

*Stephon Marbury (left), Travis Best (center) and Kenny Anderson have a combined 27 years experience in the NBA.*

# MAKING A POINT

**FROM MARK PRICE TO STEPHON MARBURY, GEORGIA TECH'S POINT GUARD LEGACY HAS BEEN EVIDENT IN THE NBA.**

BY DENISE N. MALOOF

**U**CLA and Georgetown are known for their big men. Add Duke and Indiana's defense, Kentucky and North Carolina's overall excellence and you have some of the game's most enduring positional traditions, not to mention talent pools.

Georgia Tech's legacy to the college basketball world has been at the point, where seven former standouts went on to ply their trade as NBA professionals.

It began as serendipity in 1982, when a little-known kid from Enid, Oklahoma decided to give the Atlantic Coast Conference's newest entry a try. What started with Mark Price has produced seven players who have garnered NBA credentials during the last decade, including three of Tech's ACC-record 10 rookie of the year award winners.

**MARK PRICE (1983-86)** is perhaps the most revered name in Georgia Tech basketball annals. He set the standard for Tech point guards, amassing more than 2,000 points, 500 assists and a Tech

record 240 steals. He burst onto the scene in 1983 and became the first freshman to lead the venerable ACC in scoring. More importantly, he led the Tech program to national prominence, including the 1985 ACC title and NCAA Final Eight.

Drafted by the Dallas Mavericks, he was traded to Cleveland, where he became a favorite of former Cleveland and Atlanta coach Lenny Wilkens, plus a four-time NBA All-Star and a member of Dream Team II in 1994. Among Price's many statistical accomplishments is the top career free throw percentage in NBA history. He finished his career as Cleveland's all-time leader in assists and three-point field goals, and the Cavaliers honored him by retiring his jersey in 1999.

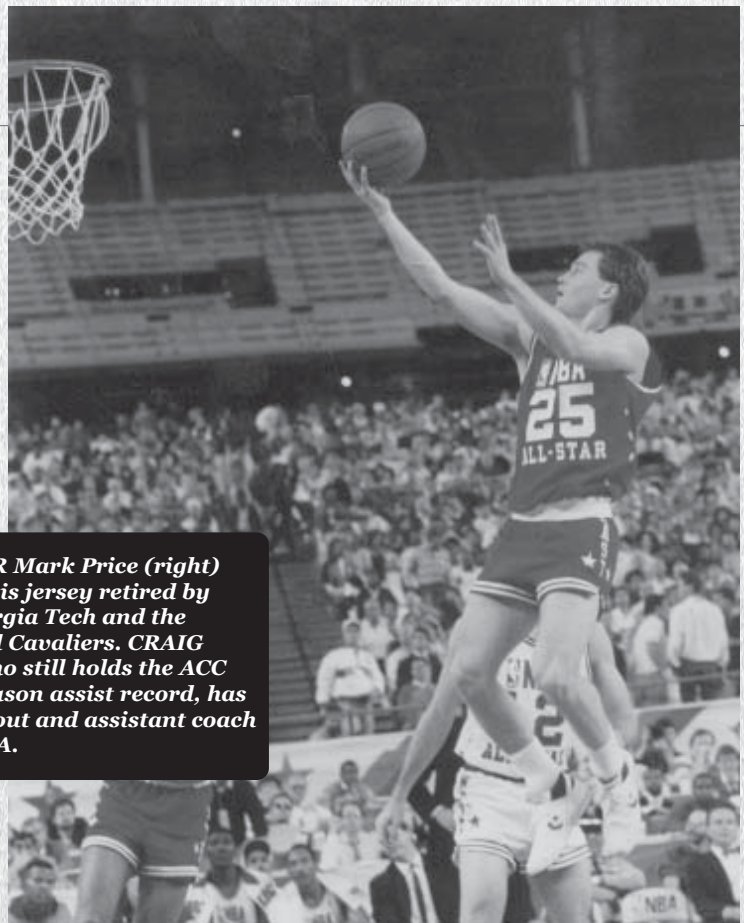
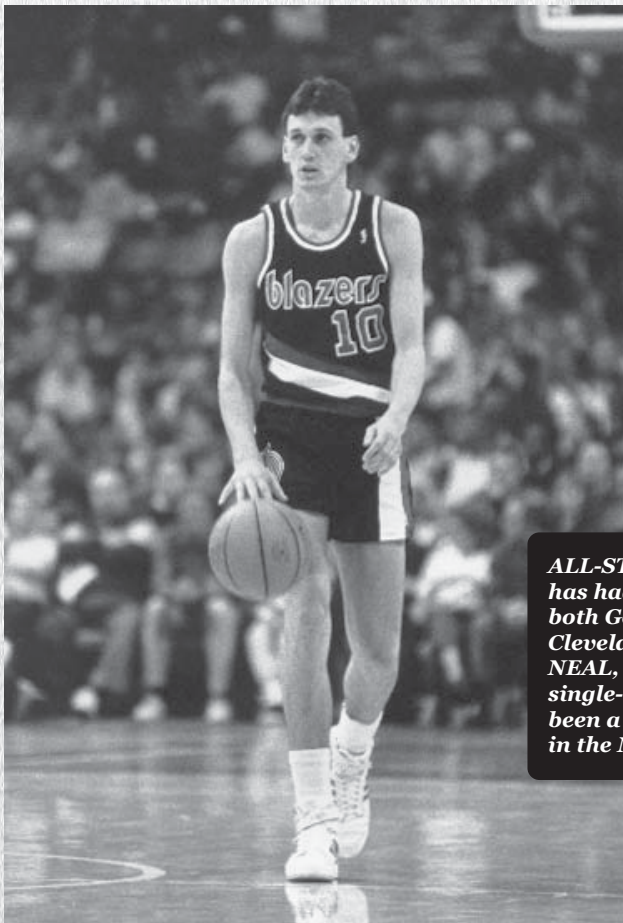
**CRAIG NEAL (1987-88)** was as outgoing as Price was subdued, but the two were great friends. Known as "Noodles," for his angular physique, Neal set the school assist record of 659 and notched an ACC-record 303 during his senior season, a mark that still stands today. His 19 assists

in a game against Duke also still stands as the Georgia Tech record.

Neal was drafted by Portland and played parts of three seasons with the Trail Blazers, Miami and Denver, also logging time in the Continental Basketball Association. He was an assistant coach for the Toronto Raptors last season.

**BRIAN OLIVER (1989)** isn't officially included in Tech's point guard listings, but the popular shooter and member of Tech's "Lethal Weapon 3" trio was the bridge between the departure of Neal and arrival of Kenny Anderson. His versatility, toughness and leadership were his greatest assets.

An Atlanta native and second-round NBA draftee, Oliver is now playing professionally in Italy after a brief NBA career that included a stint with the Atlanta Hawks in 1997-98 as well as stops in Philadelphia and Washington and a tour in the CBA.



*ALL-STAR Mark Price (right) has had his jersey retired by both Georgia Tech and the Cleveland Cavaliers. CRAIG NEAL, who still holds the ACC single-season assist record, has been a scout and assistant coach in the NBA.*

**KENNY ANDERSON (1990-91)** is one of those athletes whose first name is sufficient identification. Tech fans know him simply as, “Kenny,” the New York school-boy wonder who led Tech, along with Lethal Weapon 3 mates Oliver and Dennis Scott, to the 1990 ACC title and Tech’s sole Final Four berth. A left-handed passer, Anderson was almost automatic as the 1990 ACC rookie of the year and his match-ups against then-fellow freshman and Duke point guard Bobby Hurley made for Tech seasonal highlights.

Drafted by the New Jersey Nets after two seasons, Anderson was an NBA All-Star in 1992 and has played 12 seasons.

**TRAVIS BEST (1992-95)** had the un-

enviable task of succeeding Anderson, but he lived up to it. He led Tech to a Sweet 16 berth as a freshman and scored 2,057 career points in four seasons, including 258 three pointers. He also broke Neal’s career assist record with 692, played excellent defense and was a three-time all-ACC choice.

A first-round selection by Indiana in 1995, Best blossomed in the Pacers’ backcourt, helping the team reach the 2000 NBA Finals, and now plays for the Miami Heat.

**DREW BARRY (1993-96)** is another guard not officially listed in Tech’s point legacy, but, like Oliver, he functioned quite capably as a second point guard. Playing

along side the more heralded Travis Best and Stephon Marbury, it was Barry who led the league in assists for three straight seasons, only the third ACC player ever to do so. And it is Barry who is Tech’s career assists leader with 724.

The second Barry to play for Tech following shooting guard Jon, Drew Barry was Seattle’s second-round pick in the 1996 draft and has played for the Super-sonics, Golden State Warriors and Atlanta Hawks in the NBA.

**STEPHON MARBURY (1996)** was a one-year wonder, helping lead Tech to its first outright ACC regular-season title in 1996 and on to the NCAA Sweet 16. He led Tech in scoring with 18.9 points per game and won ACC Rookie of the Year and first-team all-conference honors. A Brooklyn native, he opted to turn pro after his freshman season and was the fourth pick in the 1996 draft. He is now playing for the Phoenix Suns.

“I thought there’d never be a more publicized guy than Kenny,” said Marbury’s coach, Bobby Cremins. “Stephon was the most explosive of all of them. He’d get up and dunk the hell out of the ball. Wasn’t quite the ballhandler Kenny was. Wasn’t quite the shooter Mark was, but he was tall, explosive, and the most physical.”

### Point Guards Through the Years

Player	At Tech	Drafted	Professional Team
Mark Price	1983-86	2nd/25th	Played 12 yrs for CLE, WSH, GS, ORL
Craig Neal	1987-88	3rd/71st	Played 3 seasons with POR, MIA, DEN
Brian Oliver	1987-90	2nd/32nd	Last with Atlanta Hawks, 1998; now overseas
Kenny Anderson	1990-91	1st/2nd	12-year NBA vet, w/ New Orleans in 2003
Travis Best	1992-95	1st/22nd	8-year NBA vet, now with Miami
Drew Barry	1993-96	2nd/57th	played parts of 3 seasons in NBA
Stephon Marbury	1996	1st/4th	7-year NBA vet, now with Phoenix
Tony Akins	1999-02	n/a	Playing overseas

# RETIRED JERSEYS

AL CIRALDO  
1954-1997

BOBBY CREMINS  
Head Coach  
1981-2000  
354 Victories  
3 ACC Titles

HARPRING  
15  
FEBRUARY 25, 1998

HAMMONDS  
20  
MARCH 1, 1989

PRICE  
25  
MARCH 2, 1986

SALLEY  
22  
MARCH 2, 1986

YUNKUS  
40  
MARCH 6, 1971

KAISER  
21  
FEBRUARY 22, 1961

## ENDURING SYMBOLS OF EXCELLENCE

### #15 Matt Harpring

Retired Feb. 25, 1998

- First-team all-American in 1998
- One of only two Tech players to earn first-team all-ACC honors three times
- Came within eight points of breaking the Tech career scoring record, finishing second with 2,225 points
- Also ranks second in career rebounds and among Tech's all-time leaders in virtually every statistical category
- Two-time Academic All-American

### #20 Tom Hammonds

Retired March 1, 1989

- Third-team all-American in 1989
- Three-time all-ACC selection, including first-team honors in 1988 and 1989
- ACC Rookie of the Year in 1986
- Became the third player in Tech history to score 2,000 points and still ranks fifth in career scoring and rebounding
- Helped Tech to four straight NCAA Tournament appearances

### #21 Roger Kaiser

Retired Feb. 27, 1961

- Georgia Tech's first all-American (1960) and one of only two consensus all-Americans (1961) in school history
- SEC Player of the Year in 1961
- Led Tech to its first NCAA Tournament
- Finished with Tech career records for points and scoring average



### #22 John Salley

Retired March 2, 1986

- Second-team all-American in 1986
- Two-time all-ACC selection
- Finished with the Tech career record for blocked shots
- Along with Mark Price, helped the Jackets rise to national prominence





## #25 Mark Price

**Retired March 2, 1986**

- Three-time all-American, including first-team honors in 1985
- Tech's first all-ACC first-team honoree and one of only two Jackets to be all-ACC three straight years
- ACC Rookie of the Year in 1983, when he led the league in scoring
- Finished his career as Tech's second-leading scorer and leader in assists and steals

## #40 Rich Yunkus

**Retired in 1971**

- Tech's all-time leading scorer with 2,232 points in just three seasons
- Second-team all-America in 1971 and a third-team selection in 1970
- Averaged a school-record 30.1 points per game as a junior
- Three-time Academic All-American

## Al Ciraldo

**Voice of the Jackets**

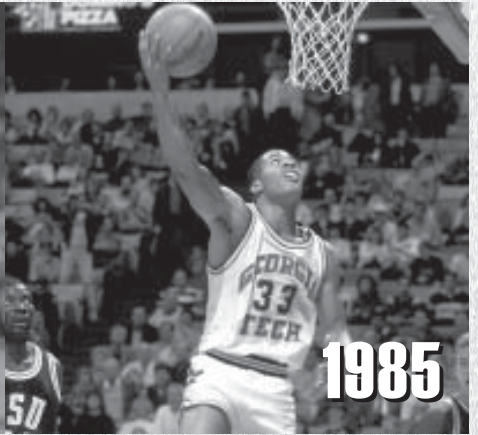
- Georgia Tech radio announcer for 43 years
- Called play-by-play for 1,030 basketball games from 1954-93
- Banner was raised on Feb. 14, 1998, three months after his death at the age of 76

## Bobby Cremins

**Head Coach 1981-2000**

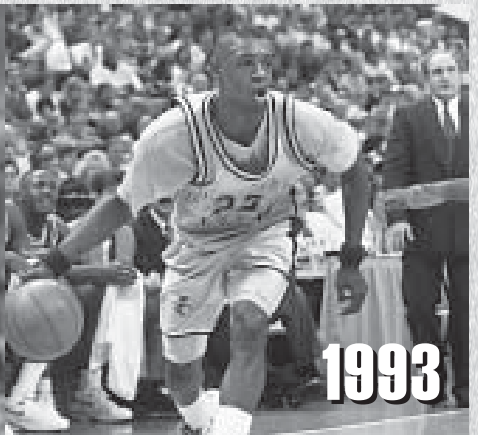
- National Coach of the Year - 1985, 1990
- ACC Coach of the Year - 1983, 1985, 1996
- Led Tech to three ACC titles (1985, 1990, 1993) and one NCAA Final Four
- Coaching record at Georgia Tech - 354-237
- Banner was raised and the Alexander Memorial Coliseum court was named in his honor on March 8, 2003





# TECH'S STRING OF P.E.A.R.L.S

Georgia Tech is home to 10  
ACC "Rookie of the Year" award winners



## From Price to Bosh, Tech's Rookie Tradition Is Unmatched

Georgia Tech and the Atlantic Coast Conference "Rookie of the Year" award seem to go together as easily as peanut butter and jelly. The rookie award has certainly found a home in Atlanta. A Yellow Jacket freshman has won the award 10 times in the last 20 years.

