



## Historical Perspective

### Early Beginnings

In 1914, the School of Commerce met during the day in two rooms in the Chemistry building on the Georgia Tech campus with three regular instructors, including Professor Kell. Prominent Atlanta business men were invited in as lecturers. Evening classes began off campus in the Walton Building conducted by the Georgia Tech faculty, assisted by Atlanta businessmen. During 1913-1914, the entire enrollment was 47 students. By 1915, the enrollment had increased to 72 and it was from that group that the first graduating class of 7 came, receiving a degree of bachelor of science in commerce. The first woman graduate was Mrs. Annie T. Wise, who received her degree in 1919.

In 1917, the school moved to the Peachtree Arcade, now the site of the First Atlanta Tower, and occupied two rooms until the school was moved again, this time to five attic rooms in a building at the corner of Pryor Street and Auburn Ave. By 1926, enrollment had grown to 500 again, new quarters were necessary. From 1926-1931, classes were held at 92 1/2 Forsyth Street, which would later be renumbered to 106 1/2 Forsyth Street.

By 1930, 12 courses existed:

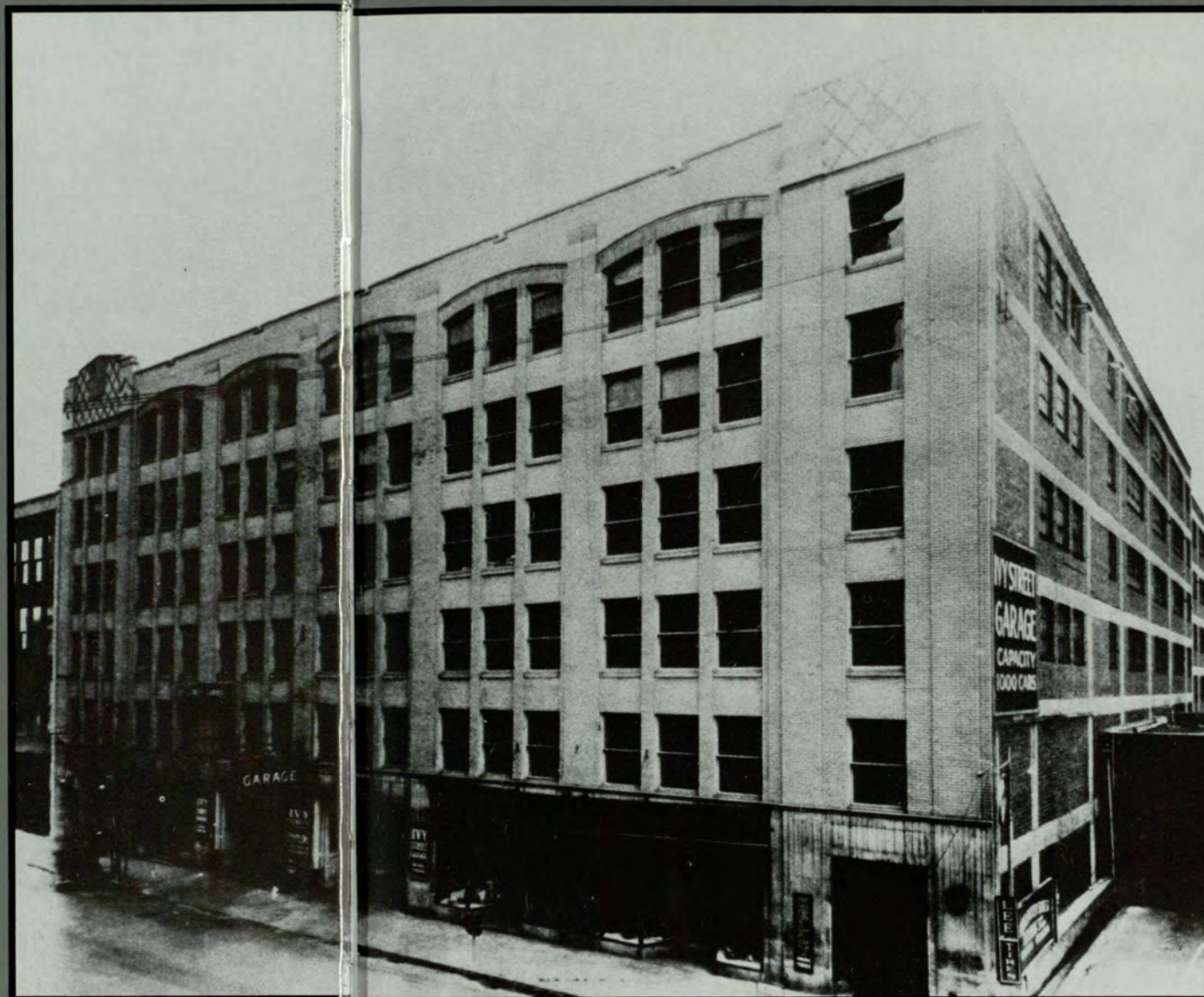
two in English, two in economics, one in sociology, two in mathematics, one in political science, two in business law and two in accounting. Students finishing degree requirements in five years were expected to prove that they had at least three years of successful experience in business or the equivalent prior to or while attending the Evening School of Commerce.

During the years at 106 1/2 Forsyth Street, enrollment increased to 1,119. A benefactor to the school, Robert R. Johnson, president of the Campbell Coal Company, felt the school needed an entire building, no matter how small, and enlisted the aid of some of his wealthy colleagues to raise the funds. Raising over \$55,000, the Sheltering Arms Building was purchased at 223 Walton Street. The building consisted of 19 rooms, 14 for class rooms, complete with a recreational roof garden. On September 1, 1931, George Sparks was appointed full-time director.

