

Notes from the President

2016 Georgia Tour Blog Day One - June 20

06/21/2016

Seven years ago when Val and I first arrived at Georgia Tech, we wanted to spend some time in the summer touring the state on behalf of Georgia Tech as a way of getting acquainted with the state's citizens, our current and prospective students, and listening to the people of Georgia to see how we could better serve them and their needs. We also wanted to visit some of the businesses that Georgia Tech had assisted or helped to create through our statewide regional offices. Our experiences that first summer were so valuable that we have made it an annual event, one that we look forward to every year.

Previous tours (2009-15) have covered more than 5,100 miles, with stops in more than 40 cities and nearly every one of Georgia's 159 counties. This year our tour is a little different from the others, each of which took us fairly far afield from our Atlanta campus. After an opening day in the energetic middle Georgia city of Macon, we'll tour selected cities and towns in metro Atlanta. This year's Georgia Tour will cover 570 miles through 21 counties, with 24 events in 15 cities and towns.

We headed out on our eighth Georgia Tour early Monday June 20, and traveled south to Griffin, Georgia, to have breakfast with University System of Georgia Regent Tommy Hopkins, who represents the Third District. His wife, Sara, made a wonderful breakfast. Regent Hopkins is the Board of Regents' current vice chairman. From there, we were off to Dickey Farms in Musella to visit with State Representative Robert Dickey at Dickey Farms (pictured here with President and Mrs. Peterson), which is home to Georgia's oldest continuously operating peach packinghouse. While there, we toured the packing house and some of the orchards. Dickey Farms have been growing peaches since 1900; he also grows pine trees. Rep. Dickey's son is working in the family business as the fifth generation. With over 4,000 acres, 1,000 of which are planted in peaches, it is quite an operation. We finished off the visit with some delicious peach ice cream and peach cobbler!

In the afternoon, we had a very enjoyable lunch with Regent Larry Walker, his wife, Janice, and his son, Senator Larry Walker III, and his wife, Adrienne, at the Perfect Pear in Perry — try saying that quickly several times in succession! We then split up with Val, who went on a tour of the Center for Collaborative Journalism while I did an interview in the offices of *The Macon Telegraph*. After a late-afternoon meeting with Georgia District 18 Senator John F. Kennedy, we enjoyed a reception with over 100 local alumni in Macon at The Blacksmith Shop, which used to be a working blacksmith shop. After joining former basketball coach Bobby Cremins at the Bobby Dodd Golf Tournament, our new men's basketball coach, Josh Pastner, spoke to the group, and his enthusiasm was contagious as he described his plans for the Georgia Tech basketball program.

From there we were off to McDonough to rest and get ready for tomorrow!

G. P. "Bud" Peterson
President, Georgia Tech