

Dr. Peterson
Institute Retirement Dinner

6-9 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2014, Historic Academy of Medicine

On behalf of Georgia Tech, welcome to our retirees and your special guests.

Congratulations to all of you on your retirement and thank you for your service to Georgia Tech. And a special thanks to family members for your support. Many times our jobs require that we go above and beyond, often requiring sacrifice on the part of our family and others closest to us.

Tonight we are celebrating the retirement of 100 Georgia Tech faculty and staff. As I do each year at this time, I can't help but reflect on all the mind power and experience that is going out the door. You might be impressed to know that you represent 2,200 years of service to the Georgia Institute of Technology, along with your historical knowledge.

To drive home the point that we live in a world of continual change, I sometimes tell our freshman students that much of what they learn during that first year will be obsolete by the time they graduate. Our world moves at breakneck speed. Tonight, we're honoring retirees who came to Georgia Tech in the 1960s, '70s, '80s, '90s, and in the 2000s. The changes you've seen since you started your work career are almost unimaginable.

It is impressive to see individuals like each of you who devoted the better part, if not all, of your career to one institution. This type of service provides a level of continuity that greatly benefits Georgia Tech and our students. Thank you for investing your career at Georgia Tech.

Three of you have been here 40 or more years. Seventeen have been here 31 years or longer, including five of you who have been here 36 years or longer. Leroy Emkin, who's here with a group of his STRUDL friends and fellow retirees, came to Georgia

Tech 45 years ago. In 1969, the year he started, Apollo 11 made the first manned voyage to the moon. Back on earth, the Woodstock music festival attracted more than 350,000 people. The median U.S. household income, in current dollars, was \$8,486. A first-class stamp cost six cents.

Annette Gaddis, who worked at GTRI, and Jeanette Collins, who was a library security information officer, are twins who didn't start at the same time here, but they're going out together.

Toni Marks was an accountant, so she was good at keeping up with numbers. That came in handy when she installed a desktop retirement clock to count down the days, weeks and months leading up to her final day.

Amelia Gambino, who retired last January as assistant vice president for News and Campus Communications, helped direct our communications strategy during the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. And as an enthusiastic apiarist, or beekeeper, she kept her Institute Communications associates supplied year-round with honey.

No matter how many years you have been a part of Georgia Tech, we are where we are today because of you and others like you who have devoted their careers or portions of their careers to our Institute.

You all have interesting Tech stories and memories, and I am looking forward to Dr. Bras and Steve Swant sharing a bit about everyone tonight.

Whether you know it or not, you have made an impact on hundreds, if not thousands of lives. Your institutional knowledge, your expertise in your fields, and the relationships you've developed are irreplaceable. It could be large projects that took months, if not years, to complete.

Or, it could be the little things you did as you went about doing your job on a daily basis. You'll never know how an encouraging word, a note, an e-mail, or taking time to help or mentor a co-worker, or student or representing Georgia Tech to a visitor, a parent, or another community member made an impact on someone's life.

You're leaving something very valuable behind. You've all contributed to Georgia Tech's success. We didn't get to a national top-10 ranking among public research universities and an international reputation for excellence without a lot of hard work from faculty and staff throughout the campus.

As you know, Georgia Tech is a special place. It should make you feel proud to know that you have been a part of an Institute where students are preparing to be leaders and innovators, and we're addressing some of society's greatest challenges, including everything from finding cures for diseases to developing solutions for energy and clean water. Somehow, your work will go on, but the real legacy that you are leaving is people — the lives you have touched, the difference you have made.

And let me clarify. You are not really leaving Georgia Tech. Some of you, in fact, are staying around part-time. I know you will be watching with interest, coming back to campus for special events, and serving as an ambassador for Georgia Tech everywhere you go in this next chapter of your life. Congratulations, and thank you for making a lifetime investment in the people of Georgia Tech.