

Dr. Peterson

Welcome: John Imlay Service

11:30 a.m. Wednesday, April 1, 2015

Good morning. On behalf of the entire Georgia Tech community, welcome!

It is somehow fitting that we gather here on the Georgia Tech campus to celebrate the remarkable life of John P. Imlay, Jr. In many ways, it was here that John got his roots, and we are very honored to host his family as we remember John and all he accomplished in his life!

John Imlay graduated from Georgia Tech in 1959 with a degree in Industrial Management. Like so many Georgia Tech graduates, he had an entrepreneurial spirit, and was prepared not only take his own innovative ideas and turn them into reality, but to enable others to do so, also.

John faced the world with a humility that is characteristic of our alumni, but also a confidence that if he could “get out of Georgia Tech” - He could do anything!

His office was filled with remembrances of Georgia Tech, and for more than half a century, he gave back of his time, his talents, and his resources. He served on the Georgia Tech Foundation, the Georgia Tech Advisory Board, and as a member of the last capital campaign.

He also served on the Executive Steering Committee for the DuPree Center for Entrepreneurship & New Venture Development in the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts, and was a great supporter of the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, named in honor of his good friend, Senator Sam Nunn!

John was a frequent speaker here at Georgia Tech and influenced countless numbers of students through his many speeches and lectures, including his commencement address

in 1993, and as the inaugural speaker for the “Future of Technology” lecture series that same year.

John’s reach was global. While serving as a strong advocate of new technologies, he encouraged the art of human interaction, and willingly shared his own learning experiences for the benefit of others, often in a subtle, but humorous way.

It is amazing to think about how much the computing industry has changed since he spoke on the topic 22 years ago. John Imlay did not just visualize these changes, he helped to transform the industry and worked tirelessly to bring his vision to reality!

Just this past week, the three individuals that have held the John P. Imlay Dean’s Chair in the College of Computing, posted a message on the College of Computing website. Professors Peter Freeman, Rich DeMillo and Zvi Galil wrote about his impact, his generosity, and his willingness to share his time and professional network.

They included a sentence that illustrates the profound impact he had on our city and its entrepreneurial network. They said:

“There is a plaque in the Dean’s suite in the College of Computing at Georgia Tech that shows the family tree of Atlanta based technology companies. Almost all of them trace their heritage to John Imlay Jr.”

John’s generosity touched many programs at Georgia Tech, and also the lives of many students.

His gifts of time, energy and resources touched an untold number of students, faculty, and administrators, and as we’ll hear later, his reach extended well beyond the great city of Atlanta.

I arrived at Georgia Tech, six years ago today and on my second day as President, John Imlay came by my office to visit. He told me that I had been entrusted with a great legacy and that if I ever needed his help or advice that I should not hesitate to call on him.

And every time I did, he responded, with generosity, wit and wisdom!

While there are many here who knew John much longer and much better than I did, I consider myself privileged to have known him.

We will all miss his spirit, his enthusiasm and his humble demeanor. To all of you, and especially to Mary Ellen and the Imlay family - we join you in the celebration of a life well-lived, one whose impact will live on in the hearts of thousands.

And while I recognize that words, however kind, cannot mend your heartache, those of us who knew John hope that you may find peace in the love of family, and comfort in the warm embrace of friends.