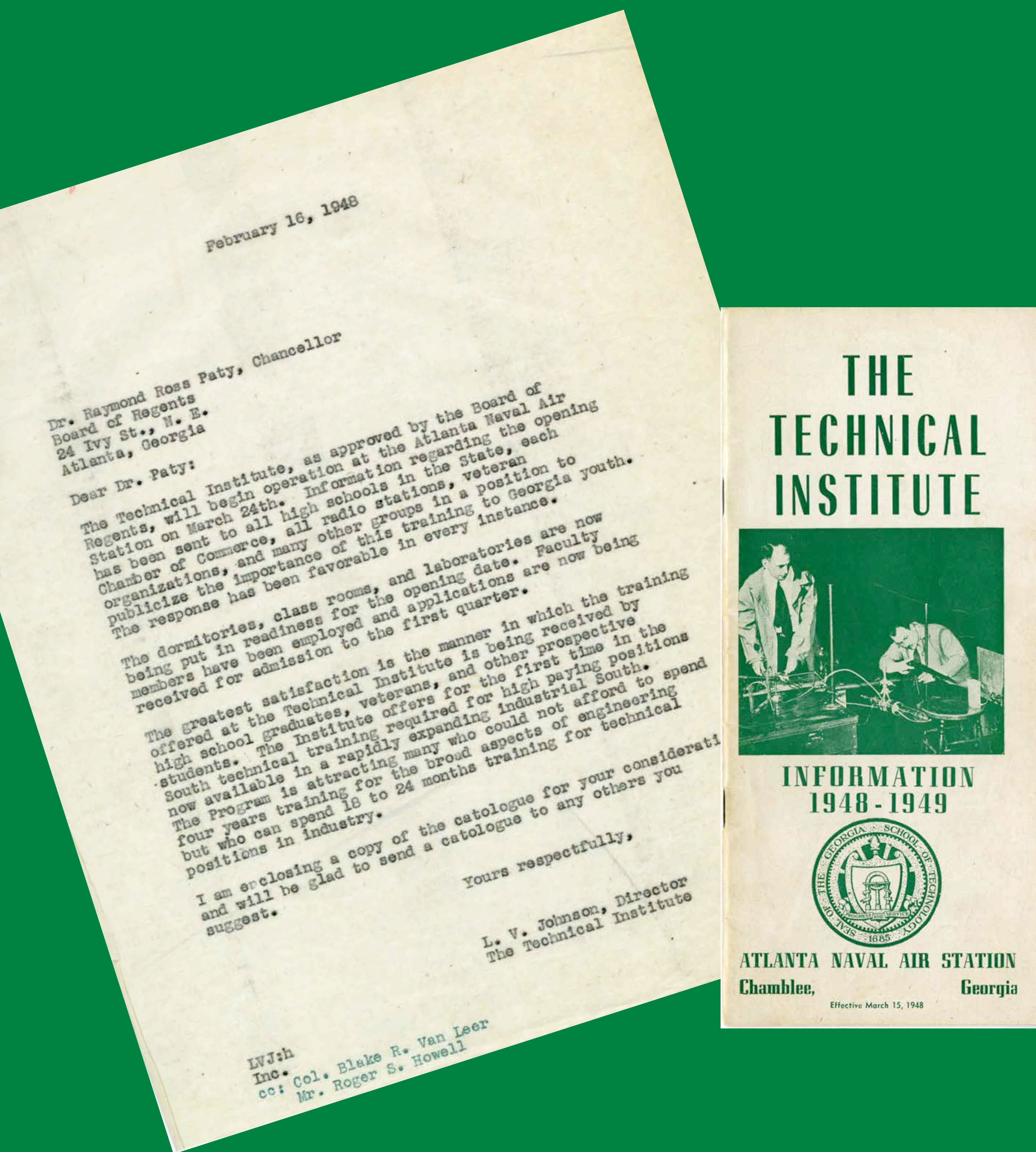


Left photo: Southern Technical Institute students, ca. 1960

Right photo: Southern Technical Institute Building D, 1960s

Bottom photos: Letter from Director L.V. Johnson to Board of Regents Chancellor Raymond Ross Paty, 1948

