I learned from engineering and improved from learning my engineering degrees to create better solutions for my church? Yes.

“And then, my students find out I’m a minister, and they call me and say, ‘Pastor, I heard you go to church. Tell me how you hear my church. I’ll see them sitting out there in the congregation. There’s definitely overlap — but not because I’m ministering to the students when I step on campus. I’m very aware to keep the two roles separate. But our society has some significant problems, and these millennials who I teach are going to get out there and solve those problems. So I’d better teach them well and love on them so hard that they get out there and want to fix our health care or our international relations with other countries, for example.”

Williams is passionate about building relationships with the people who he is dedicated to preparing for class or for delivering his church sermons on Sundays (above).

“Because I was a good Baptist minister, I feel like I have two churches: a congregational church in southwest Atlanta, and every semester — as they rotate through — a congregation of ISyE students. And I care about people, and love on people, and pour into people.”

For sale: Simmons Beautyrest “Firm” full mattress and Tempur-Ergo Premium Pillow Top Mattress (with warranty), 18 months old. Orig. $3,600, sell for $1,800 OBO. Contact pamaiga@hotmail.com.

Specialized Sirus Elite Woman’s Bike — medium frame, black. Purchased brand new a few times. Bike has lightweight, alloy/welded black frame. Rides smooth, great for speed and city street riding. TopSpeed Explorer Flack installed on back, two water bottle cages added. Asiam Kingston Commuter messenger bag also included. Contact karla.huie@gatech.edu, 706-587-5898.

Researchers in the School of Interactive Computing and Institute for People and Technology seeking parents of children ages 1 to 5 years old for a study using an e-book to track development. Learn more at cgatech.edu/ibookstudy.

Free yellow jacket nest removal. Nests to be removed up to three feet high. Contact paul_fortson@yahoo.com.

For rent: Furnished, private bedroom in East Midtown adjacent to Piedmont Park. Available through June 1. $850/mo. Includes utilities and internet. Walking distance to MARTA, Tech Square, restaurants, entertainment, shopping. Contact 312-218-7668.