

REMARKS BY GEORGIA TECH PRESIDENT G. WAYNE CLOUGH
Faculty-Staff Retirement Dinner, May 24, 2005

As President, I often get the credit for the tremendous progress Georgia Tech has been making toward our goal of defining the technological university of the 21st century. But you are the ones who have really done the work. Day-in and day-out through the years, you have been building Georgia Tech, brick by brick, program by program.

You have taken care of this place and made its educational and research programs and facilities better and better through your years of service. You have given so much to Georgia Tech, and it has been a privilege for me to shake each one of your hands as you came forward.

Each year I come to this dinner with a feeling of wistfulness, because we are going to miss you all. And each year I come away with a touch of envy and the happy realization that I am another year closer to my own retirement. Now, I know the April Fool's issue of the *Technique* announced that I was retiring early to undertake a rap career. However, I have had to put those plans on hold until this cultural phenomena takes hold with the geriatric set. So you will not find my name in this program just yet.

But once your hair gets as grey as mine, there are days when retirement can look pretty tempting. Retirement offers freedom – most obviously freedom from the daily discipline, duties, and schedule constraints of a job. But in a larger context, retirement also brings freedom from upholding all kinds of expectations that society has of you based on your career and its responsibilities.

You are back to the freedom you had when you were young, but with the resources, the experience, and the self-knowledge to make better use of it. So, as the theme of this dinner indicates, we hope you will now take the opportunity to visit the places and do the things you've always dreamed of but never had time for.

The ancient Greek philosopher Socrates learned to dance and play musical instruments in his old age, and he considered it time well spent. The Roman philosopher Cato set out to learn to speak Greek at the age of 80. When a friend asked him why he had begun so large an undertaking at such an advanced age, he said it was the youngest age he had left. Grandma Moses took up painting at the age of 78 when arthritis made embroidery too difficult.

Pablo Picasso, who continued to paint through a ripe old age, once remarked that age only matters when you are young. "Now that I have arrived at a great age," he said, "I might just as well be 20." Or, as Jack Benny once put it, "Age is mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter."

So relax, take it easy. But also be creative, explore, travel, try something new. Tackle retirement with the same enthusiasm and spirit you have shown here at Tech, and build a new life for yourself on your own terms.

All of you have given a considerable part of your life and your talents to Georgia Tech. This Institute is a better place today because you were here and helped to carry the work forward. We are grateful for the many gifts you have given us, and for the many ways you have helped to make Georgia Tech a special place. As you move into this new stage of your lives, go with our words of heart-felt appreciation ringing in your ears. We are grateful to have been the recipient of your talents and skills for so many years, and we wish all of you the very best.