6:30 - 7 p.m. Chimes play

7:10 p.m. Welcome

Good evening. It my great pleasure to welcome everyone to the official dedication of the Georgia Tech Olympic Plaza.

The Plaza you see tonight is the culmination of much teamwork, creativity, and generosity—and a beautiful symbol of the dramatic transformation that has taken place at Georgia Tech over the last five years.

In addition, it creates a sense of place, something all universities share, and it creates that sense of place in the heart of what will become the Olympic Festival area.

Three Georgia Tech alumni, as well as the classes of 1943 and 1953, combined their collective visions with $1.7 million in private donations to develop our new Olympic Plaza. So, not only is the Plaza both beautiful and useful, it is also a legacy from our great alumni to our students.

One year ago, the area we are now proudly call the Olympic Plaza consisted of trampled grass and concrete. Today, as you can see, these seven acres contain much more.

For example, consider the Alumni Fountain with its crescent-shaped waterfall that can double as a performing arts stage and a 300-foot amphitheater. A plaque within the amphitheater will
honor those members of the Class of 1953 who lost their lives in the Korean war. I would like to thank George Morris from the Class of 1953 as well as the Reunion Classes of 1953 and 1943 whose monetary donations helped build this wonderful structure.

I would also like to thank Richard Kessler, a 1968 graduate of industrial engineering. Richard was the donor and driving force behind the very visible structure behind me, the new 80-ft. high Kessler Campanile. Not only did Richard help through a generous donation, he also selected the wonderful artist to create the structure, Richard Hill.

Reminiscent of the Tech Tower, the Kessler Campanile provides light and musical entertainment—and graces Georgia Tech’s new graphic identity and logo.

It is now my great pleasure to introduce three men who had much to do with the successful completion of this venture—men who saw a way they could help Georgia Tech and didn’t hesitate to shoulder the responsibility. Those men are Alvin Ferst, an industrial management graduate from 1943 and chairman of the 1943 reunion committee; Jim Bell, a mechanical engineering graduate from 1953 and co-chairman of the 1953 40th reunion committee, and Richard Kessler.

Gentlemen...

7:33 Chimes play Alma Mater

7:34
To commemorate this moment as well as the time and effort put
into our construction of the Olympic Plaza, a time capsule was placed into the top of the campanile. A sampling of the items within the capsule were:

- Tech’s 1992 Master Plan, which included plans for the Plaza;
- Newspaper articles on the Reunion Giving Classes’ selection of the Plaza as their class project;
- From artist Richard Hill, an ATO pin from his father, T. Gardner Hill, an 1939 Georgia Tech aerospace engineering graduate.
- And also from Richard Hill, a quote: “Try not to let your education interfere with your learning. Remember that it is more important to see the light than to know how fast it travels.”

I don’t know if our chemistry professors would agree with you on that one, Richard, but it is a nice quote just the same.

Now, I would like to introduce IsyE Professor Emeritus Cecil Johnson, who is going to read us a letter he wrote to Tech’s most famous, although not most visible, graduate, George P. Burdell.

(If he is unable to attend, you will read the letter yourself.)

7:38
Thank you Cecil. It is now my pleasure to introduce Russ Chandler, industrial engineering class of 67, a man who has long been a strong benefactor of Georgia Tech, and who, in less than 70 days, will serve as steal my campus parking spot and serve as the mayor of the Georgia Tech Olympic Village.

Russ...
On behalf of Georgia Tech, I officially dedicate the Georgia Tech Olympic Plaza. Everyone is invited to stay and enjoy the music and join us for dinner. Thank you for your presence here tonight.