The dominance began with an unprecedented streak of four straight ACC rookie winners with Mark Price in 1983, Bruce Dalrymple in 1984, Duane Ferrell in 1985, and Tom Hammonds in 1986.

The all-America guard Price started the string in 1983, becoming the first freshman to lead the ACC in scoring with a 20.3 average. He bested NC State's Ernie Myers and Duke's Johnny Dawkins for the award.

One year later Dalrymple's all-around excellence made him Tech's second winner. Dalrymple averaged 13.6 points and 6.9 rebounds to edge UNC's Kenny Smith, Duke's Tommy Amaker and Maryland's Keith Gatlin.

Ferrell emerged as a high-flying small forward whose spectacular play kept Tech's streak alive in 1985. He averaged double figures throughout the season, but his average dropped to 9.1 after a knee injury in the ACC Tournament limited his play down the stretch. Ferrell outdistanced Maryland's Derrick Lewis for the honor.

Hammonds burst onto the ACC scene in 1986 with the poise and presence of a veteran. The power forward ranked among the ACC leaders in field goal percentage while averaging 12.2 points and 6.4 rebounds per game. He won over a talented rookie class, including North Carolina's Jeff Lebo and Duke's Danny Ferry.

After UNC's J.R. Reid broke the streak in 1987, Dennis Scott revived the tradition in 1988. Scott made a profound impact on Tech's fortunes when he led all ACC freshmen in scoring at 15.5 points and ranked 12th overall. He was also the ACC's most prolific three-point shooter. Scott's competition included Maryland's Brian Williams and NC State's Chris Corchiani.

Then Kenny Anderson dominated in 1990, not only capturing the ACC, but National "Freshman of the Year" honors as well. He set a standard that may never be broken by winning the ACC "Rookie of the Week" award 10 times. On Tech's Final Four team, Anderson averaged 20.6 points, 8.1 assists and 5.5 rebounds as he became just the second freshman in league history to make the all-ACC first-team.

Swingman Martice Moore added his name to the list with solid campaign in 1993 that helped Tech win an ACC title. Moore, who edged Maryland's Johnny Rhodes and Exree Hipp, averaged 10.5 points and 4.6 rebounds.

As Anderson had six years earlier, Stephon Marbury arrived at Tech as a highly-publicized and immensely talented point guard from New York City. And like Anderson, Marbury garnered first-team all-ACC honors along with the Rookie of the Year award, for which he outdistanced another freshman all-conference selection, UNC's Antawn Jamison. Marbury averaged 18.7 points a game and helped Tech capture its first outright ACC regular season title.

The award has returned to Tech the last two years with Ed Nelson and Chris Bosh capturing the honor. Nelson, a 6-8 forward, won in a close competition in 2002, establishing post presence on a small Tech squad against taller opponents nearly all season long, ranking 10th in the ACC with 6.8 rebounds per game. Bosh dominated the league's freshmen in 2003, leading the ACC overall in field goal percentage (56.0) and blocked shots (2.16) while ranking eighth in scoring (15.6) and second in rebounding (9.0).

### Mark Price • 1983

"Price probably means more to Georgia Tech than any other freshman in the country. We scouted Tech once and then played them in the Meadowlands. He had a hand in almost 85 percent of their scoring plays. That means he is either getting the steal or rebound to start the break, making the pass to set up the score or putting in the clutch shot."

— Pat Kennedy, Iona Head Coach

### Bruce Dalrymple • 1984

"Bruce Dalrymple has been extremely important to our success this season. I honestly don't think any other freshman in the conference has meant as much to their ballclub as Bruce has to ours. He scores. He rebounds. He plays excellent defense and he handles the basketball extremely well. And he plays the game with great intensity and a great attitude."

— Bobby Cremins, Georgia Tech Head Coach

### Duane Ferrell • 1985

"Ferrell, one of the most highly sought players in the country last year, has had the ups and downs of any freshman. But his scoring average is in double figures, and he has shown enough silk in his moves to the basket to leave people gasping at times."

— John Feinstein, Washington Post

### Tom Hammonds • 1986

"Freshmen aren't supposed to be this good, this polished. This essential. Even at Georgia Tech, where the Atlantic Coast Conference "Rookie of the Year" award has become a permanent fixture, freshmen aren't supposed to be so at home in the world of big time college basketball. But Tom Hammonds, Tech's prize catch, has taken to college ball like it was another pickup game in somebody's backyard back home in Crestview, Fla."

— Chuck Thompson, Macon Telegraph-News

### Dennis Scott • 1988

"First of all, he's not aware he's a freshman. Second of all, he's not aware of where the three-point line is. He plays so cool. Beyond the fact that he can shoot from the planet Pluto and not blink an eye, he seems to have great court awareness and he doesn't appear to be selfish."

— Dale Brown, LSU Head Coach

### Kenny Anderson • 1990

"He was the player for this tournament, and this March, and five years from now, when he is as big as any star in the NBA, it will be important that the country first took a good look at him when he was a freshman. When he was 18. There has not been anyone like him in college basketball since Magic and Bird. He is better than Isaiah Thomas. Michael Jordan, miracle that he has become, was just not this kind of presence. Not this young."

— Mike Lupica, The National

### Martice Moore • 1993

"Martice has helped us. He's a good athlete. I know he's been a little inconsistent at times, but he's meant a lot to our team. I really felt he was one of the keys to our ACC championship."

— Bobby Cremins, Georgia Tech Head Coach

### Stephon Marbury • 1996

"What makes him so special as a point guard is his unique scoring ability. He has a strong body and he works hard on the defensive end . . . He wants the ball late in games. He's not afraid to take the tough shot."

— Dick Vitale, ESPN

### Ed Nelson • 2002

"He's gone from a guy who in high school could just get the ball and bully his way to the basket to understanding how important it is to screen and set his men up to get good post position."

— Paul Hewitt, Georgia Tech Head Coach

### Chris Bosh • 2003

"We had to gang-guard him. I think the best way to defend him, and we don't have this, is to have a veteran big guy who's a physical player. We had to trap him and do some different things to keep him off-balance."

— Skip Prosser, Wake Forest Head Coach



# Lethal Weapon 3

*After all the celebrating was over, and this trio's place in Tech history was determined, Kenny Anderson, Dennis Scott and Brian Oliver certainly could be called . . .*

## A CLASSIC COMBINATION

**G**eorgia Tech coach Bobby Cremins is talking about chemistry. Not the kind found in the laboratory, but on the hardwood.

"You can't really discuss it," he said. "You can't really dissect it. I've had teams with bad chemistry. Last year, we didn't have it. It comes from the players."

Cremins, creator of the chemistry that brought Tech and its "Lethal Weapon 3" to the Final Four, can only marvel at what inadvertently was wrought.

"I had no idea that Kenny would fit in as well as he has," he said. "How could I know that?"

"Kenny" is, of course, Kenny Anderson, the splendid point guard who came out of Rego Park, N.Y., a working-class neighborhood in the borough of Queens, to become the trigger man for Tech's offense. Anderson joined Brian Oliver, a senior, and a revitalized Dennis Scott, a junior, for a blitzkrieg of the ACC and the

NCAA Tournament.

After a mid-season stumble in which they lost three straight ACC games and effectively took themselves out of competition for the regular-season title, the Yellow Jackets recovered and won 16 of 18 games to put them in the Final Four, the first ever in Tech history. It was during the middle of the slump, a 91-90 loss to Clemson, that a television graphic for the first time dubbed the Tech trio "Lethal Weapon 3." The name stuck. Cremins and the Tech players now refer to "Lethal Weapon 3" as if it were a separate entity.

They also refer to the slump as a time when their chemistry was tested, but proved solid.

"Before, if we had gone through three losses, there would have been people pointing fingers, saying so-and-so wasn't doing his job and stuff like that," Scott said. "That didn't happen. Nobody blamed anyone else. We knew we had to pull to-

gether and we did."

Pulling together, Tech assembled its late-season run and capped it by defeating North Carolina, Duke and Virginia in the ACC Tournament to win the championship. Then came the four-game sweep of the NCAA Southeast Regional, giving the Yellow Jackets a 28-6 record, the best ever for a Tech team.

During the season, "Lethal Weapon 3" was Tech's offense, averaging 78 percent of its points.

Anderson, Scott and Oliver each averaged more than 20 points a game, a combined 69.6 points. It was the first time in the 36-year history of the ACC that three players on one team averaged 20 or more per game.

In defeating Minnesota 93-91 for the Regional championship in New Orleans, "Lethal Weapon 3" reached its apex. With Scott scoring 40 points, Anderson 30 and Oliver 19, the three accounted for 89 of

Tech's 93 points and took 52 of 56 shots.

All season critics wondered when Tech's three-on-five game was going to run out of steam. It never did, until "Lethal Weapon 3" and its supporting cast met Nevada-Las Vegas for a spot in the national championship game, a scenario few would have believed possible for Tech when the season began.

And those who wondered before the season about the possible clash of egos on the Tech team would never have envisioned the unlikely chorus which rang out over Bourbon Street that week. The day before the Regional final, Cremins ran into his players in the French Quarter. They were on stage at a joint called "The Cat's Meow" offering delighted patrons their version of "Born to Be Wild."

### **Oliver's last year was 'fun'**

**B**rian Oliver smiles as he remembers how Cremins, who thought this would be a rebuilding year from the team which went 20-12 in 1989, came to him at the beginning of the season and told him he wanted this year to be different from Oliver's other three at Tech.

"He told me he wanted to make this year fun," Oliver said. "He said he didn't want it to be stressful. He didn't want practice to be a job."

Oliver, who was elected team captain and seemed the eye of the emotional storm that is Tech basketball, spoke calmly, but swiftly. He talked of his frustrations with a stress fracture in his left ankle which slowed his game; about a team which he said had matured through adversity.

"It's very frustrating for me to have this injury," Oliver said. "I mean, this is the time when we are going for all the apples."

In Oliver, a 6-4 off-guard who has the bulk at 211 pounds and the heart to play effectively inside, Tech found a talented catalyst largely devoid of ego. Oliver, who played point guard before Anderson's arrival, was less flashy than either Scott or Anderson. He was solid, sometimes spectacular; the glue binding three years of distinct, sometimes seemingly conflicting talents.

"In the beginning of the season, Brian carried the team on his shoulders," said Johnny McNeil, the senior center. "There is great chemistry on this team, but a lot of it is because of the leadership shown by Brian, and later Dennis. We trust each other and that helps a lot."

Oliver's injury, sustained in Decem-

ber and aggravated continually throughout the year, cut into his rebounding, hobbled his usually tenacious defense and took some offensive pop out of "Lethal Weapon 3."

Against Minnesota, although Oliver scored 19, his shots often clanged off the front of the rim, a sign he was not getting his usual elevation. But he went fearlessly inside, drawing fouls and hitting nine-of-12 from the free throw line.

"We need Brian," Cremins said time and time again. And there is no question Tech needed Oliver as much for his stability and knowledge, his calm assurance on the court, as anything.

But there were times when Oliver, for all his bravery, could not be there.

"I forget," Cremins said. "In the Minnesota game, there was a point when his man went right by him and I got on him."

Oliver, who played in constant pain—"I just try to block it out of my head"—responded, "Coach, I'm doing all I can."

Cremins never doubted that, but he had forgotten about the ankle. "I just shut up," Cremins said.

Cremins painted a picture of a Tech team which rarely ran the court as well since Oliver's injury early in the season. The picture, which Cremins recalled almost as a dream, has Anderson leading the break with Scott on the right and Oliver on the left.

In Cremins's version, the picture is completed by Anderson feeding to Scott, who pulls up and takes a three-point shot, while Oliver moves into position to rebound a rare miss.

"That's when Georgia Tech is at its best," he said. "What this injury has taken away from us most is Brian's rebounding. He is a great, great rebounding guard."

Oliver used one word to describe his injury: "frustrating." He was not the type to make excuses, addressing his injury in clinical tones.

"Yeah, I've been slowed," he said. "But we still have great talent on this team. And we know what to do."

At a news conference after the Minnesota win, Oliver, who is usually serious in such atmosphere, reached over and rubbed Cremins' mop of white hair in an affectionate, playful manner. The gesture unleashed laughter and playful banter from Scott and Anderson, who shared the stage.

For a moment, they were more like brothers than coach and players.

"Coach is a lot looser and we feel

that," Oliver said. "He trusts us and we trust him. That's where it all flows from."

Anderson arrived in Atlanta riding a wave of hype as high as Stone Mountain. He had been all-everything in high school, a can't miss prospect who was expected to step into the tough ACC and be a starting point guard.

That he did it and directed the Jackets to Denver may have amazed everyone but Anderson.

"Kenny is a bit of an introvert," Cremins said, joking.

So introverted that he suggested early in the season he was the "only pure point guard" in the ACC, bringing down the wrath of the fans of Hurley, Virginia's John Crotty and North Carolina State's Chris Corchiani.

"When we played North Carolina State the first time, Corchiani tried to take Kenny's head off," Cremins said. "But Kenny didn't back off."

Anderson said his words were misinterpreted or he said he never made the remark, depending on who was talking to him. That is similar to his remembrance of the controversial shot at the buzzer against Michigan State during the regional semifinal game. The shot put the Jackets into overtime, where they won 81-80.

About the shot, Anderson had said at different times: "I'm pretty sure I got it off," "I definitely got it off," and "I was within a tenth of a second either way."