The Technical Institute brochure, 1948-1949



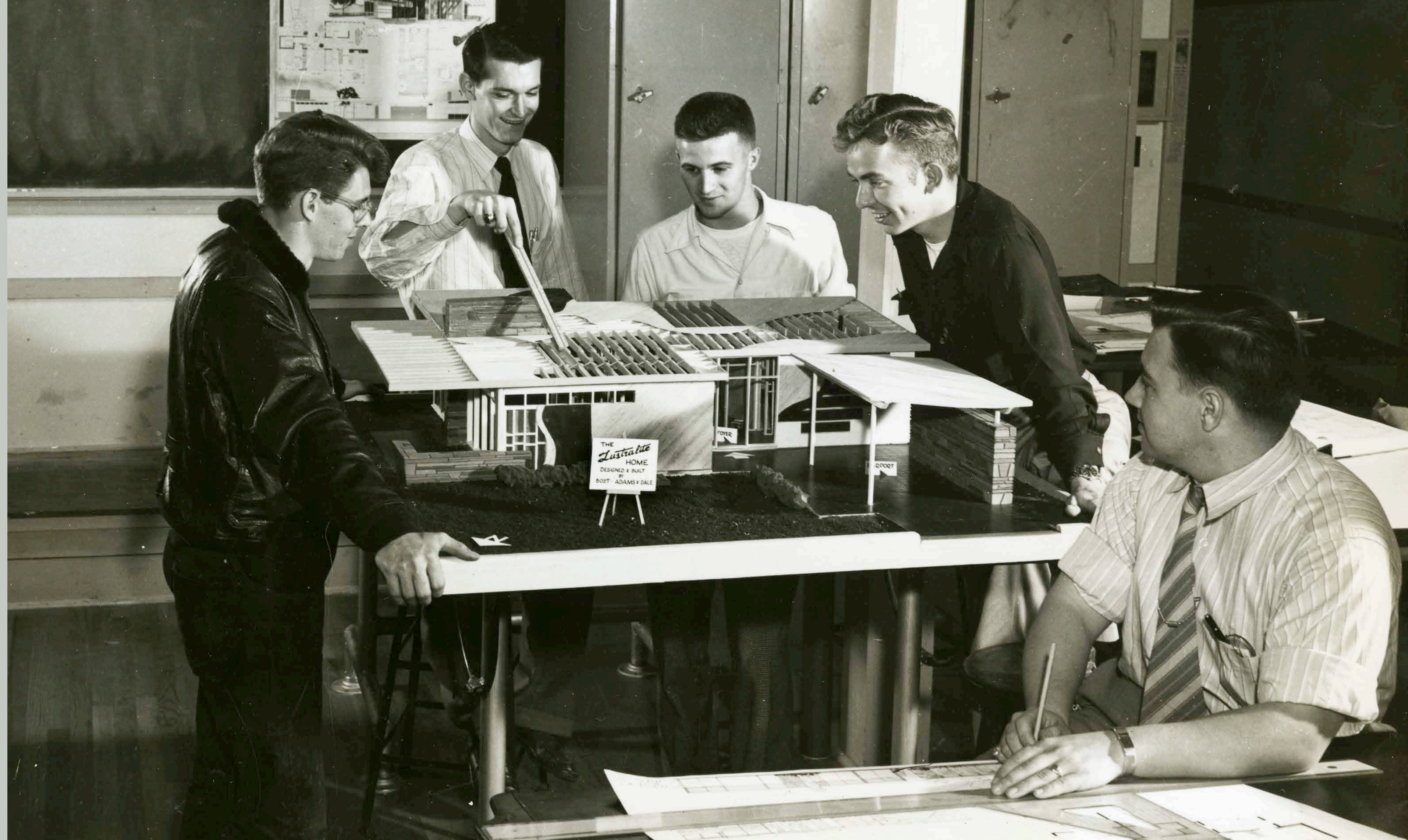
Crafting a Technician

In an age where more than 100,000 Americans over the age of eighteen receive college degrees each year, it is easy to take higher education for granted. In Georgia, a shifting focus toward higher education occurred after World War II due to the state's increasingly industrialized economy and the need to satisfy veterans taking advantage of the G.I. Bill. For many civilians and veterans, education and steady employment were of equal importance in post-war years,

thus securing the need for technical institutes. These institutes served as the middle ground between traditional higher education and trade schools by providing a two-year degree that prepared graduates for the job market while also equipping them with the necessary skills to continue their education. Southern Technical Institute, which would eventually become Southern Polytechnic State University, was one of the first technical institutes to exist in the South.

