

WELCOME BY GEORGIA TECH PRESIDENT G. WAYNE CLOUGH
College of Engineering Awards Dinner, Nov. 3, 2006

More than 40 years ago, Gordon Brown, who was dean of engineering at MIT at the time, defined engineering as follows: “Engineering is not merely knowing and being knowledgeable, like a walking encyclopedia; engineering is not merely analysis; engineering is not merely the possession of the capacity to get elegant solutions to non-existent engineering problems; engineering is practicing the art of the organized forcing of technological change.”

His words are even more true today than when he said them. In our global economy, the winners are those who practice “the art of the organized forcing of technological change.” As routine engineering work becomes commoditized and outsourced to locations where it can be done more cheaply, we face the challenge of educating engineers who are prepared to be leaders at the edge of technological change.

In addition to being a challenge, it is also an opportunity. At the same time as routine engineering tasks are being off-shored, society is looking for leaders who understand technology and can manage it creatively to shape a positive future. Society is looking for leaders who understand systems and can visualize causes and effects, so that important decisions have a minimum of unintended consequences.

There are incredible opportunities for engineers who have a global perspective, who understand sustainability, who have leadership and teamwork skills, and who are good communicators. If we give our students these abilities, they will be able to apply their engineering skills more broadly as leaders – in the field of engineering, of course, but also in a wide variety of other fields, from medicine to law, from business to politics.

Georgia Tech is in the business of educating engineers who are poised for leadership, and tonight we honor engineering alumni who have emerged as leaders. Their accomplishments reflect well on Georgia Tech and help to build our reputation for educating leaders. They provide important role models for our students. And most importantly, they are helping to make our world a better place to live.

We are proud to claim each one of our award winners as alumni. We are grateful for the leadership they provide, appreciative of their example, thankful for their support of Georgia Tech, and pleased to honor them on this special evening.

Congratulations to each one of the inductees into the Engineering Hall of Fame, the Academy of Distinguished Engineering Alumni, and the Council of Outstanding Young Engineering Alumni.