hat started as a five-year stint to improve his resume became a long and distinguished career, ultimately leading one of the nation’s top university-based, applied research institutes into the 21st century.

Edward Reedy, vice president and director of the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI), will retire this spring after 33 years on the faculty, the past six as the head of the organization. GTRI — with a staff of almost 1,200 and an annual research program of $115 million — conducts applied research for government and commercial customers.

When Reedy came to GTRI in 1970, the Institute already had a national reputation in defense research, particularly radar systems. After earning a doctorate in electrical engineering and serving two years in the U.S. Army, Reedy was seeking the research opportunities GTRI offered. That experience and opportunities for more responsibility led him to stay, he recalls.

“I’ve been able to accomplish at Georgia Tech virtually everything I could have hoped to accomplish,” Reedy says. “I have always been able to do something I really wanted to do.”

Early on, Reedy and his colleagues worked long hours conducting research in radar system development and electromagnetic scattering. Ultimately, Reedy co-authored a textbook titled *Principles of Modern Radar*, along with four book chapters, and authored or co-authored 77 reports, technical publications and presentations. In 2000, his peers honored him with the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Third Millennium Medal for service and technical contributions to his profession.

Reedy is proud of these research accomplishments, but he focuses on the more recent past when describing his most challenging achievements. As the Cold War ended in the early 1990s, Reedy — then a lab director — became involved in guiding GTRI’s expansion of its research beyond the defense arena.

“At that time, about 85 percent of GTRI’s research was funded directly or indirectly by the Department of Defense (DoD),” Reedy recalls. “And it became apparent that DoD research was not an expanding market. We had to do something, or we would suffer.”

So GTRI pursued more research contracts with industry and non-DoD government agencies. “We put our resources into this effort, and it began to pay off in the mid to late 1990s, especially in industrial work,” Reedy says.

“We also positioned GTRI to become the technology support arm for the state of Georgia,” he adds. “We filled the need for high-tech expertise. When you put all of this effort together, it diversified our base and allowed us to continue to grow as DoD research decreased significantly.”

Then DoD research dollars rebounded following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Never backing away from its commitment to DoD research, GTRI benefited from the budget increases and received significant new awards in fiscal year 2002, Reedy notes.

Meanwhile, Reedy was leading a difficult transition in GTRI’s accounting system for recovering indirect expenditures. The institute replaced a system com-

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**Faculty Profile**

**Career Highlights**

Retiring GTRI director reflects on 33 years of doing what he enjoyed.

*by JANE M. SANDERS*

Edward Reedy, vice president and director of the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI), will retire this spring after 33 years on the faculty, the past six as the head of the organization.
monly used by universities with one used by industrial contractors. It allowed GTRI to recover funds that could be reinvested in new research initiatives and training for staff. In addition, Reedy reduced internal expenditures, which allowed GTRI to pass along the resulting savings to its customers.

“The most difficult things and the things I feel most pleased about accomplishing at GTRI are diversifying the research funding base, while continuing to expand GTRI’s research program and reduce its overhead rates,” Reedy says. “This allowed GTRI to pass along the resulting savings to its customers.”

One new research initiative — which began with internal seed money and has since garnered significant external funding — is focused on homeland defense. Reedy hired principal research scientist Tom Keven to direct the effort, and that led to the creation of the Center for Emergency Response Technology, Instruction and Policy (CERTIP). The center represents a public-private partnership to foster basic and applied research in emergency response and consequence management for both natural and human-caused disasters — in particular, terrorism. CERTIP was the focal point for President George W. Bush’s visit to the Georgia Tech campus in March 2002.

Other research initiatives that developed on Reedy’s watch include GTRI’s studies in fuel cells. Researchers led by David Parekh, director of the Center for Innovative Fuel Cell and Battery Technologies, are developing innovations in membranes, fuel reforming, systems integration, catalyst optimization and modeling, among others. State-funded research programs that have contributed to GTRI’s success include a court records database automation project headed by senior research scientist Lisa Sills, a highway fog warning system project led by principal research scientist Gary Ginnestad and research focused on the early detection and tracking of severe storms led by principal research scientist Gene Greneker. Reedy also points to GTRI’s growing international defense research program, now totaling more than $10 million, led primarily from its Huntsville, Ala., research laboratory.

Reedy expects future research growth at GTRI in all of these areas, as well as in health sciences, bioengineering and national defense.

“I think GTRI will continue to grow and increase its visibility as a world-class research organization,” Reedy says. “I believe it will expand to meet the service needs of the state of Georgia. And I think GTRI will be a catalyst for economic development and growth in Georgia. Spin-offs of our new technology initiatives could create new companies.”

In addition to new research directions and technology transfer, Reedy cites two other accomplishments that make him proud. He helped establish an endowed faculty chair in honor of Georgia Tech alumnus Glen Robinson, who provided the basic endowment to fund the chair. It has allowed researcher Gary Ginnestad to pursue remote sensing technology research. Reedy also helped Georgia Tech raise about $2 million from industry sources for a new $7.5 million food technology research building expected to open on campus in 2005.

Singing Reedy’s praises is a chorus of Georgia Tech voices, among them Provost Jean-Lou Chameau. “Research awards and excellence at GTRI are at an all-time high thanks to Ed’s vision and leadership,” Chameau says. “In addition, Ed has been key in enhancing the interactions between GTRI and the rest of the Institute. Also, he has been a strong voice for the internal support of early-stage research development that critically increases marketability to external stakeholders. Ed understands the synergetic relationship among research, economic development and education, and he has leveraged GTRI’s strengths to further all three efforts.”

While Chameau guides a national search for Reedy’s successor, Reedy reflects on the challenges that lie ahead for that person.

“The challenge for anyone who leads a research institute like this is keeping the organization ahead of the technology curve,” he explains. “We have to bring to the customer capabilities they don’t have, or else they don’t need us. The challenge is to be on the lookout for new, cutting-edge areas in which we can do meaningful work that people will pay for. We must find new people and build new capabilities. If we solve this problem, a lot of other things will take care of themselves.”

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