### **He's quiet, but he listens**

**B**ut such was Anderson's personality that the discrepancies could be attributed to youthful enthusiasm rather than calculating guile. After all, because of his talent on the court, talent so great that no less a player than former Louisville star Darrell Griffith said, "He can play in the NBA right now," people forget Anderson was 19 years old.

Scott, his roommate, called Anderson "Hermit" because he spent so much time sleeping.

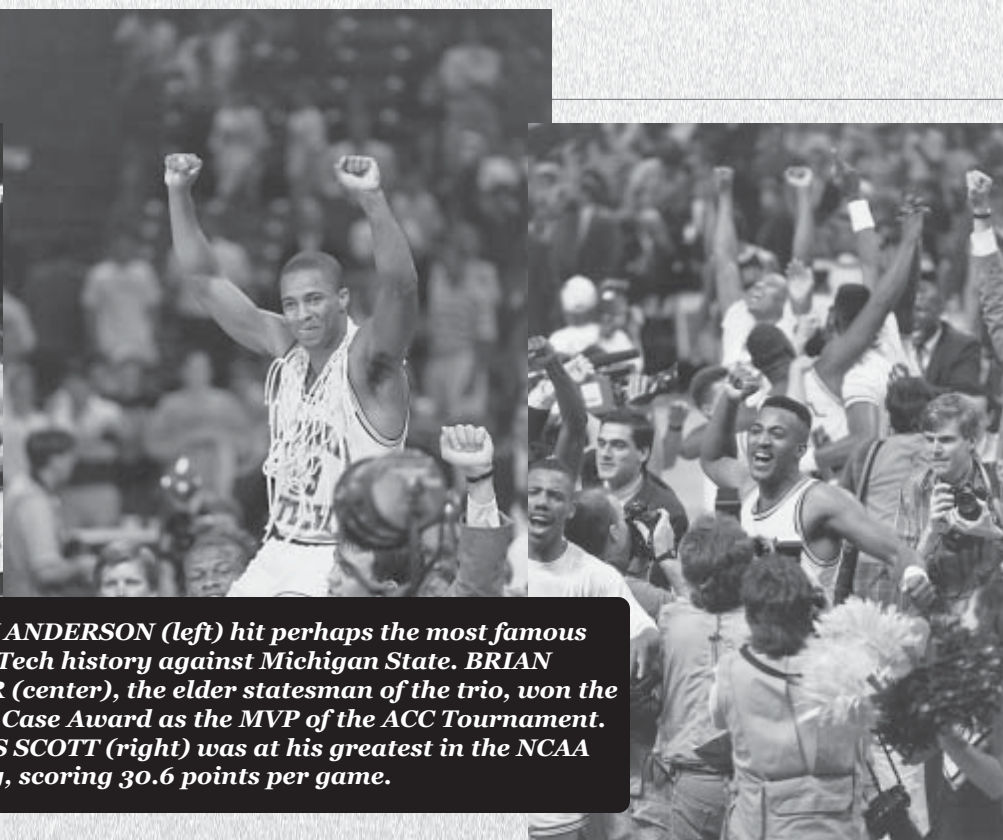
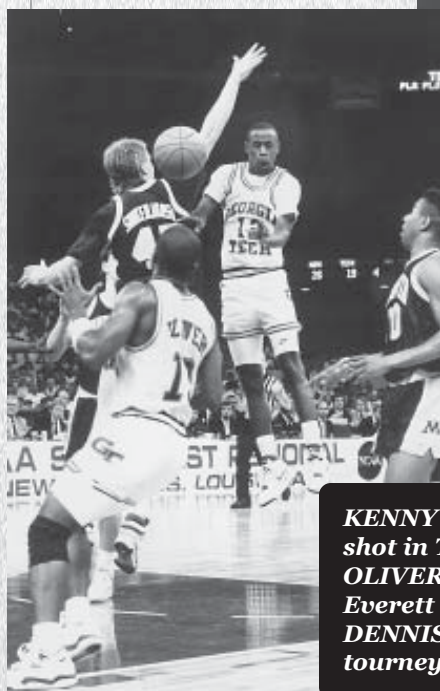
"When he got here, he was real quiet," Scott said.

But Anderson listened, which Cremins liked.

"He listens to what I tell him," he said. "He came in here with a lot of buildup, but he never let that stand in the way of him learning the game."

Other players, used to freshmen being freshmen, kept an eye on Anderson.

"I'm glad he has ended up being here," McNeil said. "I mean, I'm a senior



**KENNY ANDERSON (left) hit perhaps the most famous shot in Tech history against Michigan State. BRIAN OLIVER (center), the elder statesman of the trio, won the Everett Case Award as the MVP of the ACC Tournament. DENNIS SCOTT (right) was at his greatest in the NCAA tourney, scoring 30.6 points per game.**

and he's a freshman, but I depend on him a lot."

One thing McNeil and freshman forward Malcolm Mackey depend on Anderson for is to get the ball in any other way than rebounding. Although Anderson averaged 20.6 points, he handed out 285 assists, second best in a single season in ACC history. He also had 79 steals, a Tech record.

The hints were that Anderson was different away from the media limelight than in it. He seemed increasingly comfortable with media attention and he was a good interview, irreverent and funny. But some of that stems from Anderson's New York City roots, from growing up on playgrounds where it is often necessary to be able to talk a good game as well as play one.

Scott, who played off Anderson as if they had been together for years instead of months, expressed quiet admiration for his roommate.

"He's not like a lot of those New York guards you see who put it behind their backs and between their legs and never go anywhere," he said.

**Adding discipline to talent**

Dennis Scott's voice was quiet and soft, much softer than his muscular 6-8, 229-pound body.

For Scott, it was a time of glory. He was a basketball junkie. Unlike many ath-

letes who admit to only being interested in playing the game, Scott had studied basketball.

After winning the regional, he talked about being a kid and watching Griffith lead Louisville to the Final Four. He talked about going to the playground and pretending to be Griffith hitting the winning shot at the buzzer.

"And now to get a chance to actually do that," he marvelled.

Cremins' voice took on a solemn tone when he talked about Scott.

"The maturity of Dennis Scott has been incredible," he said. "He's been a winner, a fighter."

Before the season, Scott was a player with great talent and little discipline. He averaged 15.5 points his freshman year and 20.3 as a sophomore, but seemed to play passively.

"A year or two ago, Dennis would not look to go inside," said Cremins. "Dennis liked to stand around outside and watch."

But Scott came to school this season weighing 30 pounds less than the 259 he played at the year before. In the off-season, he had literally remolded himself and in doing so had made himself into the player his potential had always promised.

With Oliver ailing, the re-made Scott averaged 6.6 rebounds, second highest on the team. He averaged 27.7 points per game.

And then there were those games. In the regional final against Minne-

sota, Tech's biggest win ever, Scott played 40 minutes, scoring a point a minute.

"There's no question we look to Dennis Scott," Cremins said.

For the drive to the Final Four, the team looked to Scott more than ever and Scott responded. Following the Michigan State game, Scott walked to the blackboard in the Tech dressing room, wrote "3 More" and drew a circle around it. Three more wins to a national championship.

"Before, Dennis would have never done that," Cremins said.

After the Minnesota win, Scott etched "2 More" on the board.

"Dennis is not selfish," Cremins said. "He's not thinking about himself and the NBA. Since Brian has been hurt, he's really done a lot."

Scott was obviously having fun in his dream-come-true season.

"I asked Dennis at the first of the season to place his game second to the goals of the team," Cremins said.

Strange as it may seem for someone who set the ACC single-season scoring mark with 970 points, Scott played as if team goals were primary.

"How can you be upset with someone who wins games for the team," said McNeil when asked about Scott's scoring prowess, about the 25-footers he launched without hesitation.

*Reprinted from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, April 2, 1990*

# Thin Gold Line

**Eight players were enough to earn Tech its first ACC Championship and a trip to the "Elite Eight."**

**E**ight Is Enough" had been the title of a television show. In 1984-85, it was the motto of Georgia Tech's basketball team.

"Eight" was the number of healthy basketball players the Yellow Jackets had available to try to win their first Atlantic Coast Conference championship. "Enough" meant they could, and they did.

Furman Bisher, sports editor of the Atlanta Journal, had another name for it — "The Thin Gold Line." Mark Price, John Salley, Bruce Dalrymple, Yvon Joseph, Scott Petway, Antoine Ford, Jack Mansell, John Martinson. All of them played.

By the end of the ACC Tournament in Atlanta, there were an equal number of "coaches" on the Tech bench as reserves. Sitting in street clothes were forward Duane Ferrell, who sprained a knee in the first round of the tournament, and guard Craig Neal, who sat out most of the season with a bad wrist.

Still, despite the fact that Salley, Price and Dalrymple had to play 39 to 40 minutes a game, Tech played three extremely emotional basketball games and emerged with the ACC championship.

Throughout the year, Price and Dalrymple had been iron men at the guards, and Salley the same at power forward. Ferrell and Petway had shared the small forward spot, and Joseph had given Tech all it needed at center. Ford had come off the bench to give some solid help behind Joseph, and Mansell and Martinson provided valuable minutes as well. So the Yellow Jackets were in excellent condition for the task ahead.

Maybe it shouldn't have been such a surprise, for they had already captured a share of the regular-season crown, tying North Carolina and N.C. State with 9-5 conference records, and been awarded the top seed in the tournament.

Price had given Tech more than just points. His poise and effectiveness at point guard enabled all five starters to average in double figures. Dalrymple, listed as a guard, still found time

to mix it up underneath, providing a triple threat with scoring, rebounding and passing. Joseph gave Tech muscle underneath, while Salley became an intimidating shot-blocking force and was Tech's best percentage shooter from the field.

Ferrell, who became the third of four straight ACC "Rookies of the Year," was an instant starter and filled a vital role with his offensive ability, while Petway complemented the entire lineup with his ballhandling, passing and defense. His role became much more important when Ferrell went to the sidelines.

After beating Virginia, 55-48, in the opening round, with Joseph and Salley both in foul trouble and Ferrell on the bench down the stretch, Cremins never let his squad ease up.

"I was scared to death about the fouls, but I told them to keep up the pressure," Cremins told Atlanta Constitution columnist Jesse Outlar. "We couldn't let up, because we won on defense. We didn't do much on offense, but we played with tremendous guts. We gutted it out."

Eight men helped Georgia Tech become the life of the party in the Omni. The new kids on the ACC block. With the same aggressive style, the Thin Gold Line knocked off Duke in the semifinals, 75-64.

Bisher wrote, "Nevertheless, here were these upstarts in the league, treading on the precious ground of the Tar Heels, the Blue Devils and the Wolfpack. Who the hell did they think they were?"

"Then, when the score had become



75-64, Georgia Tech was near the most exulting moment since it pumped up a basketball. The Thin Gold Line had prevailed. Was this to be believed? Georgia Tech in the one game that decides who is the champion of the high, mighty and haughty ACC?"

It was true, but to accomplish the feat, Tech had to meet and beat North Carolina for the third time in a season. No team had done that since N.C. State rolled over the Tar Heels on the way to a national championship in 1974. Against Duke, Salley had fouled out, Joseph had finished the game with four and Price and Dalrymple three each. Against the bigger Tar Heels of coach Dean Smith, eight players would not be enough.

But only one Jacket earned as many as four fouls in the final, and Tech accomplished the dream, downing Carolina, 57-54, in the final. The Thin Gold Line had prevailed again after trailing the Tar Heels throughout, emerging with under a minute remaining in the game to win.

Price won the tournament's Most Valuable Player award, but with only eight players available, who's arguing? All of them could have won a piece of the award in Cremins' mind.

Fortunately for the Jackets, Ferrell returned for the NCAA Tournament, and the Thin Gold Line went all the way to the Final Eight before bowing to eventual champion Georgetown. Twenty-seven wins, eight losses and a No. 6 ranking in the final polls. A golden season to remember.



# THE START OF SOMETHING GOOD

Price-Salley tandem will always remain  
“first in Jackets’ hearts”

By THOMAS STINSON

**T**hey knew there would be trouble as soon as the team van topped the hill at Alexander Memorial Coliseum. A crowd that had been fermenting there for hours surged toward the vehicle. It was late March the night Georgia Tech had flown so hard into the face of basketball’s aristocracy and won the ACC Tournament.

Here the student body had come to laud the champions. And now inside the van, the players’ mood turned grim.

“Everybody was jumping on the van, chasing behind us when we got over to the coliseum,” said John Salley. “We’re all inside scared to death. I remember that. They’re jumping on the top. You don’t know if they’re drunk or what.”

Mark Price had sensed the danger and slipped away in another car with his parents. The irony of the moment was lost in the darkened streets. After three years of torment, worrying if success would ever come to the emaciated little program on Techwood Drive, here were Salley and Price, frightened by the arrival of that prosperity. In this van surrounded by yowling students, the circle had come complete.

Or had it?

Mark Price and John Salley, the two players who have ridden shotgun during Tech’s return to grace, have maybe one month left as college players. Where before they had wondered if their time would ever come, now they wonder if that time has come too fast. The ACC Tournament this weekend is a silent warning to the two seniors that the dance is almost done.

“There’s only one thing left I want to

do,” said Price, who was named to the all-ACC team for the third straight year. “I really think by winning the ACC last year (1985), we’ve really accomplished everything else. Obviously making first-team all-America would be nice. But I’d rather win a national championship.”

## From Oklahoma to the Big Apple

**I**f anything that profound came out of Bobby Cremins’ mouth five years ago when he was recruiting Salley out of Brooklyn or Price out of Oklahoma, the Tech coach would have been laughed out of their homes. In his first full year of recruiting, he was looking for a scoring guard and a big man. What he couldn’t know—what college basketball never suspected—was that he’d found the foundation of a national contender.

