REMARKS FOR DOUGLAS ROTARY CLUB
GEORGIA TECH PRESIDENT G. WAYNE CLOUGH
June 14, 2007

It is good to be back to my hometown. My family has deep roots in this community. My great grandfather Gaskin, related to me on my grandmother's side, served as mayor of Douglas as did my father. My mother and father, born near Hazelhurst, moved away during the depths of the depression, but moved back when they could in the 1930's and raised their family in Douglas, where my father ran the ice and coal plant. My father ran for mayor on the promise to establish a hospital in Douglas, which did not have one then, leaving the residents to drive to Waycross and stay there as best they could during an illness. He was very proud that the first hospital was built during his tenure. Needless to say, I was blessed with great parents and experienced a wonderful childhood in Douglas that was enriched by my sister and brother, Phyllis and Ronnie.

Many of my life's lessons were learned here. An early understanding of physics came in the third grade when, after a lecture in class by my teacher, Ms. Spivey, about why we should not fight, I proceeded to start one. After being called in for what I assumed was a negotiation I might pull through, she escorted me to the cloak room and pulled out a very large paddle, which I noticed had holes in it. Being analytically inclined I wondered about the holes, but it did not take long for the stinging to make me forget the question. Later when I took my first physics course it came to me that the holes had two functions. First to reduce air friction and give the paddle more speed, and second to reduce the area over which the force was applied, increasing the intensity of the pressure my rear end felt.

Another bit of corporeal punishment came my way in fifth grade when someone decided we should have an apple treat and at recess we were surprised by the presence of bushel baskets of apples on the playground. Upon holding one of these beauties in my hand, I fairly quickly concluded it would be fun to lob one towards the sixth graders, which led to a wholesale apple fight. As the instigator of the battle, I was given a good licking. The lesson I learned here was that if you are going to cause trouble and have to pay a price, make it for something worthwhile.

Douglas also gave me ample opportunity to learn about building things since as kids we spent our summers constructing dams over streams, swings over creeks, and forts which we defended with a misguided lack of appreciation of the damage thrown rocks can do. To this day, I have a scar on my head from a rock I did not avoid.

So, with the lessons I learned, Douglas sent me on my way to a career in science, engineering, and service. In spite of my somewhat wayward youth, those who helped me grow and corrected me as needed, left me with a sense of curiosity, a love of nature, an appreciation of the importance of community, and a foundation to carry me through the tough times.

The true strength of Douglas is seen not only in the way it has helped many like myself along our way, but also in its own remarkable progress. Driving to get to Douglas you pass through many other communities that have seen their better times in the past, and this is true of many of the small towns and cities in our nation. But not here.

Douglas and Coffee County were ahead of the times in figuring out how to cooperate and market your strengths. This may sound simple, but you would be surprised at how few can really do it. You bring together your economic development authorities with your educational institutions like South Georgia College and East Georgia Technical College to great effect. These efforts led to the attraction of one of the first major Wal-Mart distribution centers and much more. Today you have companies like American Insulated Wire; Premium Waters, Inc.; Optima Chemical, which I visited this morning; and Precision Castparts Corp., where I'm headed after lunch. In addition you have a first class airport that I used today, a new hotel, an attractive downtown with a movie theater, restaurants, shops, and banks. Your hospital recently added a 3rd floor, and being president of Georgia Tech I could not help noticing the antenna on top of water tower, giving Douglas a wireless computing environment. This is clearly a vibrant community that bucks the trend we see in many areas of South Georgia. It is no surprise that Governor Perdue chose Douglas as the first Georgia community to be designated "Entrepreneur Friendly."

I am proud to be able to say that Georgia Tech has had its own role in your success. Many of you know that one of the offices of our Enterprise Innovation Institute, located on North Peterson Avenue, has assisted this region's small to medium manufacturing companies, including some of those just mentioned, with outstanding technical support and advice. We have done this quietly and well for forty years, so well it may be taken for granted. But I can tell you from experience that this is unique and exists in few other places in our country. The Innovation Institute brings to your door the power of one of the world's great research universities, and I am proud of it.

Your "people power" is reflected in the presence of thirty Georgia Tech alumni who are resident to this area, and many are among the leaders in your community, including Francis Lott; Sherman Dudley; Shep Johnson, pastor of the 1st Baptist Church; and Gene Williams, CEO of Optima Chemical. Dr. Jim Barber, one of your new Douglas-based physicians, is also a Tech alumnus who got his medical degree at Emory. All of these gentlemen illustrate that a Tech education can take you anywhere, not just to engineering and science and to big cities.

