

What: Dinner Honoring Warren Batts

Background: The reason for the dinner is to honor Warren Batts (EE '61) for his loyalty, service, and support of Georgia Tech. The dinner is taking place now as he is retiring from his position as chairman of the Chicago Regional Development Council. (At the end of September he also retired as chairman and chief executive officer of Premark Corporation and Chief Executive Officer of Tupperware Corporation.) Your remarks will follow those of George Spindler (ChE '61). George is a good friend of Warren's. As part of his remarks, George will petition you to change Warren's grades from his student days at Georgia Tech. (The story goes that Warren made only one B at Georgia Tech and that he has said he would give more money except for that one B.)

Please note: Warren is not comfortable with the amount of his contribution to Georgia Tech being discussed. Therefore, I will refer to the gift as "a most substantial gift."

Good evening. It is certainly a pleasure to participate in tonight's dinner to honor Warren Batts. Warren, you are truly a hell of an asset to Georgia Tech, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your years of service on behalf of the Institute.

(Hold up the grade-changing position). However, I am just not sure what to do about this petition. The history of our Institute is a venerable one. And no president that I know of has ever personally stepped in to change a grade awarded by a professor. The closest incident I can recall occurred when I took the oath as the first alumni president of Georgia Tech. Although my grades were not changed, I have it on good authority that they have disappeared from the Georgia Tech archives.

Anyway, when I learned of this petition, I knew right away that it was...a hell of a mess. A mess because..on one hand, Warren is the type of alumnus most college presidents only dream of. Through his involvement with the Chicago

Regional Development Committee, the Georgia Tech Foundation, the Georgia Tech Advisory Board, and the EE Advisory Board, Warren has helped make a difference in the future of the Institute. Because of all he has given to the Institute, I would really like to be able to change this grade for him.

On the other hand, there is the all-too-real possibility—no probability—of establishing a precedent. Once students and other alumni find out about an official grade change, my office will be besieged by other such petitions.

Therefore when I received this petition, I decided further investigation was necessary. To that end, I went to the Georgia Tech archives with a heavy heart.

As I pushed aside the cobwebs and searched through the old test papers, I soon realized that there was a happy ending to the dilemma.

Warren, a great wrong has been perpetrated against you. For more than 35 years, you have been living a lie. Tonight, I am pleased to report that your professor made a mistake in the grading of your term paper. It was the boy next to you, one George Burdell, who should have been the recipient of the B+. You, on the other hand, earned an A for the course.

Warren, here is your amended grade report, along with the Institute's most sincere apologies. (Hand him the paper.)

(Pause and shift gears.)

On a more serious note, along with his leadership, guidance, and service, Warren recently provided a most substantial gift to his alma mater—a capital campaign contribution that he directed to be used for co-op scholarships for ECE students.

As I'm sure many of you know, Georgia Tech's co-op program is an extremely valuable part of the Georgia Tech educational package. Many

students who could not otherwise attend Georgia Tech are able to pay for their education through co-op—while at the same time earning valuable workplace experience. Warren's gift enables us to further strengthen the co-op program by offering co-op scholarships each year to freshmen who are not yet earning money through the co-op program.

To better explain the value of Warren's gift, I would like to introduce you to three of this year's scholarship recipients—students who would probably not have been able to attend Tech without this scholarship.

- Steven Australe is from Port Charlotte, Florida. In high school, Steven was a member of the National Honor Society, Model United Nations and the Thespian Society as well as president of the Vocal Ensemble. In preparation for college, he held three part-time jobs at the same time, including a job as a computer programmer. A budding actor and musician, Steven held leading roles in local community theater productions of West Side Story, Wizard of Oz, and Carousel, and in the summer of 1996 he was the mascot for the Port Charlotte Rangers minor league baseball team.

- Zuri Evan is from Marietta, Georgia. In high school, he was a member of the National Honor Society, French Honor Society and French Club, and the Beta Club. Volunteer activities included tutoring elementary students in math and work for Arrive Alive. He is also a member of the Atlanta Junior Rowing Association Crew Team and worked at the rowing venue dock for the 1996 Summer Olympics. Other employment included work as a customer service representative for Cub Foods.

- Finally, Michael Mathis is from Ashburn, Georgia. In high school, he held the office of senior class president, in addition to serving as president of the Future Business Leaders of America. He was also a member of the annual staff and the academic quiz bowl team. He once earned \$4.35 an hour transporting transporting

medical patients on various errands.

Bright, hard-working students like these will be the Warren Batts and George Spiveys of the future. Warren, thank you very much for enabling us to bring such students to the Institute.

Before I turn the program over to Warren, I would like to also offer a word of appreciation to a few others who are here this evening. First, and most importantly, I would like to thank Eloise Batts. Eloise, we all know Warren's accomplishments are attributable to the partnership you share.

Next, I'd also like to thank George Spindler and Alan Lacy for your help in arranging tonight's dinner for Warren—as well as for the support you too have offered Georgia Tech.

Warren, on the occasion of your retirement from Premark and Tupperware, as well as your—I won't say retirement—but as you step down from your duties as chairman of the Chicago Regional Development Council, it is my pleasure to present you with this gesture of appreciation for the many gifts you have given the Institute. I hope you continue to lend us your guidance and leadership on an unofficial basis for many years to come.

Warren...(motion for him to come up, lead applause, and hand him the gift.) (I believe the gift is a picture of the Tower.)