Left photo: Southern Technical Institute radio station, 1950s

Right photo: Southern Technical Institute students on Chamblee campus, 1950s



The First Years of Southern Tech

In 1947, the Georgia Board of Regents approved the establishment of a technical institute at the Atlanta Naval Air Station in DeKalb County, GA. The Technical Institute officially opened for registration in March 1948 as a unit of the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech). Lawrence V. Johnson served as the institute's first director. According to the Technical Institute's 1948 informational brochure and school newspaper, courses available for students during the school's inaugural year included industrial management, building and construction, electricity, radio, mechanical

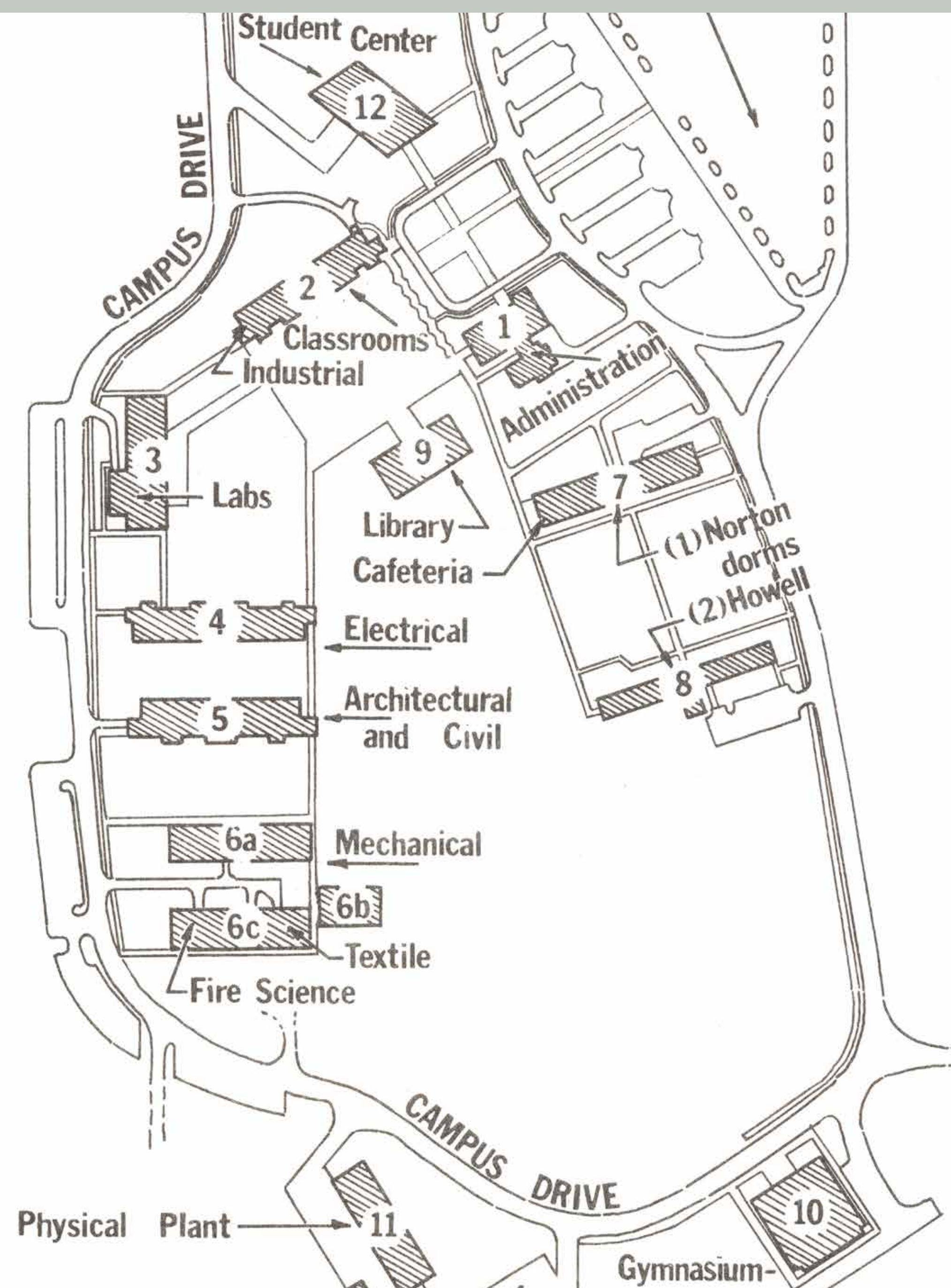
engineering, HVAC systems, and textiles. In 1949, the name of the Technical Institute officially changed to the Southern Technical Institute (Southern Tech). After a dip in enrollment during the 1950-1951 academic year that nearly led to the school's closure, Southern Tech rebounded with steady increases in program offerings and student enrollment. Despite these accomplishments, the Institute struggled to define itself, as it was overshadowed by Georgia Tech. These growing pains would act as the impetus for major changes during the next two decades.

