ENGINEERING ALUMNI AWARDS INDUCTION CEREMONY

October 22, 1999

I am pleased to welcome all of you to this sixth annual celebration of the outstanding achievements of Georgia Tech’s alumni in engineering. I especially extend my personal congratulations to this year’s special award winners and inductees into the Engineering Hall of Fame, the Academy of Distinguished Engineering Alumni and the Council of Outstanding Young Engineering Alumni.

I remember what a thrill it was for me to return to campus as part of the first class to be inducted into the Academy, so I have a personal sense of what this honor means. As I read through the biographical sketches of the leaders who have been chosen for induction this year, I began to feel pretty lucky to have made it into that first group. The level of excellence of our inductees seems to keep getting higher and higher.

It is the opposite of what often happens with honorary societies – they induct all the obvious people in the first couple of years, then they can’t find anybody else to honor without lowering their standards.

Here at the Georgia Tech College of Engineering, however, the standards just keep going up. The growing quality of the inductees reflects the growing quality of our alumni, which has resulted from the growing quality of the College itself.

Last spring, U.S. News & World Report ranked Georgia Tech’s College of Engineering third in the nation, behind only MIT and Stanford University, which made all of us very proud. Of course you have to take these rankings with a grain of salt. Funny little things that have little to do with the quality of your program can bump you up or down from year to year. But when you look at the long haul, you can see the real significance of Georgia Tech’s ranking demonstrated in a history of steady improvement.

A decade ago Georgia Tech was ranked in the teens, and proud to be there. But over the past 10 years, we have emerged as the only engineering program from among that second-tier group to move steadily upward, first into the top ten and then into the top five.

Our goal is that Georgia Tech’s College of Engineering will establish itself as one of those few top-flight, world-class institutions that other engineering colleges will adopt as their model and want to learn from. And as you can see, that goal is in sight.

We also want the engineers we graduate to set the pace across the nation and around the world in using technology to create an enriched, prosperous and sustainable society. And each one of you is helping us to fulfill that vision with your outstanding accomplishments.

Your achievements reflect well on Georgia Tech, and we are very proud to claim you as our alumni. In return, we are doing our very best to make the Georgia Tech College of Engineering an institution that you as alumni will brag about.
So congratulations to each of our special award winners and inductees into the Engineering Hall of Fame, the Academy of Distinguished Engineering Alumni and the Council of Outstanding Young Engineering Alumni.

We honor you tonight with this special recognition, and we honor you every day with our efforts to make this College of Engineering one of the very best educational institutions in the world.