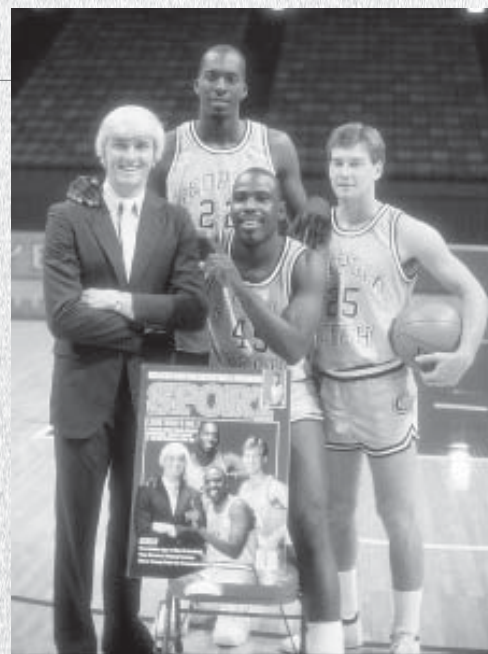
“I’ve got to give those two the credit for starting the program,” Cremins said. “The way they’ve handled themselves, what they’ve done for me and the program, they are two very, very, very special people.”

Salley, in fact, felt something the same for Price the first time they met in 1982, if for a different reason. He rushed into Price’s room upon arriving at Tech in the middle of the night, woke him up to introduce himself and nearly dropped from shock when a little Caucasian with droopy eyes sat up in his bed. Salley had expected, well, expected something else. Like Michael Jordan maybe.

“This little white dude’s shootin’ it 25 times a game?” said Salley.

“My first two years here, especially the first one when we were having such a tough time, there was never a doubt in my mind that we were going to be good, you know, by the end of my career,” said Price. “I don’t know why I felt that way but I knew we had more players coming in. I don’t know. I guess I’m a positive thinker.”

But if these were the worst of times, in some ways they were also the best. With lessened expectations, Cremins was easier on his freshmen. Tech went 0-7 on the



**PRICE AND SALLEY** arrived at a program that had won just four ACC games in three years. Their senior year, they were national coverboys (along with junior Bruce Dalrymple) and ranked No. 1.

road within the conference and no one flinched. This was the year of the infamous three-point basket in the ACC, the ring just 18 feet away from the basket. For Price, that was a layup.

“I’d just catch the ball,” he said, “and look down to see where the line was. I had a lot of fun my freshman year. ‘Course, I didn’t know what I was doing.”

Price led the league in scoring with 20.3 a game and spawned a defensive strategy heretofore unseen in the ACC, if anywhere else. Late in close games, opposing guards would play Price from behind, forcing him away from the three-point line, giving up the unobstructed 15-footer for its lessened point value. It was all novel for Salley as well. In his first meeting with Ralph Sampson, the Virginia center blocked eight of his shots. Enraged, Salley clipped him on the chin with an elbow on the way up with a hook shot. Sampson shook his head and blocked that one, too.

“We went to the ACC Tournament and beat Maryland,” said Salley. “And we were garbage.”

But then it’s not easy, being garbage.

## Evolution of a Point Guard

**W**e didn’t have a Christmas tournament to go to that year so we had two-a-days for two weeks straight,” Salley said. “It was scrimmage and practice. I was in Burger King every day, and it got so I couldn’t get enough sleep. All we did was

**“I’ve got to give those two credit for starting the program. They are two very, very, very special people.”**

**BOBBY CREMINS**

practice and sleep. Didn't have any cars, so we'd walk back to the dorms, sit down and it seems just an hour and a half later it was time to go get taped again. It was the most disgusting thing I've ever gone through."

Said Price, "My toughest year was my sophomore year, when I was being transformed into a point guard. There were a lot of frustrations that came with that. When you've played a certain way your whole life and all of a sudden you've got blinders put on you, it's a hard thing to have to handle. It was a tough year, but I guess the Lord was looking out for me because I made all-conference and I didn't even have a good year."

He ended the season being pulled from an NIT game at Virginia Tech, where he'd scored just 13 points while Tech lost by three. Long before the team had finished showering, he was changed and sitting alone in the bus outside, looking into the night.

Bruce Dalrymple had arrived and then Duane Ferrell. But by then the Salley-Price alliance had come to symbolize Tech



season). "But John has done a lot. He's recruited these other guys, he's accepted a lot of stuff I've thrown at him, he's started every game since I've been here.

"Offensively, Price has made me look like a great coach because he puts the ball in the basket. But what I really admire about Mark is he could be averaging 30 points for another coach but he's listened to me and he's become our leader. I really admire his sacrifice because the little guy likes to shoot."

They've provided a comfort zone these four years for Tech followers who have come to expect that even 23 feet away from the hoop, just one little sloppy pick means a Price basket. Right now, Salley is producing some of the best basketball of his life.

Both Price and Salley have been nominated for the Wooden Award, Tech the only school to have two candidates. And there's a whole postseason, where the Yellow Jackets were galvanized last year. Possibly, they have nine games left, three in the ACC, six in the NCAA.

But then the coach remembers that with two losses, John Salley and Mark Price will be done at Georgia Tech.

"Yeah, that scares me," Cremins said. "It scares me to death."

*Reprinted from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Mar. 5, 1986.*

basketball. Dissimilar not only in background but manner, close when it counted but distant just the same. As a rule, your urban black master-rappers don't hang full time with Oklahoman gospel singers.

"Our friendship?" asked Salley. "Our friendship is that we both made the same commitment to come here when no one else would. We both had the same ideas we were going to make something of ourselves, and it has worked."

"John and I are friends, but we're two different people," Price said. "We've always liked each other, but when we leave the floor we don't see each other much. That's fine with me and that's fine with him. Sometimes it's good to get away from your teammates. You spend half your life with them."

### More Than Statistics

As far as player development, Price's game underwent extensive work with virtually no drop-off in performance. As he was his freshman year, Price remains a sound little guard with ICBM shooting range who has a strong chance to play professionally. Conversely, after seasons fraught with inconsistency, Salley may have just found himself within the last month, even though the NBA types have been raving over him for more than a year.

"John, statistically, is no Mark Price," said Cremins. Indeed, while both players had their number retired, Price set 10 school records, Salley set one (blocked shots) and tied another (most fouls in a

### BUILDING BLOCKS

*Salley (left) grew from 6-9, 175 pounds into a 7-0, 231-pound force around the basket. Price evolved from a sharp-shooter into a true point guard.*



# HOOSIER HERO

*Indiana native Roger Kaiser comes South and becomes one of Tech's all-time greats.*

**R**oger Kaiser was exactly what the movie "Hoosiers" was about. He was an Indiana native with a crew cut, Chuck Taylor high tops and a jump shot that made the net cords dance from any spot on the floor.

"It makes me shudder to think what a helluva shooter that Roger Kaiser is," said Kentucky coach Adolph Rupp after his Wildcats, who escaped with an 89-79 victory on national television. "He's murder."

Kaiser almost single-handedly murdered the 'Cats that day at Memorial Coliseum. With blood streaming from a cut over his eye, he poured in a career-best 38 points, the most points any individual had ever scored against mighty Kentucky.

A year earlier, Kaiser had delivered

the killing blow in Tech's 62-60 upset of the Wildcats before a packed house at Alexander Memorial Coliseum.

With the score tied at 60-60, Kaiser calmly dribbled away most of the final 31 seconds before he made his move. Then he darted to his left and let fly with a twisting one-hander from about 15 feet, over the outstretched arms of Kentucky's Bill Lickert and into the basket as the buzzer sounded.

To add insult to injury, Kaiser performed his heroics with a fractured thumb on his shooting hand.

"Everyone in the place knew that Kaiser was going to shoot," lamented Rupp. "But what could we do about it. Our boy had him covered, but he got it off. It was a difference of one second and two points."

Newspaper accounts speculated that, "Perhaps never in the history of the big bowl on The Flats has one man done so much to win a

game as did Kaiser in this tense struggle."

Mississippi State head coach Babe McCarthy echoed Rupp's praise.

"That Roger Kaiser is one of the greatest player I've seen and I'm doggone happy I don't have to see him again," said McCarthy after Kaiser scored over half of Tech's points in a 62-61 overtime loss to the Bulldogs. "I've already seen too much of that boy."

A native of Dale, Ind., Kaiser learned how to shoot a basketball by aiming for a hoop that was nailed to the barn behind his house. Later, a full court was built and, according to Kaiser, it was always occupied. His high school girl friend, whom he later married, wanted him to go to school at Indiana, but he chose Tech.

Kaiser became Tech's first all-America as a junior in 1960, when he led the Jackets to their first NCAA Tournament appearance this year and a berth in the Sweet 16. A year later he earned consensus all-America honors in 1960-61 and was named the Southeastern Conference "Player of the Year."

Kaiser was also an all-conference performer in baseball, and no less an authority on Rambling Wreck sports heroes than legendary football coach Bobby Dodd called him "the greatest all-around athlete in Georgia Tech history."

But it was definitely his basketball skills that made Georgia Governor Ernest Vandiver proclaim Feb. 27, 1961 to be "Roger Kaiser Day" in Georgia.

When Kaiser completed his three-year career he held the career records for points scored, scoring average, field goals made, free throws made and free throws attempted. He also held several single-season marks, and his career free throw accuracy rate of 85.8 percent still stands as the Tech record.

Kaiser went on to become a coaching legend in the state of Georgia, retiring in 2000 at the age of 62 after an ultra-successful career highlighted by four NAIA national titles at West Georgia (1974) and Life University (1997, 1999 and 2000). Including a stint at Decatur High, his 34-year coaching record is 754-260 (.743).



## DAY TO REMEMBER

*Tech's all-America is honored at Alexander Memorial Coliseum on Roger Kaiser Day.*



**"THE BEST BIG MAN ...**

**... I've ever had at Georgia Tech without a doubt," said his coach, Whack Hyder. Yunkus' single-game record of 47 points lasted over two decades before it was broken by Kenny Anderson. His career mark of 2,232 points still stands.**



# BENTON BOMBER

**Georgia Tech's big man on campus was in a class all by himself.**

The big man on campus in 1970 rose to unmatched heights when Rich Yunkus scorched both Furman and North Carolina for 47 points to set Georgia Tech's single-game record and make history.

Nicknamed the Benton Bomber after his hometown in Illinois, the 6-9-1/2 Yunkus' first scoring spree nearly beat Furman single-handedly while the second capped a glorious weekend in which Tech upset fifth-ranked NC State and then seventh-ranked North Carolina.

"He is the best big man I've ever had at Georgia Tech without a doubt," said his coach Whack Hyder. "He is in a class all by himself."

Yunkus' 47-point efforts comprise just a fraction of the 2,232 points he scored as Tech, which still stands as the school record. He earned all-America honors twice and finished sixth in the nation in scoring as a junior at 30.1 points per game.

A newspaper headline captured one of those games simply, "Yunkus' 47, Tech's 41 Nix Hapless Furman's 61." With 10 minutes to play, Yunkus was actually leading the Paladins by himself 41-35 when Hyder sat him on the bench. He returned for another three minutes but couldn't quite defend his lead.

Furman's head coach Frank Selvy, who had once scored 100 points in a game, said, "He was just fantastic."

Hyder said, "I've never seen a player shoot any better than he did tonight. Actually our plan wasn't to look for Rich but to try and open things up from the outside. But he was moving so well that he was open consistently, and we were able to hit him."

Yunkus erased two records with his 47 points, including the Alexander Memorial Coliseum mark of 40 by Pres Judy in 1967 against Florida State and his own school record of 41 that he had set against Tulane in 1969. Yunkus described it as just one of those nights.

"It seems that once a year I just go out there and feel like I did tonight," he said. "Since junior high, I've had just one game a year where I can hit 40."

In 1970, that feeling actually occurred five times. He also netted 41 points against Dave Cowens and Florida State as Semi-

nole assistant coach Bill Clendinen said, "He has to be the best-shooting big man in college basketball. Only man I've seen who even comes near him is Kentucky's Dan Issel."

Yunkus also hit for 40 points against Georgia and Georgia State that year, but his most memorable performance came in the North-South Doubleheader in Charlotte, N.C. Tech had been a substitute team for South Carolina and faced a pair of Atlantic Coast Conference heavyweights.

Yunkus scored 27 points and grabbed 20 rebounds in the Jackets' surprising win over fifth-ranked NC State in the opening game. The next night, Yunkus put on a show against the Tar Heels with his school record-tying 47 points.

He sparked Tech to a 53-45 halftime lead with 27 points en route to the 104-95 victory. The Rambling Wreck's sweep is still considered one of the great moments in the school's basketball history.

"I don't think I've ever had a game like this against a team as good as North Carolina," Yunkus said. "I was scoring more from inside tonight than I did against State, but that was because North Carolina played me differently. They were guarding me very closely, which made it better to drive, while State played further back and made me shoot outside."

Yunkus' specialty was a soft left-handed jump shot. "He has the best touch for a man his size I've ever seen," Tech assistant coach Dwane Morrison said. "I don't think he can take a bad shot."

A three-time Academic All-America, he chose Tech because of its academic reputation. As one of the nation's top prep seniors, he got a personal letter from Bill Bradley urging him to go to Princeton, a letter from Bob Cousy encouraging him to attend Boston College, and a phone call prior to an NBA playoff game from John Havlicek praising the merits of Ohio State.

Yunkus' soft touch carried over to other areas. He built model cars as a child and then built a "T" bucket, a 1932 "T" roadster pickup from scratch when he was in college. He also built a scale model of his home from balsa wood and about 2,500 straight pins.

Just about the same number of points he scored at Tech.

# HOOK, LINE & SINKER

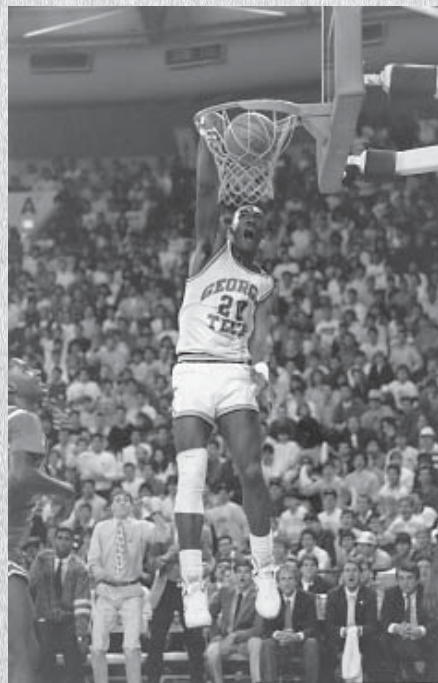
*When he wasn't reeling in largemouth bass on a secluded pond, Tom Hammonds was landing big points and rebounds for Tech.*

**L**argemouth bass in the local ponds around Atlanta breathed a sigh of relief during basketball season when Tom Hammonds played at Georgia Tech.

