Thank you, Bob, and thanks to the Class of 1934 for providing the support that makes the Distinguished Professor Award possible.

Earlier this year Georgia Tech accomplished something that raised eyebrows around the nation. It is unusual for technological research university to pay attention to excellence in teaching, let alone achieve it, but Georgia Tech won the 1999 Hesburgh Award – the top national award for outstanding undergraduate teaching.

The Hesburgh Award is proof that we understand that our faculty are the heartbeat of the education process, and that the key to achieving excellence as a university is outstanding faculty.

Our alumni understand that, too. Their lives were changed by the outstanding faculty they encountered here. And they have stepped forward to support a variety of programs that nurture the teaching skills of our faculty and lift up outstanding faculty for special recognition.

The Distinguished Professor Award is perhaps the most prestigious honor a faculty member can receive at Georgia Tech. And it is my distinct pleasure to present it this year to Dr. James C. Powers.

Jim Powers is the “founding father” of biochemistry at Georgia Tech. He got his PhD in organic chemistry from MIT, then served on the faculties of UCLA and the University of Washington before arriving here in 1970 as the very first professor in the new biochemistry program Tech was hoping to start. At the time, there was some doubt as to whether biochemistry would really materialize as a discipline in its own right, but everyone agreed that if it didn’t, Dr. Powers would still be a valuable addition to the chemistry faculty.

However, Jim worked tirelessly to develop this new discipline at both the undergraduate and the graduate level, expanding both the courses and the faculty. The program’s strength as a discipline today is due to his efforts, and any recognition of Georgia Tech’s expertise in it is due, at least in part, to some 140 articles Jim Powers has had published in refereed journals.

His students, from undergraduates to post-doctoral fellows, are unanimous in reporting that he is uncompromising in his expectations of excellence, but at the same time deeply concerned that his students comprehend the material. He is known for his engaging lectures, his calm and clear presentation that makes the most complicated subjects understandable, and his willingness to answer all questions.

In addition to being the “father of biochemistry” at Georgia Tech, Professor Powers is also known to Tech students as “the mountain goat in biochemist’s clothing.” Through Outdoor Recreation Georgia Tech, he has led groups of up to 20 students on backpacking trips all across the nation that have ranged from weekends to three weeks in length.
He is an experienced mountaineer and a certified ice and snow climber. And mountain climbing with him is considered the ultimate experience that ORGT has to offer.

As Jim Powers approaches his 30\textsuperscript{th} anniversary at Georgia Tech next year, he is loved and revered as Regents Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry and as mountain goat extraordinaire, who is an inspiration to students both in the classroom and on the trail. Students half his age are awed both by his academic expertise and by his daily multi-mile runs, but whichever the context, they all know he genuinely cares about them. It is my privilege to present James C. Powers with the 1999 Distinguished Professor Award.