

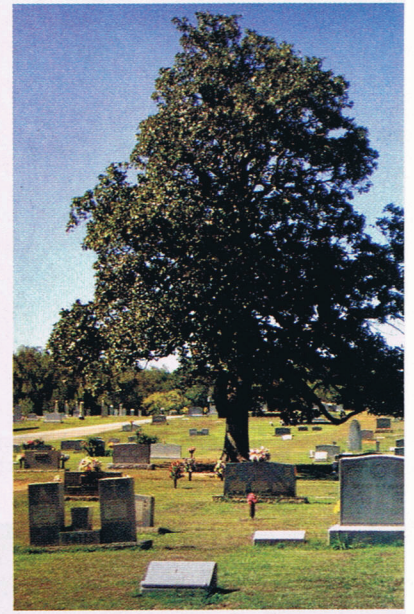
## College Park

A historic South Fulton city on the rise

By CHANDRA R. THOMAS

THE STREETS ARE NAMED for some of the top universities in the country (Princeton, Virginia, and Columbia avenues, for instance), but the city of College Park no longer has a college within its borders. Originally named “Manchester,” the community took on its current moniker in 1896 when it was home to the since-closed Cox College and, later, the Georgia Military Academy—incarnated today as Woodward Academy, the largest K-12 private school in the United States.

Located approximately ten miles south of Atlanta near Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, College Park is home to roughly 21,000 people, mostly African Americans. While this magazine named College Park one of the “Best Places to Call Home” in 2003 (due in part to increased development), in his 2006 book *The Absolutely Worst Places to Live in America*, Dave Gilmartin calls the city “a realm of crime” and “frightening and above all,



Originated from a land grant in 1846, College Park currently has the fourth-largest urban historic district in Georgia, with more than 850 structures on its historic register—including homes, monuments, businesses, a cemetery (far right), and a railway station.

undesirable.” Mayor Jack Longino scoffs at the assertion, characterizing the book as “fiction” based on flimsy facts. Residents such as Maurice Baudy, who moved to College Park last year, agree with Longino. “We love the area,” says Baudy, “especially the diversity and the fact that there are a lot of other relatively young couples.”

### Living There

The sprawling estates along posh RUGBY AVENUE constitute one of College Park’s most exclusive neighborhoods, but a rash of newer subdivisions is luring upwardly mobile couples and families to the area. The PRINCETON COURTS (3633 Howard Avenue, 404-768-9332) senior community and the master-planned PRINCETON VILLAGE (3648 Howard Drive, 404-559-9211) are part of a large Brock Built development that will ultimately extend west to Main Street. Within walking distance from Woodward Academy, Whitehall Homes’ two-year-old EAGLES GROVE (770-722-4465) subdivision features homes priced from the high \$300s to low \$400s. An increasing range of housing options continues to draw more families to Col-

lege Park, including parents with children attending Woodward who have acquired second homes there in which to reside during the school week.

### Food & Drink

Although Main Street is College Park’s central artery, Virginia Avenue is a close second; new and notable dining offerings include the collegiate-themed ACADEMY GRILL (1583 Virginia Avenue, 404-765-0011) and HAPPY COFFEE (1682 Virginia Avenue, 404-214-7203), a trendy Internet cafe serving fresh-to-order “healthy coffee” (less caffeine), decaf cocoa, organic fruit smoothies, and fresh baked pastries.

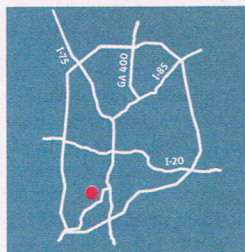
For upscale dining, try THE PECAN (3725 Main Street, 404-762-8444)—menu headliners include pepper jack grits, sweet potato fries, and buttermilk pecan chicken—and THE FEED STORE (3841 Main Street, 404-209-7979), a “Southern nouveau” bistro with original plates (think sea scallops served with truffle risotto and lemon beurre blanc sauce). FINA’S (3823 Main

Street, 404-767-9292) cozy neighborhood atmosphere delivers with hearty Italian dishes such as lamb rigatoni and lasagne.

### See & Do

Owned and operated by the city, the GEORGIA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER (2000 Convention Center Concourse, 770-997-3566) is the newest and second-largest exhibit and meeting space in the state. Construction is currently under way for a light rail system (completion expected later this year) to transport conventiongoers directly from the airport and will eventually include stops at two convention hotels.

College Park also has the highest number of city parks and pools in the south metro area. BARRETT PARK, along Rugby Avenue, and the newly renamed CHARLES E. PHILLIPS SR. ESQUIRE PARK at Herschel and Riverdale roads are popular choices, along with the nine-hole COLLEGE PARK MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE (3711 Fairway Drive, 404-761-0731), which offers a free children’s golf academy. ■



#### LOCATOR

>> From Atlanta, take the I-75/I-85 connector south, then continue to follow I-85 via the ramp to Montgomery/Macon. Take exit 73, turn right on Virginia Avenue, and travel approximately one mile to Main Street.