He was so busy on the court, becoming the third player in Tech history to score more than 2,000 points in a career and the second to play on three Yellow Jacket teams that won 20 games or more.

"I really miss it," he said during his senior year. "Not just the fishing, but being out there on the lake by myself."

Hammonds, a 6-9 all-America for-



## SLAM DUNK

*As quiet and unassuming as he was off the court, Hammonds was fierce and determined on the court.*

ward from Crestview, Fla., instead reeled in rebounds and baskets. He wound up his career with 2,081 points and 885 rebounds, both of which rank fourth in Tech history. He is second only to Rich Yunkus in field goals made (853) and shot 56.6 percent from the field in his career.

Said Louisville coach Denny Crum following a Tech win over the Cardinals in 1989 in which Hammonds scored 19, "You can't stop a great player like him unless you want to double team, and you're willing to give up something else. Our gameplan was to control him so he wouldn't go crazy and get 30 or 40 points."

Hammonds did go crazy a few times during his senior year, scoring 30 or more in three consecutive games, including a career-best 40 against Georgia State.

Many times, the strong play of Hammonds, a forward who at times had to play center, resulted in opponents double-teaming him or employing trick defenses. Though he would become frustrated, it helped him learn an important lesson.

"The junk defenses would cause me problems," said Hammonds. "I've got to keep a great attitude when I see junk defenses and keep working hard."

Keeping a great attitude was never difficult for Hammonds, a mild-mannered, soft-spoken individual who preferred to keep his ferocious intensity confined to the basketball court.

He is generally credited for changing the way pre-game introductions were made in ACC basketball games. Up until his senior year, players were introduced onto the court alternately from each side, with players from each side greeting one another at mid-court. With Tech playing Duke in a crucial game, Hammonds

slapped Danny Ferry's hand so hard that the practice was discontinued.

A product of his upbringing—his stepfather a career Air Force sergeant, his mother also a disciplinarian—Hammonds had developed a deep sense of self-conviction. Six years of weight training brought it out even further.

While he attracted a great deal of media attention for his accomplishments, he never changed his outlook or his priorities.

"I think I've handled it pretty well," he said during his senior year. "I know where I came from and where I want to go."

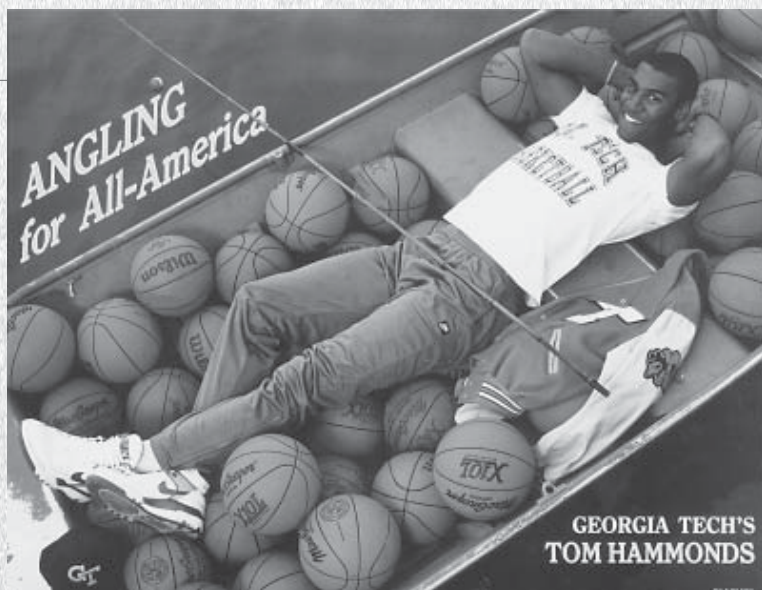
Just as important to Hammonds while he was at Tech were his studies and his other hobbies, which included his red pickup truck, attending tractor pulls and bass fishing. Those pursuits and his engaging smile made him extremely popular with Tech's student body, which presented him with the "H" from the Tech Tower on the night of his final home game at Alexander Memorial Coliseum.

They had lined up the night before the game for tickets, and he wanted to buy pizza for them.

"It was kinda nice," Hammonds said. "One guy had a couch and a TV with a VCR. We sat back for a while and watched a Robert Townsend special."

His convictions also served him well in class. Noted for always sitting in the front of the classroom, Hammonds graduated in four years with his degree in management.

As many Tech players have done, he found work in the NBA with several teams and played in the league for 13 years before he retired after the 2001-02 season. Now there is plenty of time to fish.



"Give me a team full of Matt Harpring's"  
-Bobby Cremins



The Hardest Working Player In America...  
GEORGIA TECH'S MATT HARPRING  
FOR ALL-AMERICA

**H**e scored 2,225 points and pulled down 997 rebounds, grabbed 176 steals and handed out 289 assists. He played 4,472 minutes in a Georgia Tech uniform, but Matt Harpring's career was best characterized in the few minutes after he left the court in the waning seconds of the Yellow Jackets' Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament loss to Maryland.

With just over a minute left in Maryland's 83-65 victory, Tech head coach Bobby Cremins called his senior all-American to the bench.

Harpring had not had one of his better games against the Terrapins, but gradually the crowd rose in appreciation as he made his exit from his final ACC Tournament game. The cheering began in the Tech section, but in a rare display of non-partisanship, the applause spread to every corner of the 24,000-seat Greensboro Coliseum as fans wearing every shade of Carolina blue, NC State red and Clemson orange joined in.

The cheering continued as a dejected Harpring took his seat on the bench, not realizing what was happening. Then, coaxed by Cremins and his teammates, Harpring stood and waved to the crowd.

"It didn't sink in at first because I was still pretty emotional about the loss," Harpring said after the game. "But it was a huge honor and compliment. When I look back on it tomorrow or the next day, after I forget the game, I'll say, 'Wow, that was great.'"

"Unbelievable," agreed Cremins. "I've been in this league a long time, and it's one of the nicest gestures and best compliments I've seen."

Maryland head coach Gary Williams echoed the sentiments of the crowd, saying "you can only go but so far in terms of hard work, and Harpring is right there. At the end of a game, he never leaves anything on the floor."

Afterward, an appreciative Harpring

# Harpring on HARPRING

*His work ethic, determination and all-out hustle often evoked this sentiment from Bobby Cremins.*

said, "I don't know why they did it. I guess they see something in me that they like. I think I'd appreciate my work ethic and that I always give 100 percent, and if I'm not shooting well, I'll try to help my team in other ways.

"It was a great farewell, almost like having my jersey retired."

Such accolades never would have been predicted for Harpring when he arrived at Georgia Tech in 1995.

The 6-8, 225-pounder was better known for his football skills at Atlanta's Marist School, receiving scholarship offers to play quarterback for several schools, including Northwestern and Wisconsin. He was lightly recruited in basketball until very late in his senior season, improving his stock and gaining the notice of Cremins as he led his high school team to the state title.

From the time he stepped onto the court at Alexander Memorial Coliseum, Harpring exceeded expectations, averaging 12.1 points and 6.2 rebounds a game while finishing a close second for the 1995 ACC Rookie of the Year award.

But that was only a glimpse of what was to come, because as a sophomore, Harpring blossomed into one of the nation's top players as he helped Tech reach the NCAA Sweet 16. On a team that featured sensational point guard Stephon Marbury, it was Harpring who was the most consistent force with his all-around skills, averaging 18.6 points and 8.1 rebounds a game while leading the team in three-point shooting.

Harpring's junior year wasn't as successful as his sophomore campaign as the undermanned Jackets limped to a 9-18 record. Through the frustration of Tech's first losing season since 1983, Harpring remained the ultimate warrior, and despite constant double-teams, he produced 19.0 points and 8.2 rebounds a game.

Many encouraged him to enter the NBA following that difficult season, but

Harpring opted to stay the course.

"When I came to college, I never dreamed that I would have the chance to be a first-round draft pick," said Harpring, a two-time Academic All-American. "I came to Georgia Tech to get my degree and to prepare for a career after basketball.

"I love college basketball, and I didn't want to leave after a season like that. It was important to me to come back and help get Tech basketball back where it belongs."

The result was an outstanding senior season in which he earned numerous all-America awards, including first-team honors from Basketball America magazine as well as hoops guru Dick Vitale. While averaging 21.6 points and 9.4 rebounds a game, he joined Mark Price as the only Yellow Jackets to receive first-team all-ACC honors three times. After earning his degree in June of 1998, the Orlando Magic made him the 15th pick of the first round in the NBA draft.

He finished second in Tech history in both scoring and rebounding, coming within eight points of Rich Yunkus' school record of 2,232 career points. In addition, he finished among Tech's career leaders in virtually every statistical category, from assists to steals to blocked shots and of course, minutes played.

Even before that ACC Tournament salute, the Georgia Tech family paid tribute to Harpring, the consummate student-athlete, by retiring his No. 15 jersey prior to his final home game against Duke.

More importantly, Harpring helped Tech enjoy a winning season with a 19-14 mark and trip to the National Invitation Tournament, in which the Jackets advanced to the quarterfinals.

"I can't say enough about what Matt Harpring meant to Georgia Tech," said Cremins. "I'm really proud of him for coming back for his senior season, and I'm happy that he could go out on a winning note."

# ONE OF A KIND

**UNDER BOBBY CREMINS, GEORGIA TECH WENT FROM DOORMAT TO PERENNIAL CONTENDER, A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH IN A TRADITION-RICH CONFERENCE.**

BY BARRY JACOBS

**B**obby Cremins is one of a kind, as a coach and a person. And because of who he is, as much as what he did, Georgia Tech commands a prominent place in college basketball.

"We rely so much in recruiting on the tradition, on the success he's had in the past," says Paul Hewitt, his successor as coach of the Yellow Jackets. "He built the Georgia Tech tradition."

Cremins inherited a program that, while estimable under coach John "Whack" Hyder, made a single NCAA appearance prior to the young coach's arrival for the 1981-82 season. Cremins came to a school that, in its first two years of competition in the Atlantic Coast Conference in 1980 and 1981, notched a cumulative 12-41 record, 1-29 in league competition. Some Tech fans attended games wearing paper bags over their heads. A section of 2,000 seats at Alexander Memorial Coliseum often sat empty, purchased by fans at other schools so they could qualify for ACC Tournament tickets.

By the time Cremins stepped aside following the 2000 season, Tech had made 10 NCAA appearances, including nine straight from 1985 through 1993, and enjoyed a fearsome homecourt advantage at the Thrilledome. The 1990 squad reached the Final Four for the first and only time in school history. The Jackets tied for first place in the ACC in '85 and finished alone atop the standings in 1996. They won a trio of ACC titles — in 1985, 1990 and 1993 — and posted 13 consecutive winning seasons and 15 in Cremins' 19 years on the job.



*"He is my all-time favorite coach in any sport. He is unpretentious, passionate, honest and caring. He will tell you what he thinks, and he usually tells you in plain words full of fun and common sense."*

**Dave Kindred, The Sporting News**

*"Bobby Cremins is a genuine star. He is truly one of the great coaches in ACC history and certainly one of the most well-liked. He put Georgia Tech on the map and helped raise the level of play in the ACC to make it the premier basketball conference in the country."*

**Duke Head Coach  
Mike Krzyzewski**

*"Not only did he build the program to a place of respectability and power, he did it quickly and without any hint of impropriety. Everything he did, he did with honor and dignity and with great class."*

**South Carolina Head Coach  
Dave Odom**

*"The guy is genuine and likable. I've never met another coach who didn't like Bobby. In a profession like this, there are not many guys you can say that about."*

**Former ACC Commissioner  
Gene Corrigan**

The program produced the ACC player of the year in '90 in Dennis Scott, eight rookies of the year in the 14 seasons from 1983 through 1996, 13 first team All-ACC selections, and a dozen first-round NBA draft choices.

In short, under Cremins' guidance Georgia Tech went from doormat to perennial contender, a force to be reckoned with in a tradition-rich conference. Perhaps no one in the 50-year history of ACC basketball ranks as a greater program builder.

"Bobby was a very good coach," Homer Rice, the retired Tech athletics director who hired Cremins, says. "He was a heck of a recruiter and one of the finest persons I ever worked with. He was always upbeat. He was a fighter."

Yet Cremins fought without rancor. He could be as animated and competitive as any of his coaching colleagues, leaping and gesturing along the sidelines throughout a game, trademark grey hair flopping wildly, but could go years without earning a technical foul.

Cremins could be painfully honest, particularly about his own shortcomings or those of his team. Following one particularly decisive road defeat, Cremins actually apologized. "It's a great league and I was embarrassed for the league," he said. "I was embarrassed for Georgia Tech. I

was embarrassed for all my friends.”

He could be stunningly mindless of appearance, as when he conducted a media teleconference from the comfort of a bathtub, the acoustics giving him away. He could be uncommonly casual, inviting movie stars and others into his locker room to chat immediately prior to a game.

Other coaches sagely revealed their technical expertise. Cremins, almost devoid of pretense, made little effort to impress listeners with his grasp of X’s and O’s. Sometimes he forgot the names of opposing players, or whether they were even in the game at key junctures.

Still, he was three times voted the ACC coach of the year (1983, 1985, 1996), a total exceeded only by two Hall of Fame coaches, North Carolina’s Dean Smith and Duke’s Mike Krzyzewski.

Cremins brought his infectious grin and easily mimicked Bronx accent to Atlanta a year after Krzyzewski arrived at Duke and Jim Valvano landed at N.C. State.

“Everybody thought I was crazy,” he says of his decision to leave a successful perch at Appalachian State in Boone, N.C., for a foundering program in a power league, “but I felt like the ACC was just a great conference. Tech was a great aca-



**ADMIRATION FOR CREMINS** was always evident in the Tech student body with the annual Bobby Cremins Look-Alike Day.

demie school, sometimes too hard. And then of course the city of Atlanta, Atlanta is a big-time city. I thought the job had a lot of things to offer.”

