

# ATLANTA-TBILISI SISTER CITY COMMITTEE

“BRINGING TOGETHER THE TWO GEORGIA’S”

## INTRODUCTION:

At the Committee’s February 14, 2008 meeting, General Thomas McCollough and the Committee asked me to serve as your Chairman. I accept this challenge with the utmost humility, and look forward to working with you. A newsletter such as this one will precede each of our quarterly meetings and will be one way of communicating among and from the Committee. In this first edition, I thought it appropriate to introduce myself and our Committee’s newest activities.

An attorney by profession, my relationship with Georgia began when my law firm was unexpectedly asked to host Georgian attorneys through the Open World Program in the Spring of 2007. We introduced these bright, young lawyers to our legal system and quickly embraced them and their culture. In November of 2007, I then had the privilege of meeting leaders here in Atlanta who have been instrumental in impacting Georgia militarily, politically and economically. I was personally and positively moved and resolved to work with and for the people of Georgia.

As your Chairman, I look forward to helping you continue your work for Georgia, and to building upon the tradition and history of the 20 year partnership between our two great cities. We are already taking initial steps to that end by developing a strategic plan to focus our efforts and recruiting an advisory board to guide the committee in its endeavors. We welcome your input on these plans, and I thank you for your confidence.

With gratitude,

John E. Hall, Jr.

For a copy of the strategic plan, contact Cheri Dyer at [cdyer@hbss.net](mailto:cdyer@hbss.net).



## ATSCC CELEBRATES IT’S 20TH ANNIVERSARY



The Atlanta-Tbilisi Sister City Committee is celebrating it’s 20th anniversary in 2008 and was recognized by Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin at an awards dinner on March 12th.

### Inside This Issue:

- ◆ ATSCC Hosts Georgian Educators
- ◆ ATSCC to Host Georgian Lawyers in April
- ◆ Spotlight On: The Georgia National Guard State Partnership Program
- ◆ Meeting Reminder: The next scheduled meeting of the ATSCC is April 24th, 2008

**Reminder!**

Next ATSCC Committee Meeting is at 6:30 on April 24th. We will meet at the offices of Hall, Booth, Smith and Slover, located at 1180 West Peachtree St., Suite 900, Atlanta 30309. Call 404-954-5000 for directions.

## ATSCC HOSTS GEORGIAN EDUCATORS

From March 15-22, the Atlanta-Tbilisi Sister City Committee hosted a delegation of Georgian educators for a visit sponsored by the Open World Leadership Program. The primary purpose of their visit was to learn more about higher education fundraising and endowments. They had a very full week, meeting with leaders at the University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, Georgia State, Emory, Kennesaw State and Morehouse College.

They had the opportunity to meet Governor Sonny Perdue, visit with our Supreme Court Justices, toured the state capitol and the Georgia Aquarium. They visited with the GA National Guard and were treated to a behind the scene tour of Dobbins AFB. The GA National Guard's ties to the country of Georgia through the State Partnership Program were explained in detail by top officials. They sampled ample local cuisine at such restaurants as the Varsity, Merry Mac's, Manuel's Tavern and even the Big Chicken.

The ATSCC hosted a dinner in their honor at the Blue Ridge Grill in Buckhead, sponsored by Hall, Booth, Smith & Slover, P.C. Those who attended included Jim Wooten (AJC), Carlton Parker (Sister Cities International), Dr. Ken Walker (Emory), Archil Undilashvili (Emory), General William T. Nesbitt (Adjutant General) and John Wilhelm (Friendship Force).

The committee appreciated the opportunity to host this delegation and get to know each of the delegates: Aleksandre Lashkhi, Gigi Tevzadze, Zaza Tsotniashvili, Levan Tsutskiridze and facilitator, Sophie Bzishzili.



Delegation visits with the Georgia Supreme Court.

## ATSCC TO HOST GEORGIAN LAWYERS IN APRIL

April 25th-May 3rd, the ATSCC will host a delegation of lawyers from Georgia for crucial training on our jury system in support of the Rule of Law reforms currently underway in Georgia. They will attend a NITA Mock Trial Program at Emory University and meet with court officials. The two-fold purpose is for them to learn more about our legal system, as well as us learning more about them to assist our preparation for upcoming training of lawyers in Georgia. The delegates attending are:

Meliton Benidze, Head of the Tbilisi Legal Aid Office; Koba Bochorishvili, Executive Director of the Center for Protection of Constitutional Rights; Tamar Chubinidze, Deputy Head of Administration for the Prosecution Service of Georgia; Irakli Kotetishvili, Deputy Head of Administration for the Prosecution Service of Georgia; Nino Janiashvili, Assistant Director, Georgian Young Lawyers Association.

## SPOTLIGHT ON: GEORGIA NATIONAL GUARD STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

The Georgia National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP) was established in 1995 to link the two Georgia's by developing enduring personal and professional relationships to improve the social, political, economic and security conditions in the Country of Georgia. 2007 was their most productive year ever, conducting 26 events in Tbilisi and twice hosting military and civilian personnel from Georgia. The numerous training topics include implementing Georgia's national emergency response plan and soldier training in support of their scheduled deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. 2008 promises to be another busy year for the SPP, with numerous events scheduled on topics such as medical support in peace-keeping operations and combat engineer planning.

While there is no formal relationship between our committee and the SPP, we continue to collaborate together and they are a valuable resource to the committee.

Editorial Note: In each issue, we will use this section to spotlight programs and organizations who impact the relationship between the two Georgia's.



GA Army National Guard meets with counterparts in Tbilisi