

REMARKS BY GEORGIA TECH PRESIDENT G. WAYNE CLOUGH  
Alumni Association: "Georgia Tech Innovating Here and Now"  
February 11, 2004

It is a great pleasure to welcome such a large group of Atlanta area alumni to the new Georgia Tech Hotel and Conference Center at Technology Square. This new facility adds a wonderful new dimension to our ability to host large groups of people – much more comfortable than a tent on the front lawn.

You are part of the most active, supportive group of alumni of any public university in the nation. And as the Alumni Association has been in conversation with you and other Tech alumni over the past year or so, you have made it clear that you want more of a relationship with Georgia Tech than merely sending in a Roll Call check once a year, although we hope you will continue to do that. So this evening is part of our effort to build a deeper, more multi-faceted partnership with you. You are our personal ambassadors. You are the face of Georgia Tech in the companies where you work and the communities where you live. We want you to be in on the awesome things that are happening all across campus, and we know you will radiate that excitement throughout the metro Atlanta area.

Tonight we are going to focus on some of many exciting, innovative ideas that are being generated by our outstanding faculty. And I guarantee that you will wish you could come back as a student and sign up to do an undergraduate research project with one of the professors on our panel tonight.

Those of you who are at the same stage in life that I am, will remember that when we were students back in the 1960s, Georgia Tech had emerged as a noteworthy regional university in the South. The very first Tech Ph.D. had been awarded about a decade before, and sponsored research totaled more than a million dollars a year. Tech had about 5,400 students in those days, still mostly engineering majors, which put us first in the South and fourth in the nation in engineering enrollment.

Over the decades since then, Georgia Tech worked hard to move beyond regional status and win recognition as a national university. We were focused on what might be called "Harvard-ization." We were following a trail that had been blazed before us by schools like MIT and Harvard, and we were doing our best to emulate and imitate them. And it worked. The quality of our students and faculty increased, and our research enterprise expanded. We moved up steadily through the ranks in U.S. News and World Report until we were listed among the nation's top ten public universities and among the nation's top five engineering programs.

Today, our goal is to move beyond Harvard-ization. We want to define the technological university of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We want to become one of those few universities who blaze the trail. When people want to know what the next new thing is going to be, we want Georgia Tech to be the obvious place they look to find out. We want to build a solid reputation for being at the leading edge of the newest interdisciplinary fields; for discovering new knowledge and coming

up with new ideas; and for developing new technology that enhances the quality of life and addresses the problems our society faces.

And we are seeing our identity as a national leader taking shape. As president, I have been invited to bring the expertise of Georgia Tech to the national table. Woody Allen once said that “80 percent of success is showing up.” And it is true. Public policy leaders have traditionally turned to Harvard and MIT when they wanted expertise. Today, when they sit down with the members of PCAST – the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology – there at the table beside the president of MIT is the president of Georgia Tech. When they meet with the executive committee of the U.S. Council on Competitiveness, there, sitting beside the president of MIT, is the president of Georgia Tech.

This kind of visibility is helping us build an image as an institution that has expertise and ideas to contribute at the highest levels of science and technology policy. And it is a great honor and privilege for me to represent Georgia Tech in these national arenas. Most recently, I have been asked to join Sam Palmisano, the president and CEO of IBM, in co-chairing a National Initiative on Innovation sponsored by the Council on Competitiveness. And later this month, the working teams for this national initiative will gather right next door at the Georgia Tech Global Learning and Conference Center to begin our work.

But the reason that I have been given these national opportunities... the reason Georgia Tech’s leadership is increasingly sought after... is the outstanding work of our dynamic, world-class faculty. Our reputation as a leader in this age of technology is grounded in their endeavors. It is the cumulative expression of their individual ground-breaking research in leading-edge fields. They are “innovating here are now.”

This evening you are going to hear from five of those innovative faculty. They are all eminent scholars who have attracted international recognition and respect for their expertise and leading-edge research. And each one represents a dynamic field that is critical to our future well-being as a society. Their work is helping to drive Georgia Tech’s growing reputation as a center of innovation and a source of new ideas that change the world for the better, and we are privileged to have them on our faculty. I want to thank each one for taking time to be here with us this evening, and without further ado, I am going to ask Joe Irwin to introduce them to you.