Notes from the President
Georgia Institute of Technology
G.P. “Bud” Peterson, President
Georgia Tech Participates in Events Surrounding Aer Lingus College Football Classic in Ireland
09/01/16

DAY 1: Wednesday, Aug. 31

Val and I headed to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport at around 4:30 Tuesday afternoon to catch our flight to Dublin. The flight was full of Georgia Tech fans and supporters and also the football teams from the Marist School and Blessed Trinity Catholic High School. As it turns out, in addition to the Boston College-Georgia Tech game on Saturday, three Atlanta high school teams will be playing here in Dublin on Friday, Sept. 2. The first of the three games pits Westminster against the Community School of Naples, Florida, at 11 a.m. Dublin time; then Blessed Trinity faces St. Peter’s Prep from New Jersey at 2 p.m. Dublin time; and the Marist School takes on Belen Jesuit from Miami at 5 p.m. Dublin time.

The flight was fairly uneventful, about seven hours long, so not too bad. When we landed the sun was shining, and several of the locals commented on what a wonderful day it was and indicated that it was not all that common, so we should take advantage of it. The thing that struck me as we came in on approach for the landing was how green everything was, which makes it easy to understand why Ireland is referred to as the “Emerald Isle.” Johnny Cash sang about Ireland’s beautiful countryside in “40 Shades of Green,” a song he wrote in 1961, but the original credit for the term usually goes to an Irish poet, William Drennan, 1754-1820.

When we arrived at the hotel our room was not ready, so we walked around the city some and visited the shops. Along the way, we saw loads of Tech fans and supporters out enjoying the beautiful day. Unfortunately, the sunshine did not last long, and it started raining.

While Georgia Tech’s football game against Boston College is the centerpiece for our trip to Ireland, there is a broad range of related activities planned. This evening we will be attending a welcome reception and dinner for Boston College and Georgia Tech hosted by the Naughton family at the historic Stackallan House with Georgia Governor and Mrs. Deal and Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed. Martin Naughton is an Irish entrepreneur who founded Glen Electric in 1973 and has grown it into the world’s largest manufacturer of domestic heating appliances. The Stackallan House was built around 1715 and is one of the very few surviving classical Irish
country houses from the early 18th century. Because Dublin is five hours ahead of Atlanta, our dinner started at 4 p.m. Dublin time, which means it was 11 a.m. in Atlanta when we arrived at the reception. The house was beautiful and still has many original features and materials, such as the slate roof, molded window surrounds, and string courses.

Over the course of the next several days, we will be participating in a number of events focused on economic development. Following a welcome breakfast tomorrow morning, I will be participating in a panel discussion entitled “International Collaborations in Education, Research and Innovation,” along with Father William Leahy, president of Boston College, and Patrick Prendergast, provost and president of Trinity College. Val and I will then join Governor and Mrs. Deal for a reception and lunch hosted by Kevin O’Malley, the U.S. ambassador to Ireland. We will then travel to watch the Georgia Tech Marching Band compete in the “Battle of the Bands” at the Malahide Castle and Gardens in County Dublin, then on to a reception and dinner with some of our alums.

Just a closing note — while on the trip over, I received a wonderful message from one of our alums who lives in Alabama. It turns out his son was recently diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, and yesterday in the mail he received a letter from Matthew Jordan, a quarterback on the Georgia Tech football team. Matthew told his son that he could still reach his dreams of playing college football. Not sure what all Matthew said to the young man or how he even knew him, but the dad told me that “his son was on cloud nine after reading the letter.” He just wanted someone at Georgia Tech to know what a “first-class person that [we] have on the football team,” and how surprised he was that a college football player would “take time out of his crazy schedule to write a letter to someone that he has not seen before or talked to is first class in [his] book.” Apparently his son commented at dinner that Auburn is still his favorite team, but now his second-favorite team is Georgia Tech. When I talked to the football team this past week, one of the things I told them was how proud I am of the way they represent Georgia Tech both on and off the field. Gotta make you proud to be a Yellow Jacket!!

We’ll post a blog each day to give Yellow Jacket fans the chance to hear about this great way to open the 2016-2017 season.

G.P. "Bud" Peterson

Photos from Day 1:
Georgia Tech's President G.P. "Bud" Peterson, left, and Provost Rafael L. Bras, speak with Father William Leahy, president of Boston College at a welcome reception hosted by the Naughton family at the historic Stackallan House. *(Photo credit: First Lady Val Peterson)*

Guests from Boston College and Georgia Tech tour the grounds of historic Stackallan House ahead of a welcome reception and dinner hosted by the Naughton family. *(Photo credit: First Lady Val Peterson)*

The Yellow Jackets will face Boston College in Aviva Stadium to open the season on Saturday, Sept. 3. *(Photo: Georgia Tech Athletics - Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets Facebook page)*