I’m pleased to be here, and i join you in congratulating John Hannabach on his retirement June 30th and thanking him for his service to Georgia Tech over the past 11 years.

If the idea of retirement makes you feel old, John, just remember that it is all relative. The average age of the Rolling Stones is now greater than the average age of the top executives at General Motors.

Actually, John is leaving Georgia Tech because he was offered a promotion. His wife said that if he came home, he could be senior vice president. That was an offer Georgia Tech simply could not match, and one that John simply could not refuse.

Running Georgia Tech’s Career Services Office is a little like playing poker. You know what you have to do to win… but a lot of the circumstances are beyond your control. You have to play with the cards you’re dealt. And the challenge is use them as best you can to move toward your long-term goals.

The hand that John Hannabach was dealt 11 years ago was not Jacks or better. It contained an old restaurant and a limited budget. It was certainly not what he was used to at GE. But he has been so creative and resourceful in playing that hand, that the Career Services Office he leaves behind is the envy of other universities across the nation.

Someone once said that there is only one thing that is rarer than ability, and that is the ability to recognize ability. That is the gift that John Hannabach has given to Georgia Tech students – the ability to see each one as an individual, to recognize their unique talents, and to help them reach their goals.

John was recently named 1999 Friend of the Student by the Undergraduate Student Government Association. In choosing him, SGA cited his technological improvements, which have made Georgia Tech’s Career Services Office one of the most technologically advanced in the nation. InterviewTrak, an online interview scheduling service, allows students and employers to interact directly on the Internet and by E-mail. It not only makes scheduling easier, but also frees up the Career Office staff to focus on students’ needs.

And John has led the way in doing that, impressing students with his willingness to counsel them individually… helping them with resumes, giving them advice about jobs, companies and salaries, and tailoring his advice to match each student’s particular situation and personal goals.

His personal attention to students has made such a difference in their lives that they continue to call him years after graduating, asking his advice about promotions and job changes. You might want to get an unlisted phone number, John, because they’ll probably continue to call you at home after June 30th.
John has also been very active with students outside the Career Services Office. He has served as advisor to a number of student organizations and attended the meetings of many more, speaking to them on issues that range from ethics to interview skills.

He has helped to enhance Georgia Tech’s national reputation, by serving as president of the Southeastern Association of Colleges and Employers, and serving on the board of directors of the National Association of Colleges and Employers. And he is a popular speaker to corporate human resource audiences on recruiting and hiring.

Thank you, John, for the time, energy, vision and outstanding service you have given us the past 11 years. Your calm smile and reliable advice has gotten the careers of countless students off to a good start. On their behalf, we send you off to enjoy your retirement with our deep gratitude and very best wishes.