So he became one of what he calls “the young guns” who soon transformed the balance of power in the ACC.

“To me, Tech became my American dream,” Cremins says. “Coaching at Georgia Tech was me living the American dream. It was also a personal dream for me to coach in the league I played in. Coaching at Georgia Tech also fulfilled that.”

Cremins had played guard at South Carolina, finishing in 1970, a year before the Gamecocks left the ACC. “I owe everything to Frank McGuire,” Cremins says of his coach. “He gave me my start, he gave me my opportunity.”

South Carolina was heavily favored to win the 1970 ACC title and advance to the Final Four. McGuire, who coached an undefeated UNC team to the 1957 NCAA championship, called the ’70 USC squad his best ever. But the Gamecocks were stopped in the ACC Tournament final, defeated in overtime by N.C. State after the ball was stolen from Cremins. Only one team from each league was invited to the NCAAs back then; South Carolina went nowhere.

“Not winning an ACC championship my senior year almost ruined my life,” Cremins recalls. “Unfortunately, I still have nightmares about that. Not as bad as it used to be.”

So when he built Tech’s program to competitive status, going from cellar to title in four years, Cremins felt both satisfaction and relief. “That meant we had arrived,” he says of the 1985 ACC Tournament championship. “Everybody said we couldn’t beat North Carolina the third time (that season). It was right there in Atlanta. To me personally, one of the reasons I wanted to coach in the ACC was to win an ACC championship ring that I lost as a player...”

“In ’85, when that game was over, that was the championship I lost. I’ll always remember thinking about that. It took a lot  
*continued next page*



# Bobby Cremins Day

*Georgia Tech celebrated Bobby Cremins Day on March 8, 2003, by dedicating the Alexander Memorial Coliseum court in his name. Many former players, including Mark Price (opposite page with current head coach Paul Hewitt), Tom Hammonds, Jon Babul and Shaun Fein (below), participated in the ceremony.*



of pain away for me.”

Tech’s transformation began with the arrival of a pair of key recruits, Brooklyn big man John Salley and Oklahoma guard Mark Price, who in 1983, aided by a short, experimental 3-pointer, became the first and only freshman to pace the ACC in scoring. “There were not a lot of expectations,” Cremins remembers, “so anything we did was a positive. Obviously, getting Mark Price and John Salley, that’s what started it all. Those two guys put us on the map.”

The good times rolled with refreshing warmth, producing dais scenes at post-game press conferences where players draped arms around their coach’s shoulders and teased him with little compunction. “It’s more like an older brother-younger brother relationship,” Salley said in 1985. “He’s more than a coach.”

The parade of exceptional players continued unabated — Bruce Dalrymple, Duane Ferrell, Tom Hammonds, Brian Oliver, Dennis Scott — as Cremins conjured talented groups of prep stars and gave them the freedom to learn and grow on the court.

The arrival of New York playmaker Kenny Anderson, perhaps the nation’s top prospect, put the finishing touches on a 1989-90 squad that advanced to the Final

Four.

“Kenny Anderson, we knew once he arrived on campus he was special,” Cremins says. “Dennis had some weight problems the first two years, and he lost some weight and he was a different player. And Oliver was the heart and soul. You could just tell that those three guys on the court were really something. It was almost like you didn’t have to coach.”

The trio, dubbed “Lethal Weapon 3,” accounted for 79 percent of Tech’s scoring and became the first trio of 20-point scorers on one ACC team. Big men Johnny McNeil and Malcolm Mackey and reserve guard Karl Brown got the bulk of the playing time in a supportive role.

The Jackets finished 28-7, the most victories by a Tech squad. Scott led the ACC in scoring with a 27.7-point average, highest in 15 years. Anderson was the 1990 Rookie of the Year and the second freshman ever voted first-team all-ACC. Oliver was the MVP of the ACC Tournament.

“They’re fun to watch play, unless you have to be on the other sideline,” said Virginia’s Terry Holland. Cremins and the Yellow Jackets visibly enjoyed the ride. “I just wish we could bottle it and save it,” Oliver said of the experience.

The Jackets led UNLV, the eventual champs, by seven at halftime, but fell, 90-

81 in the national semifinals. “I remember after the game I said, ‘OK, we learned a lot,’” Cremins says. “We’ll get back next year.”

But Scott left a year early to enter the pro draft following the 1990 season. “That was a shocker,” Cremins says. “Those things weren’t happening too often during that time...It was something we weren’t real prepared for, and we did slip.”

Other talented players kept coming, even as Anderson left in ’91 following his sophomore season. A group keyed by forward James Forrest and point guard Travis Best surprised everyone by winning the 1993 ACC title. Mackey, ’93 Rookie of the Year Martice Moore, and Drew Barry were the other major components of the squad.

There were distractions, however. South Carolina was courting Cremins to return as its head coach. He vacillated for months. Tech got bounced in its NCAA opener by Southern University, coached by Ben Jobe, a former Cremins assistant. Shortly afterward Cremins announced he was going to his alma mater. Almost as quickly, he said he couldn’t bear to abandon folks at Georgia Tech and did an about-face.

“The South Carolina thing, that personally knocked me out for a good three



to four months," Cremins says. "That was the worst period of my life. That was my mid-life crisis."

Tech's run of nine straight NCAA bids ended in 1994. Another blow landed in 1995 when, despite a .500 record and fifth-place in a league that saw a four-way tie for first, the Jackets were snubbed by the NCAA Tournament selection committee.

Then, in a move that surprised Cremins, premier guard prospect Stephon Marbury committed to Georgia Tech. Once Marbury meshed in the backcourt with Drew Barry, they led a squad with sophomore forwards Matt Harpring and Mike Maddox and junior center Eddie Elisma to a first-place ACC finish and a berth in the 1996 ACC Tournament final. "We just got on a roll that was really, really fun," Cremins says.

The '96 Jackets returned to the NAAs for what proved the last time under Cremins, as again an early departure for the NBA, this time by Marbury after a single season, proved debilitating.

Untimely injury, another early departure by Dion Glover, and recruiting stumbles took their toll. "I said to myself one time, if we ever don't go to the Big Dance four straight years, then I need to take a hard look at what I'm doing," Cremins says.

So, with a handful of games remaining in the 2000 season, he announced his retirement as Georgia Tech coach effective at year's end. A one-point loss in the ACC Tournament play-in game, accompanied by a standing ovation from the appreciative crowd, concluded a tenure that produced a 354-237 record, more victories at an ACC post than anyone except Smith and Krzyzewski.

"I think in my 28 years as a head coach, I have never met a more honorable opponent or great guy than Bobby Cremins," Krzyzewski, a fierce rival, says. "I love him and adore him. Look, I'm about to cry. He made me cry a lot."

Cremins, intent on leaving Tech "the right way," as he put it, moved to Hilton Head Island in South Carolina and kept his distance from Georgia Tech basketball. "When I left Tech, I wanted to cut all ties. I wanted Paul Hewitt to have his own program and get out of his way."

Removed from the limelight, Cremins spent more time with wife Carolyn, continued his avid reading, became a golfing regular, considered a few coaching offers, and stayed close to the game by getting involved in television broadcasting. "I do miss the action sometimes," he admits. This season he did color commentary on ACC and Southern Conference games for

Fox Sports South, as well as a pair of studio shows, and a few broadcasts for Jefferson-Pilot.

"We have a life of leisure and luxury," Cremins says from his home. "We have a great life. I live on the Intracoastal Waterway. It's just a beautiful place. My wife and I are very happy here."

Meanwhile, almost as soon as Hewitt was hired Georgia Tech athletics director Dave Braine broached the idea of honoring Cremins. "The fact of the matter is, it's the right thing to do," says Hewitt, who thoroughly endorses the idea of naming the court at Alexander after his predecessor. "I guess it's a way for us to say thanks for all the things he did at Georgia Tech."

Cremins may have kept his distance, but Hewitt finds the former coach is always available and supportive when needed. "I can't tell you how much of a help he's been," Hewitt says. "That's the type of person he is."

That personal generosity, plus good staffs, a penchant for attracting outstanding players, and a gift of leadership helped Georgia Tech build the national profile it enjoys today.

**Barry Jacobs has covered ACC basketball since 1976 and is the author of "Golden Glory: The First 50 Years of the ACC."**

# THE SLAYING OF GOLIATH

**D**avid and Goliath of the collegiate basketball world squared off twice during the 1955 season. David walked away without a scratch.

Within a 23-day period, mild-mannered Georgia Tech stunned the nation's top-ranked team Kentucky by ending the Wildcats' 129-game home winning streak in Lexington and then proving it was no fluke with a commanding victory at home.

"This was probably the greatest upset victory by any Georgia Tech team in any sport that I can remember," said Bobby Dodd after Tech's initial shocker.

Atlanta newspaperman Furman Bisher wrote, "I say it was the most incredible event in basketball since Dr. James Naismith discovered the peach basket."

These epic upsets came from a 1955 squad that finished the season with a 12-13 record. The Jackets had lost 67-66 to Sewanee one game prior to venturing to Lexington, the home of Baron Adolph Rupp. The Wildcats had not found themselves on the short end of a Southeastern Conference game in 16 years and were riding a 32-game winning streak.

Only five Tech players stepped on Kentucky's court that January night with Lenny Cohen and Dick Lenholt at the forwards, Bill Cohen (no relation) at center, and Bob Kimmel and Joe Helms at guard. Helms and Lenny Cohen were junior college imports while the remaining three were holdovers from a 2-22 squad dubbed "les miserables" the previous year.

Coach John "Whack" Hyder knew better. "The boys said before the game they were going to win, and they just wouldn't be beat," he noted.

A sluggish Kentucky team appeared to be in serious trouble throughout the contest. Tech trailed early 16-11 before a 15-0 outburst gave the Jackets a 26-23 halftime advantage. Tech pulled ahead 38-30 in the second half before turning cold. Kentucky rallied and its faithful were certain the Wildcats would pull it out.

With 14 seconds left, Kentucky held a three-point lead, but missed a pair of free throws. Kimmel was fouled in the scramble for the rebound and hit his charity tosses to pull Tech within 58-57 with 1:12 left.

## From the Associated Press ...

**LEXINGTON, Ky., Jan. 8, 1955—A jump shot in the last 11 seconds by little Joe Helms (right) gave Georgia Tech a 59-58 upset over Kentucky Saturday night and stopped the nation's No. 1 collegiate basketball power after 32 straight victories.**

**ATLANTA, Ga., Jan. 31, 1955—Georgia Tech, tiny outpost in the basketball world, successfully stormed Kentucky's proud citadel Monday night for the second time in less than a month. The score was 65-59.**

Kentucky captain Billy Evans attempted to run out the clock, but Kimmel tied him up in the frontcourt and Helms snatched the ball away. He faked as if driving and then let fly a one-handed, 12-footer that netted the winning points with 11 seconds left. Two shots missed in Kentucky's last gasp.

"When I saw Joe take off with that ball, I knew we had it made," Hyder said. "He'd been firing them in for us all night and as hot as he was I knew he wouldn't miss."

Helms, who scored a game-high 23 points, said, "I didn't think about a thing. It was all like a dream."

"It's certainly the happiest moment of my basketball career," Hyder said. "Coach Rupp boosted his stock with me when he came over after the game, shook hands and told me that we deserved to win. I know it was a tough one for him to lose, but he didn't have a single squawk."

Fans gathering at Municipal Airport in Atlanta gave the Jackets the "most enthusiastic reception since MacArthur's." The students sang their rendition of the Rambling Wreck fight song, and two police cars escorted Tech back to town.

"We'll never live it down," Rupp said.

Hold that thought, Adolph. For Tech's second triumph over Kentucky could only be described as the Jackets' greatest up-

set since their first.

Kentucky wanted badly to avenge their only loss of the season while Tech had managed only a 5-10 record. Rupp even brought a special TV crew to televise the rematch. But they witnessed history instead as Tech became the first team to beat Rupp twice in the same season.

Again using only five players with Gary Phillips subbing for the injured Lenny Cohen, Tech led the game from start to finish. The Wildcats missed every free throw attempt in the first half. Meanwhile, Tech took care of business on the boards and Helms and Kimmel combined for 44 points.

The Jackets led by 14 points with six minutes remaining as Kimmel's dribbling put the ball in a deep freeze. When the final 65-59 score flashed, assistant athletic director Tonto Coleman suggested that Tech keep that scoreboard turned on permanently and buy a new one.

"I don't know what to say," remarked Hyder, who received the game ball. "The kids played a whale of a ballgame. We had them from the start."

Rupp said, "That just goes to show you what a team can do when it makes up its mind to win a ballgame. They beat us the same way they did last time—with good backboard play and on the foul line."

And so David slew Goliath. Twice.





**COACHED BY WHACK**  
HYDER, the Jackets' starting five featured Dave Denton (above), Roger Kaiser, Bobby Dews, Wayne Richards, Jim Riley. Sharp-shooting Roger Kaiser (right) and the gritty Dave Denton were known as the "South's best one-two punch."



# THE ROAD TO SAN FRANCISCO

## *Kaiser, Denton Take Tech To Its First NCAA Tournament In 1960*

**G**eorgia Tech once traveled the "Road to San Francisco" in 1960 in its only NCAA Tournament appearance prior to the streak of nine straight trips reeled off by the Bobby Cremins-coached Yellow Jackets from 1985-93.

Fueled by guard Roger Kaiser and forward Dave Denton, known as the "South's best one-two punch," Georgia Tech demonstrated a valiant effort en route to a 22-6 finish that year and runner-up honors in the Southeastern Conference.

The Jackets' starting five featured Kaiser, who averaged a team-high 22.5 points per game, and Bobby Dews in the backcourt, Denton and Wayne Richards at the forwards and Jim Riley at center.

"I am sure this is the best defensive team I have ever coached at Georgia Tech," said John "Whack" Hyder, as his Jackets surrendered only 58.9 points per game.

Entering the NCAA Tournament, Hyder had guided Tech to a No. 8 national ranking in the United Press poll and a No. 13 slot in the Associated Press poll prior to the national tourney. The Jackets received a first-round bye although Hyder downplayed his squad's chances saying they were in "over their heads."

