Our final award this evening is the Dean’s Appreciation Award. In the program this evening, we trace a history of liberal arts at Georgia Tech, beginning in 1888. We take considerable pride, in fact, in there having always been, through one configuration or another, an interweaving of the technical with the liberal arts at Georgia Tech.

Though the liberal arts have often been overshadowed by the more visible and prestigious engineering vanguard – there have long been leaders and colleagues at Georgia Tech who have understood that “the technical MAN,” and indeed, the technical age of humankind must be informed by the knowledge, expertise, understanding, expressiveness, and perspectives of the liberal arts as human-centered enterprises.
The honoree this evening is a person who understands this necessity in the very fiber of his being, and he has moved well beyond ordinary understanding to act—with great vision, energy, and generosity. His advocacy, engagement, and investments are enriching the liberal arts at Georgia Tech every day and in many, many ways, with the pinnacle of his impact being in the ways that he enables quite un-paralleled experiences for students, faculty, and all of us at Georgia Tech. In the very best tradition of Georgia Tech and Ivan Allen College, he is a man who crosses and re-crosses boundaries and carves out mechanisms for others to do the same and more.

Our awardee is Bruce McEver. Bruce earned an engineering degree at Georgia Tech in 1966, but went on to a stellar career in business and finance at such entities as Bessemer Securities, Chemical Bank, Blyth Eastman Dillman, and the Paine Webber Group. In 1983, he founded Berkshire Capital. As CEO of Berkshire, he innovated the concept of providing independent merger, acquisition, and strategic advisory services for investment managers and securities firms.
In his spare time, he earned an MBA from Harvard Business School and, most recently with a remarkable dedication to life-long learning and an evolution of commitment, he also earned a Master of Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School, and he is a published poet.

Bruce has been a great friend and supporter, enabling Georgia Tech and the Ivan Allen College to reach beyond the ordinary. He established twenty years ago the Poetry@Tech program and the McEver Chair in Poetry – creating the unique claim at Georgia Tech of the McEver Chair being one of only twenty-two endowed chairs in poetry in the whole country—with, in point of fact, another one of the 22 (the Bourne Chair) now being here as well, so with Bruce’s leadership we have the distinction at Georgia Tech of having 2 endowed chairs in poetry.

Bruce also endowed the McEver Professorship in Engineering and Liberal Arts, and for a decade has co-led the McEver Program seminars and regularly co-teaches in the program with Ken Knoespel, who holds the McEver Professorship.
If those accomplishments were not enough, in 2014, Bruce envisioned and provided financial support for yet another boundary breaking program here at Georgia Tech – our new Leadership and Multi-faith Program (LAMP), a joint initiative between the Ivan Allen College and the Candler School of Theology at Emory University.

By all measures, then, Bruce is a long-time friend to this college whose ideals and vision enriches and elevates the liberal arts at Georgia Tech as a 21st century enterprise, during a crucial time in history when the liberal arts are having to define themselves as worthy and relevant in the wider discussion of education. How fortunate we are to have Bruce and his wise counsel as a member of the Ivan Allen College Advisory Board.

Our views of Bruce are anchored in admiration, respect, inspiration, and gratitude, as illustrated by the voices and experiences of colleagues and friends.
Bruce, in honor of your steadfast and ever-growing support and friendship for the liberal arts at Georgia Tech, for the Ivan Allen College, and for all that you do to enrich the education and intellectual life of students here on campus, I am pleased to present you the 2015 Dean’s Appreciation Award.

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