



Michael L. Hanes, Ph.D.

GSW remembers rural roots, ready for second century of educational leadership

With a pledge of \$30,000 and 270 acres of land, the citizens and County Commissioners proclaimed their support for the founding of a college to serve the region surrounding Americus and Sumter County at the beginning of a new century in 1906.

“Sumter County won out in the contest for the Third District agricultural college, and that great educational institution is to be located here. . . And the victory is far-reaching in its effect. . . Its value is really inestimable.” This proclamation was proudly reported in the Americus Weekly Times Recorder of Nov. 23, 1906.

One of the first buildings to be constructed was Academic Hall, a formidable structure to house classrooms, administrative offices, and an auditorium for the fledgling institution. During the first decade of the college’s history, this landmark structure had to be completely rebuilt following a devastating fire. The signature element of this new structure was a prominent dome with architectural details denoting the importance of this reconstructed landmark. In the years to come, the dome became a central icon in the minds of many students as well as in campus folklore.

When the faculty, students, staff, and alumni expressed their preference as we sought a new logo for the

University in the last year, no doubt the longtime observer of life at Georgia Southwestern was not surprised. The Wheatley Administration Building dome was a favorite image among the many that were considered. A clearly defined, readily recognizable representation of the dome is prominent in the new logo that will serve our University as we move forward in the second century (cover story, page 8).

As we welcome this next chapter in the life of the University, we also prepare to celebrate the dedication of the latest addition to our campus community, the new Student Success Center, encompassing 130,000 square feet and constructed at a cost of more than \$22 million. The convocation hall of the Student Success Center is introducing the campus community to a new dome that will surely become a landmark for future generations of students. The geodesic dome that provides shelter for the convocation hall, the centerpiece of the Student Success Center, is the first of its type in the University System of Georgia.

After nearly a century of service, Academic Hall, now known as the Wheatley Administration Building, is the focus of a detailed restoration project at a cost of nearly \$4.5 million. It is our goal to restore many of the architectural details of the dome that have been lost over the years as well as the two-story rotunda that graced the first floor of the building. The fully restored Wheatley Administration

Building will serve as the centerpiece of the historic district that is being created on campus.

Remembering our treasured past and building for the future, Georgia Southwestern continues to be of inestimable value to the community.

Building for the Future—The nearly complete \$22 million Students Success Center will serve the University community at the dawn of GSW’s second century.