Ohio University upset Notre Dame in the first round to draw Tech in its next game. The Bobcats appeared to be a sleeping giant when they jumped out to a 19-6 lead over Tech at the 10:26 mark in the

first half.

Behind center Howard Jolliff, who had 16 points and 15 rebounds in the first half, Ohio maintained a 33-23 halftime advantage. The Bobcats refused to fold and held a 12-point margin with 13 minutes left in the game.

But Tech applied the screws with its full-court pressure defense, taking the lead at 49-48 after a pair of free throws by Kaiser with 4:55 left. The all-America Kaiser proceeded to score 16 of Tech's final 23 points, including several critical free throws, as Tech slipped by Ohio, 57-54.

Seemingly bewildered in the first half, Tech warmed up and wore out the Bobcats down the stretch as Kaiser finished with 25 points and Denton collected 15 points and 11 rebounds. As the Jackets advanced to the NCAA Final Eight, the "Road to San Francisco" got a lot steeper.

Ohio State, certainly one of the nation's premier teams with future NBA stars Jerry Lucas (New York Knicks) and John Havlicek (Boston Celtics), had compiled a 22-3 record and a No. 2 national ranking. The game at Freedom Hall in Louisville, Ky., would be a contrast in styles between the Buckeyes' whirlwind pace and the deliberate, possession pattern of the Jackets.

OSU head coach Fred Taylor singled out Kaiser as a "really great shot and Denton as a fine all-around player" in preparation for the matchup.

Although the physically overmatched Jackets lost 86-69 to Ohio State, which eventually won the national championship defeating California, the newspaper accurately described the grit and effort of Hyder's 1959-60 team.

"A Georgia Tech team of incalculable courage refused to recognize its own human limitations here Saturday night in meeting the greatest offensive machine in the nation head-on, and emerged beaten, but unbowed."

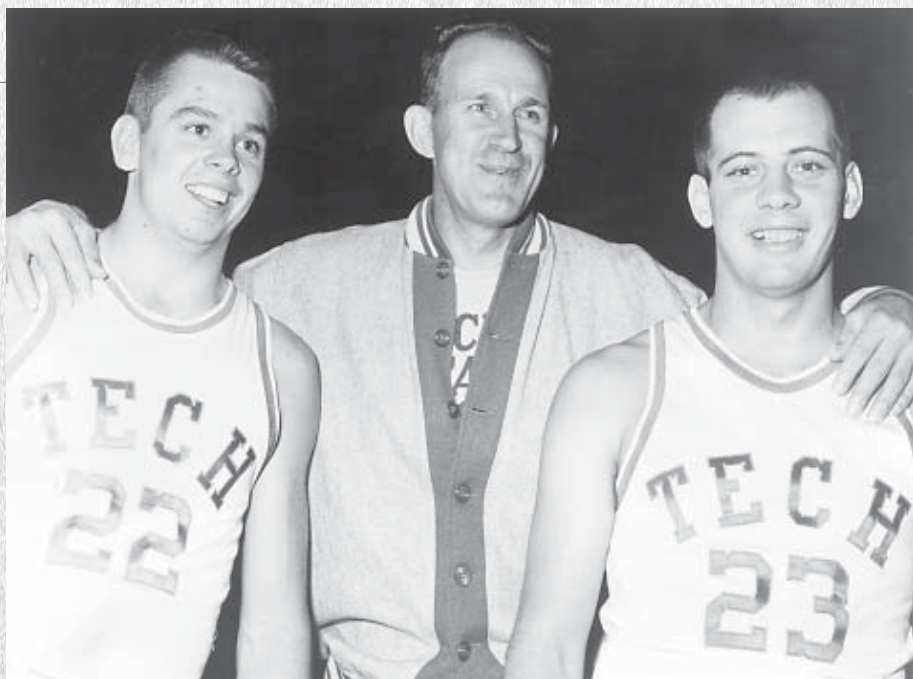
The game stayed tight the first few moments before the 6-8 Lucas gave OSU a lead it would never relinquish. The Buckeyes led 41-35 at halftime, and threatened to runaway in the second half. But Tech stayed within striking distance at 66-56 with 8:53 left before Ohio State flexed its biceps.

True to form, Kaiser led the Jackets with 27 points while Denton chipped in 15. A balanced Buckeye scoring attack featured Lucas with 25, Joe Roberts with 19 and Havlicek with 15.

"They just had too much manpower for us," Hyder said. "They wore us down in the second half."

But that 1960 team blazed a trail not to be forgotten. While the memory of Tech's coveted Final Four appearance in 1990 remains fresh, the performance of Kaiser, Denton and the rest of Hyder's troops should not be overlooked in Tech's first NCAA appearance.

# Your Father Away From Home



## *Nine wins over Kentucky and trips to the NCAA's and NIT were only a small part of Whack Hyder's legacy*

**J**ohn “Whack” Hyder recalls a conversation back in 1955 with The Baron, Kentucky’s legendary basketball coach Adolph Rupp, who was in town to face the Yellow Jackets on the Georgia Tech campus.

“Coach Rupp asked me if I would meet and talk with him after practice here,” related Hyder, referring to tiny Heisman Gym, where the Jackets played their home games. “I said yes.”

“When I showed up, he was surrounded by his team. He asked me two questions.”

What’s your aim in basketball?

What do you expect to accomplish in a gym like this?

Hyder said, “I told him my first aim was for our kids to lead a good moral life. Next I wanted them to graduate. And third, when it came time, I wanted them to concentrate on basketball.”

“You can’t do that,” replied Rupp. “Boys aren’t that way any more.”

That same season, Hyder, the man of folksy, homespun philosophy, pulled two stunning upsets of number one ranked Kentucky, thus starting Hyder’s reputation as a giant killer. Hyder lost to the fabled Rupp and his Kentucky team 16 times in his coaching career. That was no disgrace. Hyder won nine times. That was an unheard-of feat.

Born July 10, 1912 in Lula, Ga., Hyder was one of the best all-around athletes in Georgia Tech history, lettering in basketball, baseball, cross country and track. He

also earned a freshman letter in football, the sport in which he received his scholarship to Georgia Tech because there were no basketball scholarships in those days.

After graduating from Georgia Tech in 1937, he signed a professional baseball contract and played three years in the New York Yankees farm system.

After a stint in the U.S. Navy in World War II, Hyder returned to Tech in 1946. He was hired as an assistant basketball coach by Director of Athletics William Alexander, the same man who had offered him a scholarship to Tech after watching him play basketball for Monroe A&M prep school.

Hyder was elevated from assistant to head coach prior to the 1951-52 season, and for 22 years, he guided the Yellow Jacket basketball fortunes. He retired on St. Valentine’s Day in 1973. He won games and lost games, including the first NCAA appearance in school history in 1960 and two trips to the finals of the National Invitation Tournament.

Hyder was twice named SEC Coach of the Year, and he is a member of the Georgia Tech Hall of Fame and the State of Georgia Sports Hall of Fame.

Hyder compiled an overall record of 292-271 (.519) and was Tech’s winningest basketball coach until surpassed in 1996 by Bobby Cremins. For the years in which



*“He made me feel like a member of the family. He talked more about the importance of a good education than he did about basketball. I felt like playing for Coach Hyder was going to be a positive influence on my life. And it was.”*

**ALL-AMERICA  
ROGER KAISER**

his teams played in Alexander Memorial Coliseum, which opened in 1956-57, Hyder’s record was 251-189 (.570).

But there was much more to Hyder than coaching games.

“The thing about Coach Hyder,” recalled one of his superstar players, Rich Yunkus, “is that he treated all his players as human beings and not as animals being led by the nose. He had a genuine concern for his players and he was proud. All but one of those who played for him the full four years graduated.

“Above all, he insisted upon an education and this he told every recruit.”

Roger Kaiser, who played for Hyder from 1958-61 and became the first all-America in Tech history, concurred.

“He was my father away from home. I always respected him. I wanted to give him 100 percent effort, 100 percent of the time. He made me feel I was wanted and needed. He got his message across to the players, and he did without belittling anyone.”

Kaiser, who won four NAIA national titles as a head coach, was a highly recruited prepster from Dale, Ind., who was headed for Vanderbilt or Indiana when he met Hyder and changed his plans.

“Coach Hyder was warm, empathetic,” said Kaiser. “He made me feel like a member of the family. He talked more about the importance of a good education than he did about basketball. I felt like playing for Coach Hyder was going to be a positive influence on my life. And it was.”

Long after he retired, Hyder remained active in the program, coordinating the annual Alumni Game.

“I consider Coach Hyder a close personal friend and a man I truly respect,” said Cremins.

Upon Hyder’s retirement following the 1972-73 season, at Whack Hyder Night given by friends and former players, he said, “All of you know me as Whack. But my name is Johnny and tonight I feel like my last name’s Wooden.

“I’m not the greatest coach in the world, not by any stretch of the imagination, but I’m a very grateful and humble man tonight.”

# Kentucky Killer

Perhaps the most amazing statistic of Whack Hyder’s tenure at Georgia Tech is his record against the powerful Kentucky teams coached by the Baron, Adolph Rupp.

From 1951, when he took over the Tech program, through 1964, when the Yellow Jackets left the Southeastern Conference, Hyder’s teams posted a 9-16 record against the mighty Wildcats.

To put that in perspective, Hyder’s nine victories against Kentucky were twice as many as any other SEC school during that period. The next best record was by Vanderbilt at 5-20. Three SEC schools—Georgia, Florida, and Mississippi—did not record a single victory against the Wildcats during that time, and four others had two or fewer wins.

Hyder’s most famous win over the Wildcats was his first one, on Jan. 8, 1955, when a Tech team that would finish with a 12-13 record went into Memorial Coliseum and knocked off No. 1-ranked Kentucky, ending a 129-game home winning streak. That was the first of three victories over top-ranked Kentucky squads.

In 1963, Hyder again took his team to Lexington and downed the ‘Cats in double overtime, becoming the first



**COACH HYDER is congratulated by Terry Randall and others after a 71-52 win over Kentucky in 1958.**

coach to defeat Rupp three times on his home court.

## Hyder's Wins Over Kentucky

Date	Site	UK Rank	Score
1-8-55	Away	1	59-58
1-31-55	Home	1	65-59
1-27-58	Home	9	71-52
1-2-60	Away	13	62-54
1-25-60	Home	16	65-44
1-30-61	Home	NR	62-60
1-5-63	Away	6	86-85 (2 ot)
1-28-63	Home	NR	66-62
1-4-64	Home	1	76-67



# BIRTH OF TECH BASKETBALL

## Yellow Jackets' Early Teams Call Many Places Home

Georgia Tech made its intercollegiate basketball debut on Feb. 17, 1906 when, after playing several games in a local amateur league, a matchup was arranged between the Georgia School of Technology, as the Institute was known then, and Auburn University.

The site of the contest was the Peachtree Auditorium and according to the Atlanta Constitution, "a large crowd was present in the auditorium to witness the first struggle between college teams for the supremacy of basketball tossing."

Auburn, under coach Mike Donahue, entered the game as the favorite after beating the Atlanta Athletic Club, 27-18, a week earlier. Tech, on the other hand, had played together only in the Atlanta Basketball League, a circuit in which team members competed to stay in shape for the football and baseball seasons. The lineup for the Yellow Jackets featured the team's captain, Wert, at left forward, Baker at right forward, Sutcliff at left guard and Fosterling at right guard. The center was 6-2 Ed Lafitte, who would go on to pitch professionally for the Detroit Tigers.

The experience of the Auburn team proved to be the difference as The Constitution reported, "In the first 20 minutes of play, Tech made the game interesting for the team from Alabama, but even with the advantage of knowledge of the floor, could not score more than half the points scored by the visitors, this period of playing ending 12 to 6 for Auburn.

"In the second half, Auburn had everything her own way. Tech was unable to score and confined her efforts to limit the points made by their opponents. Auburn scored 14 points making the final 26 to 6."

Baker led Tech in scoring in that first game as he tossed in a pair of field goals while Wert had two points on two free throws. Lafitte was held scoreless, while the guards in that era were strictly defenders.

Despite that initial setback, Tech scheduled two more games that season, both against the University of Georgia,



**EARLY TECH TEAMS** like this 1908-09 unit had no on-campus facility in which to play.

another newcomer to the sport. The Yellow Jackets were victorious in both games against their arch-rival, winning on Mar. 10 in Athens by the score of 27-13, then capturing the return engagement two weeks later, 12-11, in an overtime game at the Peachtree Auditorium.

### Heisman Adds Hoops

It was nearly three years before Tech competed in an intercollegiate game again, this time under the guidance of a full-time coach as the legendary John Heisman added basketball to his duties as football and baseball coach.

Still without an on-campus gymnasium, arrangements were made for Tech to play its home games at the St. Nicholas Rink on Ponce de Leon Avenue, a facility that would provide ample room not only for basketball, but for the big dance that would follow each game. Unfortunately, a cold snap swept into the Atlanta area just days before the scheduled opener against Mercer University, forcing Tech to search for an alternative to the unheated rink.

Despite short notice, Tech secured the use of the Cable Piano Company Hall on Broad Street near the Piedmont Hotel. On Jan. 9, 1909, a "goodly crowd" paid 25 cents for admission to the ballroom turned gymnasium to see the Jackets defeat Mercer, 28-8.

Tech's lack of experience after the three-year layoff quickly became apparent as the Rambling Wreck lost its five remaining games to veteran squads from

Georgia, Auburn, Tulane and the Atlanta Athletic Club. Still, the season was considered a step in the right direction and plans were made for the following year. The 1909-10 season never materialized, however, as the lack of an adequate playing facility again proved too great an obstacle and the sport was dropped.

### First Games On Campus At Crystal Palace

The Athletic Association took a major step toward reviving the game in 1912 with the allocation of \$500 to transform the old campus foundry on Cherry Street near Third Street (later the site of the Dean of Students Building) into a basketball arena.

