

REMARKS BY GEORGIA TECH PRESIDENT G. WAYNE CLOUGH
Dedication of the Campus Recreation Center, September 29, 2004

Thank you, Michael.

I returned to Georgia Tech as president in the fall of 1994 – just ahead of the back-hoes that descended on campus to dig the holes for the Olympic swimming pool and a number of other new facilities that would enable the Tech campus to serve as the Olympic Village and host the swimming, diving, water polo, and wrestling events.

Georgia Tech was the beneficiary of major improvements to our campus by the organizing committee for the Atlanta Games – from new dorms to a 1,700-mile fiberoptic network to the aquatic center. And we are honored to welcome Billy Payne, who was truly the prime mover of the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games. Billy, please stand.

I also want to pay tribute to my predecessor, Pat Crecine, who was integrally involved in helping Atlanta attract the Olympics and giving Georgia Tech the opportunity to serve as the Olympic Village, which brought such tremendous development to our campus. Pat was invited to this ceremony and was unable to attend because of a long-planned overseas trip. He sends his best wishes.

The original Olympic Aquatic Center did an admirable job of serving the needs of the Games. The swimmers loved it and dozens of records were set. But over the next few years it became clear that something had to be done if it was to serve as a long-term Olympic legacy for Georgia Tech and the City of Atlanta. Even though the pool and the viewing stands met the requirements for intercollegiate, national and even international swim meets, the fact that the facility was outdoors kept it from being used for this purpose. We were not able to host meets, and our own swimming and diving team could only use it on a seasonal basis.

In addition, over the next few years following the Olympics, we began to see the negative effects of exposure to the weather on the facility. It was obvious that something had to be done to stop the decline of the facility and expand its usability. At the same time, as Dan Papp noted, Georgia Tech's recreational facilities were woefully inadequate for our growing student body.

Just prior to the Olympics, Georgia Tech had crafted a new Strategic Plan, which called for the innovative facilities that would enable us to define the technological university of the 21st century. So immediately after the Olympics, we took stock of our physical campus and developed a new Campus Master Plan. Our goal was to leverage and build on the physical improvements the Olympics had given us to our long-term benefit.

One of the projects in our Campus Master Plan was to enclose the Olympic Aquatic Center in a new and expanded recreation facility for our campus community. Today we are celebrating the completion of one of the most impressive recreation centers on any campus in the nation.

It also has a special function that you can't see unless you fly over it. On the roof is the world's largest grid-connected roof-top PV system of solar panels. So that even as Tech folks are working out and having a good time below, the solar panels are generating power and providing an opportunity for energy-related research overhead.

It has been fun for me to drop by unannounced from time to time and see the large number of people who are using the Campus Rec Center. I enjoy seeing the smiles on the faces of students. And I enjoy seeing faculty and staff bringing their families with them to take advantage of this beautiful facility, especially the Crawford Pool.

This incredible rec center would not be here without the leadership of a number of folks from the Georgia Tech community, and I would like to take this opportunity to recognize them. First, Senior Vice President Bob Thompson and the design and construction team from Georgia Tech. Would all of you please stand.

This impressive new facility has no state funding in it. Our students, faculty, staff, and alumni are helping to pay for its construction through a user fee structure. In fact, a key component was the willingness of our students to adopt a student activity fee structure that would support this facility in advance of its actual construction.

Tyler Brown, whose death in Iraq is still painfully fresh for those of us who knew him, was the Student Government Association president at the time. I remember my discussions with Tyler about this project and how he stepped up to exert his leadership along with his fellow SGA officers to work on behalf of all Georgia Tech to see this through to completion. In the end, our student government voted in support of the fee, so it is fitting to remember him and pay tribute to his leadership in bringing us to this day. And like father like son – Tyler's father Carey, was the student body president who led the charge for the original SAC facility in his day.

The graduate students were a little less enthusiastic about the fee – not the facility, just the fee – but their leaders also were positive contributors to the cause and I would like to recognize the leadership of Graduate Student SGA President Caroline Clower. In addition, Marc Galindo and David Skinner held the SGA presidencies when the groundwork was laid for the new fee structure, which kept the project on course, and later J.R. Spriggle carried the torch when he was the SGA president and the new fee structure went into effect. We would not be here today if were not for the leadership of our great students. To all we say thanks. And to Tyler, who we know is looking down on us today with a big smile, we are grateful.

Another critical component in supporting the Campus Rec Center was generous donors who were willing to contribute to the cost. At this time I would like to recognize the major donors to this facility and ask them to stand:

- Wade and Mary Lu Mitchell
- Tommy Toles
- Jim Terry and Mark Root, representing the Coca-Cola Company
- Mark Dash and Carey Brown, who were graduate and undergraduate SGA presidents when the original SAC was planned. They gathered a small group of former student leaders to coordinate a fund-raising effort for the Crawford Leisure

Pool, which is named in honor of Vernon and Helen Crawford. Vernon was a long-time faculty member who went on to become Chancellor of the University System of Georgia. Would that group of alumni please stand?

We also had major in-kind gifts of equipment from Life Fitness and water treatment systems from BioLab. And I would like to ask the representatives from these two companies to stand.

We are deeply grateful to each one of you for your support in making this fabulous new facility possible.

Finally, it is my distinct pleasure to proclaim today Campus Recreation Center Day on the Georgia Tech campus, and I would like Michael Edwards to come forward and accept this proclamation to that effect.

(PRESENT PROCLAMATION)

And now I am proud to introduce the Student Government Association President Amy Phuong, and Graduate Student Government Association President Kasi David, who will speak on behalf of the student body.