Gov. Nathan and First Lady Sandra Deal opened the Governor’s Mansion to Georgia’s finest and their friends the evening of May 16, hosting an appreciation gala for state and local public safety officials. Held to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange (GILEE), the event brought together law enforcement and civic leaders, members of the diplomatic corps and corporate partners to recognize GILEE’s contributions to global public safety.

Major Gen. (Ret.) Dr. Isaac Ben-Israel, chairman of the Israeli Space Agency and the National Council for Research and Development, gave the keynote speech. Other notable guests shared their GILEE experiences included Col. Mark McDonough, Georgia’s commissioner of public safety; Chief George Turner of the Atlanta Police Department; GILEE Board Chairman Jay Davis; and Dr. Robert Friedmann, GILEE founder and professor emeritus of criminal justice at Georgia State University. Ben-Israel was introduced by Opher Aviran, Consul General of Israel to the Southeast.

“I am an avid supporter of GILEE,” says Georgia Bureau of Investigation director Vern Keenan, a 1993 graduate of GILEE’s training exchange with Israel. “GILEE delegations gain valuable, peer-to-peer training with international partners, where they are exposed to new techniques, new skills and new ideas — many that validate the public safety practices we use here.

"GILEE will be more important than ever in the near future," he continues. "Training with our peers in public safety will strengthen our ability to fight international or trans-national organized crime, which is rapidly becoming a threat to national security."

In the last two decades, GILEE has provided more than 800 senior law enforcement officials worldwide — more than half from Georgia — with critical knowledge in public safety practices through more than 200 peer-to-peer training exchanges. More than 15,000 public and private leaders in law enforcement and public safety have attended GILEE’s special briefings, such as the annual Business Continuity Summit.

Recognized as a professional education training program by the U.S. departments of Justice and Treasury, GILEE is the only non-law enforcement body to receive the Governor’s Public Safety Award. It has also received the J. Edgar Hoover Award and Georgia State University’s Service Award.

"The GILEE program was one of the best experiences of my 30-year law enforcement career," says Dunwoody police chief Billy Grogan, a former GILEE delegate. "I am thankful to have been part of the continuing growth and reach of the program over the last 20 years and look forward to GILEE’s continued growth and prosperity."

"GILEE graduates blanket the state of Georgia," says Reginald "Ray" Moore, special agent in charge of the U.S. Secret Service, Atlanta Field Office. Moore has partnered in planning and hosting GILEE’s annual Business Continuity Summit. "What you become when you go through GILEE is an ambassador for life."

The event at the Governor’s Mansion will be remembered by Georgia’s law enforcement community. “GILEE, the Department of Criminal Justice and the Andrew Young School are grateful to Gov. and First Lady Deal for the evening’s extraordinary recognition and honor," says Friedmann. "We are proud that GILEE – a signature international program at Georgia State University – has been recognized in such an exceptional way for its impact on public safety worldwide. We look forward to doing even more important work in the next 20 years.”


See more GILEE news at http://gilee.org.