The remodeling involved the plastering of walls, removal of existing obstacles and installation of screens to protect the many windows as well as the addition of a new 25-foot ceiling and the installation of 18 80-power incandescent lights to illuminate the 100' x 50' playing court. Though the cost of the renovation eventually reached \$800, on Feb. 23, 1912, the Crystal Palace was ready for play as the Athletic Association sponsored an intraclass basketball doubleheader and free postgame dance. The combination proved popular among the student body and was continued for the next few weeks, setting the stage for varsity competition in 1913.

On Feb. 8, 1913, the Rambling Wreck played its first game ever on campus as Clemson visited the Crystal Palace. Unfortunately, the inaugural intercollegiate game in the Crystal Palace was a disappointing one as the visiting Tigers won, 26-22.

Tech would not win its first game in the Crystal Palace until the following season when it defeated Vanderbilt on the way to a 6-2 record. Despite the success of the 1914 team, the program received another setback as the sport was discontinued for financial reasons, again leaving one of the South's athletic powers without a basketball team.

In 1919-20, basketball returned for good as coach William Alexander, the man



*GEORGIA TECH'S 1923-24 team (left) was coached by William Alexander. THE HEISMAN GYM (center) was the home of Georgia Tech basketball through the 1955-56 season. DWIGHT KEITH coached the above Tech squad to an 11-6 mark in 1944-45.*

for whom Alexander Memorial Coliseum is named, organized a team for intercollegiate competition. The Rambling Wreck was again without an on-campus facility suitable for the sport and thus had to make use of any available court. During the 1919-20 season, Tech played four times at the City Auditorium, once at the Atlanta Athletic Club on Auburn Avenue, and once at the YMCA on Luckie Street before playing its last 10 games on the road.

Tech continued to be primarily a road team for the next four seasons, playing no more than six games in any one season on its adopted home floor at the City Auditorium. Joe Bean replaced Alexander as the coach for the 1920-21 season, but after a 4-10 record, Alexander returned to the helm for the next three campaigns. During this time, an on-campus gymnasium was discussed with plans drawn for a facility on Third Street between Techwood and Williams, the current location of Towers and Glenn dormitories. The cost was considered prohibitive, and the Athletic Association elected instead to increase the seating capacity of Grant Field so as to realize additional revenue for a better gym in the future.

### **Temporary Gym Proves Too Temporary**

**I**n November of 1924, a "temporary" wooden gymnasium was erected at the corner of Third Street and Techwood Drive beside Grant Field (the current location of the Edge Center), providing a 2,500-seat structure with a 90' x 50' playing court. After a disappointing 1-6 home record in 1924-25 under new head coach Harold Hansen, the Rambling Wreck established itself on the new floor, winning 29 of its next 37 games as Roy Mundorf took over as head coach for the 1926-27

season. The "Temporary Gym" proved to be all too appropriately named because in the summer of 1931, the building was destroyed by fire, again leaving the Tech basketball program homeless.

With the nation in the midst of the Depression and money for a new facility lacking, Tech had no choice but to move its home games back to the City Auditorium, where it played the next four seasons until the facility was closed for reconstruction.

President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal recovery program provided salvation for the Tech program as the Civil Works Administration's construction of a new Naval Armory on the former site of the Temporary Gym provided an 1,150-seat facility that allowed the Yellow Jackets to finally settle on campus.

Given the limited seating capacity, admission to games at the Naval Armory was limited to Tech students and faculty, and the Rambling Wreck made the most of the home court advantage. After losing the opening game of the 1935-36 season, Tech compiled a three-year mark of 22-2 on the Armory floor, winning its last 19 games in a row, including perfect slates of 6-0 in 1936-37 and 10-0 in 1937-38.

The 1936-37 Tech squad, captained by future head coach John "Whack" Hyder, posted a 10-0 record in the Southeastern Conference, which was formed in 1932-33 with Georgia Tech as a charter member. The following year, Mundorf's squad marched to its first SEC title with an 18-2 overall record and a 12-2 conference mark.

### **Heisman Gym Hosts South's First TV Game**

**I**n the meantime, appropriations from the Board of Regents as well as another

New Deal agency, the Works Progress Administration, allowed work to begin on the Heisman Gymnasium, which was located on Third Street (now Bobby Dodd Way) adjacent to the North Stands of Grant Field until it was razed in 1995.

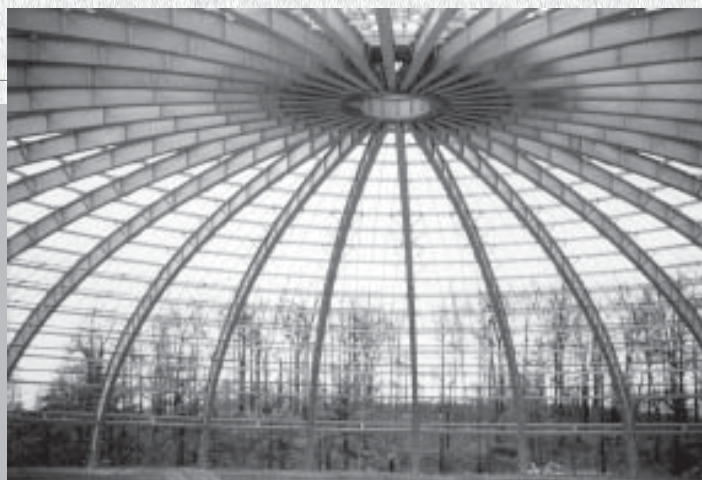
Designed by the Georgia Tech Architectural Department, the building opened for the 1938-39 season as the first completely reinforced concrete structure on the campus.

With a capacity of just 1,800, admission was again limited almost exclusively to students and faculty, and over the course of 18 seasons in the gym, the Yellow Jackets were a difficult team to beat on their home floor. In an era in which Tech was just 72-151 (.323) away from home, the Jackets sported a home record of 98-61 (.616) at Heisman Gym.

Dwight Keith coached the program for three seasons from 1943-46, including a 14-4 record in 1943-44 and an 11-6 mark in 1944-45. Roy McArthur took over for the 1946-47 season and compiled a 57-72 mark in five seasons before giving way in 1951 to Hyder, who would guide the program for the next 22 seasons.

The Heisman Gym has a place in history as the site of the first intercollegiate basketball game to be televised in the South as WSB-TV broadcast Tech's 81-45 win over Tennessee-Chattanooga on Dec. 11, 1948, just two-and-a-half months after television was introduced to the region. The entire home schedule was broadcast that season, and fans who were unable to obtain a ticket to see the game live could go next door to the Naval Armory and view the contest on one of the many television sets set up for that purpose. Also for the first time, Tech's entire home slate was broadcast by radio.

*By Richard Musterer*



## Tech Basketball Timeline Before Entering the ACC

### Feb. 17, 1906

Georgia Tech plays its first intercollegiate game, a 26-6 loss to Auburn.

### Mar. 10, 1906

Tech wins its first basketball game, a 27-13 decision at Georgia.

### 1908

After two seasons of inactivity, John Heisman takes over as Tech basketball coach for three seasons, though Tech will not play in 1909-10, 1910-11 or 1911-12.

### 1919

The Jackets have not played basketball for five years, but William Alexander revives the program and coaches it for four seasons.

### Jan. 9, 1924

After playing most of its home games at Atlanta City Auditorium, Georgia Tech plays its first game in its new on-campus home, a 23-22 loss to Atlanta Athletic Club. The gym was located in the north end of Grant Field and eventually became known as Heisman Gym before it was torn down in 1993.

### Jan. 31, 1924

Tech wins its first game in Heisman Gym, a 30-25 triumph over Georgia.

### Feb. 2, 1929

Tech wins its 100th game of all-time in a 38-15 decision over Vanderbilt.

### Jan. 17, 1932

Tech, a charter member of the new Southeastern Conference, scores its first conference victory over Sewanee, 38-32.

### Mar. 7, 1938

Tech wins its first Southeastern Conference title with a 58-47 victory over Mississippi in Baton Rouge, La.

### 1943

Dwight Keith takes over the coaching reins and posts a 35-21 record in three seasons.

### 1946

Roy McArthur becomes the head coach and goes 57-72 in five seasons.

### 1951

John "Whack" Hyder, a 1937 Tech graduate, becomes Tech's head coach and will endure four very lean years before posting his first winning record (12-11) in the 1955-56 season.

### Nov. 30, 1956

Tech begins playing its home games in Alexander Memorial Coliseum (see construction photos above), dropping its first game in the new facility, 71-61, to Duke.

### Dec. 4, 1956

Tech wins its first game in Alexander Memorial Coliseum, 67-64, over Murray State.

### Feb. 27, 1960

Tech falls to Vanderbilt, 62-57, in the finals of the Southeastern Conference tournament, finishing its best-ever regular season with a 21-5 record.

### Mar. 11, 1960

Led by Roger Kaiser, the first all-America basketball player at Georgia Tech, the Yellow Jackets defeat Ohio University, 57-54, in the NCAA Mideast Regional, first NCAA Tournament game in Tech history. Tech would lose to Ohio State, the eventual national champion, in the second round.

### March, 1961

Roger Kaiser, a guard whose No. 21 would later be retired, is a near-consensus all-America, receiving first-team status on all but one team.

### Feb. 23, 1963

Tech downs Georgia, 66-58 in overtime, to become only the second Yellow Jacket team to win 20 games in a season. Tech would finish 21-5.

### Feb. 18, 1964

Tech defeats Tennessee, 47-45, to complete an undefeated 14-0 season at home. The Jackets finished as the runner-up in their final Southeastern Conference season.

### Dec. 21, 1964

Tech wins the 500th game of its history over William & Mary, 91-73.

### Mar. 25, 1971

Led by all-America Rich Yunkus, Tech reaches the finals of the National Invitation Tournament with a 76-71 overtime triumph over St. Bonaventure.

### Mar. 27, 1971

Tech falls to North Carolina in the NIT finals, but Rich Yunkus finishes his career with 2,232 points score, a record which still stands. Yunkus No. 40 is retired.

### Mar. 10, 1973

The last game of head coach Whack Hyder's 21-year tenure at Georgia Tech. Hyder won 292 games.

### 1975

Tech becomes a charter member of the Metro Conference.

### 1979

Tech becomes the eighth member of the Atlantic Coast Conference.

### Feb. 9, 1980

Against a Ralph Sampson-led Virginia team, Georgia Tech notches its first Atlantic Coast Conference victory, 62-61, at Alexander Memorial Coliseum.

# AL CIRALDO

*For 43 seasons, legendary radio voice Al Ciraldo made expressions like "Brothers and Sisters" and "the clock ticks" as much a part of Georgia Tech basketball as Buzz and Bobby Cremins.*

Georgia Tech has lost a legend," said Tech Director of Athletics Dave Braine upon Ciraldo's death on Nov. 7, 1997 at the age of 76. "He was a legend in Georgia Tech athletics, just like Bobby Dodd."

Ciraldo retired from Tech's broadcast team in 1997, completing an on-air career that began in 1935 as play-by-play voice for the minor-league baseball Akron Yankees and spanned 62 years, the last 43 of them with Georgia Tech.

Ciraldo stepped down from play-by-play announcing prior to the 1992-93 season but served as host for Tech's pregame, half-time and postgame shows.

A 1948 graduate of the University of Florida with a degree in radio broadcasting, Ciraldo actually came to Atlanta in 1949 as the play-by-play announcer for the University of Georgia's basketball broadcasts at WGBE-Radio.

He joined the staff at WGST-Radio and broadcast his first Tech football game in 1954 against Tulane. His first Tech basketball game was against Sewanee that same year. Over the next 38 seasons, he called 416 football and 1,030 basketball games for the Rambling Wreck.

In 1984, Ciraldo moved with Tech from WGST to WCNN.

"Everyone knows how much Al Ciraldo's meant to Georgia Tech," said head basketball coach Bobby Cremins. "But he's meant so much to Bobby Cremins as well. As far as I'm concerned, he's a legend and a part of Georgia Tech that can never be replaced. The Al Ciraldos of his time only come around once in a lifetime."

Dr. Homer Rice, who retired in 1997 after 17 years as Tech's Director of Athletics, said of Ciraldo, "His deep-seated love for Georgia Tech was matched only by the affection of Georgia Tech and its fans, friends and alumni towards him."

Kim King, Ciraldo's longest radio partner as the two teamed on Tech football for 17 years, said "It will be hard to imagine Georgia Tech without Al Ciraldo in the radio booth. But I admired him more than as just a radio announcer. He was a unique individual who stood for old-fashioned values and virtues you don't see a lot of these days."

Thad Horton was his first partner in 1954, and during the 1960s, Pat Williams, future general manager of the Orlando Magic, worked with Ciraldo for two seasons.

*The Al Ciraldo Fund was established to benefit athletic and non-athletic scholarships at Georgia Tech, as well as the Carlyle Fraser Heart Center at Crawford Long Hospital.*



**AL CIRALDO, with his wife Ruth, daughter Barbara and Director of Athletics Dave Braine, was presented the "T" from the Tech Tower on Sept. 27, 1997.**

## The Voice of the Jackets



# GOING FOR THE GOLD

## Dion Glover >

- Helped U.S. win the gold medal at the 1998 Goodwill Games in New York, N.Y.



## Mark Price ^

- Helped U.S. win a gold medal at 1983 Pan Am Games in Caracas, Venezuela
- Also played on gold medal-winning team at the 1984 World Championships
- Invited to 1984 Olympic Trials
- As a pro, played for Dream Team II, which won a gold medal at the 1994 World Championships in Toronto



## Tom Hammonds

- Played for gold medal-winning U.S. squad in the 1986 World Basketball Championships in Madrid, Spain
- Attended 1988 Olympic Trials

## Kenny Anderson

- Played on bronze medal team at the 1990 World Championships

## Bobby Cremins ^

- Assistant Coach for the 1996 U.S. Olympic Team—Dream Team III—which captured the gold medal at the Centennial Games in Atlanta. Chosen by head coach Lenny Wilkens along with Clem Haskins of Minnesota and Jerry Sloan of the Utah Jazz
- Assisted Arizona's Lute Olsen in coaching the U.S. team to a gold medal at the 1986 World Championships and Goodwill Games in Madrid, Spain
- In 1989, coached a U.S. squad to qualification for the 1990 World Championships

## Pete Silas

- Played for gold medal-winning U.S. squad in the 1955 Pan Am Games in Mexico City, Mexico