DAY 3: Friday, Sept. 2, 2016

My day began with the IDA Ireland Breakfast hosted at the Royal College of Physicians building, which opened in 1864, while Val spent time with the First Lady of Georgia, Mrs. Sandra Deal, for a small breakfast that she hosted and then a tour of the Early Learning Center. IDA Ireland, according to its own description, “is a noncommercial, semi-state body that promotes foreign investment into Ireland and partners with potential and existing investors to help them establish or expand their operations in Ireland.” The session’s highlight was a talk by Minister of Jobs, Enterprise, and Innovation, Mary Mitchell O’Connor, who talked about Ireland’s position with respect to the “Apple issue.” She spoke forcefully about Ireland’s position on the determination of its taxation rate and clearly stated that it intended to appeal the EU’s decision on behalf of Ireland. The discussions with the other participants, including Martin Shanahan, CEO of IDA Ireland, were informative and provided a helpful perspective about the advantages of investment in Ireland.

Georgia Tech’s Yellow Jackets and Boston College’s Eagles weren’t the only American schools bringing their football teams to Dublin. We were not able to take in any of the action as Atlanta’s Marist, Blessed Trinity, and Westminster high schools played American high school teams from other parts of our country, but we heard they went well and that it was a beautiful day for football. Some of the Georgia Tech players from Marist and Westminster on our roster were anxious to hear the outcome of those games. Our fans will remember placekicker Harrison Butker, No. 87, a senior from Westminster who made some momentous kicks in his first three years at Tech.

Georgia Tech and Coca-Cola, our North Avenue neighbor, have enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship, so it was gratifying to see Coca-Cola CEO Muhtar Kent, a great friend to the Institute, as the keynote speaker at the Boston College CEO Club Luncheon in the historic Mansion House, official residence of Dublin’s Lord Mayor since 1715. The Governor and Mrs. Deal, along with Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed, were all in attendance along with about 300 CEOs and other business men and women. As always, Muhtar was enlightening and insightful. In his remarks, he talked about his history with Ireland and some of his fondest experiences. Muhtar was followed at the podium by a last-minute addition, Minister Mary Mitchell O’Connor, who again talked about Ireland’s position with respect to the “Apple issue.” It strikes me that the timing of this game and the associated events could not have been better for Ireland. With the
recent vote in Britain to exit the EU, Ireland is the only native English-speaking country in the European Union, making Dublin a very attractive place for business. The week’s activities focused on innovation and economic development and provided an excellent opportunity for so many Americans to see firsthand the welcoming business climate here in Ireland and the warmth of the people!

After that formal, dignified event, our next stop was the Georgia Tech Pep Rally in Parliament Square at Trinity College. It was a wild and crazy event with a packed house. We felt like we were home again as the Georgia Tech band, cheerleaders, dance team, and Buzz pumped up an already excited crowd of Yellow Jackets. Some of the players showed up and spoke to the crowd, as did I. Derrick Moore really lathered up the crowd with his passionate leading of some energetic chants. This was the first official event for our new Georgia Tech announcer, Andy Demetra. The crowd gave him an enthusiastic welcome, and he rose to the occasion.

We then made our way over to Christchurch for a reception for donors and special guests. After they enjoyed listening to live Irish music in a pit outside the church, the oldest structure in Dublin, we were invited down the stairs, under the church to the crypt! The dimly lit catacombs went on and on and on. It was just unbelievable, and certainly the most unusual venue we have ever had for a gathering of our alumni. Folks were able to view all kinds of religious artifacts on the walls and in cases as they wound their way to the back of the crypt. Our guests enjoyed food and beverage in a very unique place! They were thrilled to be there.

We still had a couple of more events on our calendar before the evening was over. First was a reception for our European alumni. It was held in a local pub and was packed wall-to-wall with people, mostly folks from Georgia Tech. Not sure what the numbers were, but it seemed like the Tech fans in Dublin far outnumbered those from Boston College. From there, it was on to the Civil & Environmental Engineering Alumni Reception, hosted by Dr. Reginald DesRoches, the Karen and John Huff School Chair and Professor. Once again, a packed house with tons of Tech folks all over the place in a different part of Dublin.

From there we headed home to get some rest before the football game tomorrow. Seeing all the dyed-in-the-wool Yellow Jackets today and sensing their excitement almost makes me wish we were kicking off right now! Almost … it’s been a long day, and we need to rest up to get ready to pull for our guys tomorrow!

G.P. "Bud" Peterson

(Photo above: Georgia Tech alum Tom Noonan (ME '83), left, stands with President Peterson, wife Kim Noonan (IM '83), and Erin and Karl Dasher (IE ’93). Photo credit: First Lady Val Peterson)

Photos from Day 3:
Brendan Carr, Lord Mayor of Dublin, center, is presented with a gift from President Peterson and First Lady Val Peterson.
Live music is played outside of Christchurch, the oldest structure in Dublin.