You probably are not aware that Georgia Tech's outreach to Douglas has expanded to your K-12 schools. Our science and math professionals from CEISMC just completed a seven-day math workshop for Douglas teachers in grades 3-9 to help them accommodate an updated math curriculum. In addition, two Coffee County High teachers are going to participate in our summer GIFT teachers program, and next year 50 of their students will visit our campus in Atlanta for a weekend.

Finally, this afternoon we will add to our Douglas connections when President Torri Lilly of South Georgia College and I will formalize a new agreement for an advanced transfer program between South Georgia College and the Georgia Tech Savannah campus. This program will give South Georgia students a leg up in undertaking engineering studies from our top ranked College of Engineering. We are proud to be linked in this way with South Georgia College – an institution that is on the road to a new path, with a record high enrollment last fall of more than 1,500 students, an Academic Quiz Team that recently finished 6th at National Championship Tournament at University of Minnesota, and plans for enhanced outreach to assist this community in economic development.

Of course it would be remiss on my part not to mention Georgia Tech's role in providing a first class education to many of the students from this area. Three current students are from right here in Douglas: Karen Melissa Deen got her BS in mechanical engineering in 2005 and is now pursuing a PhD at Tech. Andrew Shepherd Johnson, who went to South Georgia College and transferred to Georgia Tech, is a management major. (His brother also went to Georgia Tech, and guess who their dad is!) And Ellsworth Swanson is junior majoring in computer engineering at GT Savannah. But there are also more than 2 dozen students enrolled from Coffee and adjacent counties. I am pleased to say that several of these receive financial support from a Clough family scholarship named for my mother and father.

In addition to our direct links to Douglas, I also like to think that Georgia Tech offers much to this region by virtue of what it has become. Today Georgia Tech is ranked as one of the nation's top ten public universities. We are home to a College of Engineering ranked among the top five in the nation, with seven engineering programs each of which is ranked in the top ten of its discipline. Beyond engineering, our business school and applied math program are ranked among the top ten in the nation. We rank number one in the nation among public universities in the percentage of students who are National Merit Scholars. And we are a university recognized nationally for having adapted our educational programs to provide our graduates with what is needed to compete in what the author Tom Friedman calls the "Flat World."

But we are more than just academically strong. A recent study showed that Georgia Tech generates over $4 billion in annual economic impact each year in our state, and is responsible for 45,000 jobs for Georgia citizens. We rank among the top ten universities nationally in patents and are among the top five in research expenditures for those without a medical school. Only this past year, the Milken Institute, a respected think tank, cited Georgia Tech as fourth nationally in biotech startup spinoffs and in the past five years we created 52 new companies from the ideas generated in our research laboratories. This is critical to the creation of new jobs for the future of Georgia.

Today Georgia Tech has campus facilities in Atlanta and Savannah, and on-site operations in Ireland, France, Singapore and Shanghai. We are actively helping Georgia compete economically in all these countries. We also are providing opportunities for our students to learn about the "flat world" first hand, with over one third of them studying abroad before they graduate.

I could go on, because Georgia Tech is truly an exceptional university and there are more recognitions to cite, but let me bring this to closure by adding two more points. First, we are a good value to the state because the state only provides one fourth of our budget. We raise three fourths of it ourselves. Second, we are listed by Kiplinger Magazine as one of the nation's top 15 best values. This ranking is arrived at by comparing value to cost, and we are a low cost and high value institution. This is particularly true for Georgia residents who can access the HOPE scholarship as well as our cooperative education program. But in spite of our low cost, Georgia Tech has announced a new program that goes a step further – the Georgia Tech Promise. For any in-state student whose family makes less than $30,000 a year, we will cover the full cost of their education over and above the support provided by other scholarships the student might have. To date we have processed over 60 students who qualify in this year's freshman class, and the

average family income of this group is $19,000. We will be working to recruit students like these in the future, many of whom in the past thought they could not afford a Georgia Tech education. Our goal is to have no student unable to access Georgia Tech because of cost.

In closing, I think you can tell that I am excited about Georgia Tech and its future and honored to serve as its President. It is particularly gratifying to see the multiple ways in which Georgia Tech and Douglas are linked. But as I look to the future, I often reflect on the journey that took me from Douglas to where I am today. I am proud to have been born here and cite it as often as I can, because this community gave me the foundation that helped me face the challenges and realize the opportunities that arose along the way. Douglas is a great place to be from as well as to live in. I thank you for this chance to come to my hometown and share these thoughts with you.