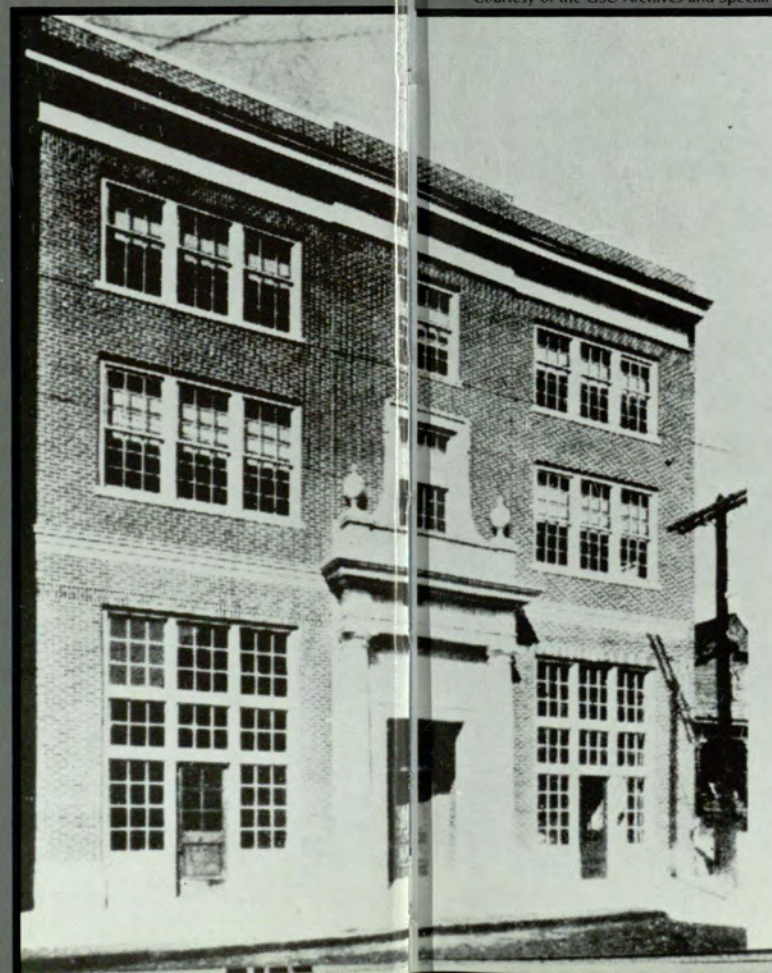
June 3, 1934 was the school's first baccalaureate service as an independent institution. The sermon was delivered by Dr. Louie Newton, pastor of North Druid Hills Baptist Church, and was broadcast over WGST.



Top: Nell Trotter, dean of women, was instrumental in developing student activities. Above: Dr. William Pullen served as the school's first librarian.



Courtesy of the GSU Archives and Special Collections



Above: Name changes abounded throughout GSU's history demonstrated by the sign in front of Kell Hall. Far left: The school occupied the 162 Luckie St. Building from 1938-1945. Left: What formerly was Sinclair's gas station is now the site of the General Classroom Building.

Left: The converted Ivy St. Garage became known as Kell Hall, which today holds GSU's science and research programs. Below: V.V. Lavroff, an immigrant from Europe, became the first Vice President for Financial Affairs. Below: Atlanta Mayor Ivan Allen presents President Langdale with the Shinning Light Award in memory of Dr. Sparks contribution to the city.







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### Post-War Era

During the war years, Sparks was bothered by the potential overflow of returning students at war's end. While searching for a building that could be remodeled, he came upon the Boiling-Jones Building, an old six-story garage structure on Ivy Street, now Peachtree Center Blvd. Partially vacant and under debt, the building was purchased after Sparks pushed the matter with the Board of Regents, who gave their approval only when he personally guaranteed the financial success of the venture. The money was borrowed from Georgia Tech and University of Georgia Funds. The 12-year loan was paid in full after ten months.

By 1946, the Ivy Street building was nearing completion. There were classrooms, faculty offices, science labs and a cafeteria. All six floors were accessible by ramps with two elevators. Extra space was rented out to various state agencies including the Georgia Press Association, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and even the Board of Regents.

By fall of 1946, enrollment had climbed by more than 4,000 with 1,800 GI's and 55 new faculty members were hired to accommodate the enrollment surge.

A gymnasium-auditorium was procured through U.S. Government surplus. Rental revenue from the Ivy Building paid for a small lot for the auditorium, which was completed in November 1947 in time for the Homecoming Banquet that year. More than 700 attended the banquet in the new structure.

The college's first athletic program emphasized intramural play with little interest in intercollegiate contests. William P. Layton served for many years as athletic director, working out a diversified program for the needs of students.

On May 7, 1947, the school underwent another name change to the "Atlanta Division of the University of Georgia." Activities were correlated with Athens to work out the details of the co-relationship. Within this new network, Sparks was named Director.

In the summer of 1950, the Atlanta Division conferred 68 degrees to seniors in the small auditorium on the sixth floor, known as Room 610. Dr. Sparks delivered the address and a reception was held in the business library.

In 1955, Sparks Hall was completed and the building was the first air-conditioned unit in the University System.

Below: Major Lathem's 1938 Basketball team. Bottom: The Urban Life Building under construction in 1973.



Middle: As new buildings were completed, construction on the plaza system began, which would link together the university through an elevated walkway.

Below: Basketball games drew spirited crowds. Right: Annual graduation ceremonies were held in the old quanset hut gym.



Below: Coach Lathem and the Tennis team of 1939. Middle: Aerial view of the campus during construction of the Business Administration and Library buildings in 1965.



Courtesy of GSU Archives and Special Collections



Above: State of the art business education, meeting the demand of new technology both obsolete and advanced. Left: May Day queens parade in Hurt Park.