One hundred sixteen students registered for the first spring quarter at the Technical Institute. Of these students, over 100 were veterans and only one was a woman. Barbara Hudson (pictured at right) graduated in 1950 with a degree in Building Construction Technology.



Left photo: Southern Technical Institute campus map, 1976

Right photo: Detail of Southern Technical Institute campus map, 1976



The Move to Marietta and the Push toward Independence

In 1958, the Board of Regents began to consider a proposal to move Southern Tech from DeKalb County to Cobb County. The potential move received support from key stakeholders in Cobb, such as the Lockheed Corporation. In December 1958, the groundbreaking took place for the new Marietta campus, and the opened in October 1961. That same year, Hoyt McClure became the new director of Southern Tech.

The next two decades were both challenging and rewarding for Southern Tech. National circumstances such as the junior college boom and the Vietnam War resulted in student recruitment challenges, while economic tensions with Georgia Tech continued to escalate. Amidst these challenges, however, Southern Tech made the transition to a four-year school in fall 1970. Ten years later, the Board of Regents approved the separation of Southern

Tech from Georgia Tech, which gave way to a new era of school pride and campus traditions.

Southern Tech's basketball team entered the regional finals in 1978 and won the District 25 Championship five years in a row. A new tradition, known as the "Bathtub Races," began in the mid-1960s and would bring hundreds of community members to Southern Tech's campus annually until the 1990s. Goat Day was another popular tradition at Southern Tech that brought together students, faculty, and alumni fraternization for barbeque, a pageant, and an evening dance.

Left photo: Southern Tech students, ca.1982

Right photo: SPSU student, ca. 2012



Becoming Southern Polytechnic State University

The year 1980 was a fresh start for Southern Tech. Not only had the school recently separated from Georgia Tech, but it also was the recipient of a new, enthusiastic president — Dr. Stephen Cheshier. Under his leadership, minority representation became a priority for the school. Southern Tech made additional efforts to improve diversity by hosting minority-focused events on campus and developing strong relationships

with organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) — Cobb County Chapter.

Over the next thirty years, SPSU achieved many significant milestones, including the development of graduate programs, campus expansion, and appointing the university's first woman president in 1998 — Dr. Lisa Rossbacher. Engineering degree programs expanded and interdisciplinary courses

in media arts and game design rose in popularity among an increasingly diverse campus. By 2014, half of SPSU's student body was non-white, and nearly one third of the faculty were women.

In 1982, Dr. Harris T. Travis was hired as the Vice President and Dean of Faculty at Southern Tech, making him one of the first African American chief academic officers in the University System of Georgia.

Left photo: Dr. Lisa Rossbacher during Poly Day, 2013

Right photo: SPSU students protesting consolidation, ca. 2013



Consolidation

In November 2013, the Board of Regents announced plans to consolidate KSU and SPSU by January 2015. Although many SPSU students and faculty petitioned against the consolidation, leaders from KSU and SPSU worked together during the challenging transition. SPSU held its final commencement ceremony in December 2014 and began a new chapter as KSU's

Marietta campus one month later. Although the two schools merged, SPSU's legacy and achievements are evident throughout the fabric of the "new KSU." The KSU Marietta Campus brings a new level of prestige to KSU's academic offerings and serves as a thriving place for innovative engineering, architecture, and computing programs.

SPSU DIRECTORS AND PRESIDENTS

Mr. Lawrence V. Johnson (1947 – 1959)

Mr. Hoyt McClure, MS (1959 – 1970)

Mr. Walter O. Carlson (1970 – 1980)

Dr. Stephen Cheshier (1980 – 1997)

Dr. Lisa Rossbacher (1998 – 2014)