

THE MAGAZINE OF TULANE UNIVERSITY / WINTER 2025

# TULANEAN



A  
gift  
of a  
lifetime



***CARNIVAL CONNECTION***

The Crescent City Connection dazzles in purple, green and gold lights, beckoning visitors to the city to celebrate the Carnival season.

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Front cover: Celia Scott Weatherhead  
Photo by Kenny Lass



# First Look



Pictured on page 3: A student hugs a puppy during Puppy and Pilates, an event hosted by Campus Recreation and Take Paws Rescue outside the Reily Center. Page 4, top: Tulane School of Architecture students exhibit their final projects. Page 4, bottom: A student presents during the Research & Ideas Symposium, hosted by Newcomb-Tulane College. Page 5, clockwise from top left: A dance instructor guides guests through a performance during Global Café, an International Education Week event. A faculty member wins the egg race during the Essential Employee Event. Students from the Tulane School of Social Work graduate in December.

# Up First



## STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY

BY BARRI BRONSTON

It's no secret that Michael A. Fitts loves Tulane University. As Tulane's president for the past decade, he relishes the opportunity to tout the school's successes, accomplishments and triumphs, be it to civic groups, business organizations or governmental bodies.

For his annual State of the University address, the spotlight landed on Tulane's staff and faculty, a group of employees he describes as "moving Tulane forward in a million different ways" and who are taking Tulane from "bright to brilliant."

Those are just a few of the words that Fitts shared last fall during his State of the University addresses at the uptown, downtown and Tulane National Primate Research Center campuses. He also shared his "Top 10 List" of everything he admires about Tulane, from its world-class research enterprise to the academic caliber of the student body, and from the physical transformation of Tulane's campuses to the *Always the Audacious* campaign, which has raised more than \$1.7 billion from nearly 100,000 donors.

He noted that none of this would be possible without the dedicated staff and expert faculty, many of whom were recognized with awards during the events. "The big picture," he said, "is truly an inspiring sight."

"The State of the University is my opportunity to share this inspiration with you," Fitts continued. "It's a celebration of all of your accomplishments and a recognition of the myriad ways that you are each contributing to our success."

In an exceptionally monumental year, one of Tulane's greatest milestones was the renaming of the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine to the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine in honor of the woman whom Fitts called a "devoted alumna and iconic Tulanian."

Fitts said Tulane is building international recognition as a research university on the rise, with federal research funding up by more than 75% over the last seven years and faculty garnering accolades across the globe for their work on everything from ancient societies and aging to coastal erosion and disease.

Underscoring Tulane's ascent as a preeminent research institution, Fitts recalled a visit by the then-president and first lady of the United States to announce that the bipartisan Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health had committed up to \$23 million to fund cancer research at Tulane.

Among other highlights, Fitts noted:

The acceptance rate dropped from 41% to 15% over the last decade, and new scholarships and pathway programs are expanding access to qualified students regardless of their financial backgrounds.

Tulane's physical transformation of its uptown campus over the past year includes the opening of Steven and Jann Paul Hall, home for the School of Science and Engineering; the creation of National Pan-Hellenic Council Plots, which honor the legacy of historically Black Greek-letter organizations; expansion of Richardson Memorial Hall, home of the School of Architecture; the renovation of Newcomb Hall, home of the School of Liberal Arts; and the continued expansion of The Village, Tulane's innovative residential living and learning community.

Tulane's downtown campus is embarking on a historic expansion which includes new research labs at Hutchinson Memorial Building; major enhancements such as new lighting, landscaping and food options; and the planned transformation of the Tulane Medical Center building and redevelopment of the iconic Charity Hospital into the centerpiece of Tulane's downtown home.

On the North Shore, the university recently broke ground on a new administrative building for the Tulane National Primate Research Center.

Tulane has taken major steps to harden campuses against hurricanes and weather events, including the addition of 16 megawatts of backup power to prevent disruptions to research.

In addition, a recent study measured Tulane's annual economic impact at \$5.2 billion, up from \$3.1 billion five years ago. 📈

Opposite page: President Fitts delivers his address on the uptown campus. (Photo by Kenny Lass)

## NOLA STARTUPS AND AI

BY ROGER DUNAWAY

Most New Orleans area startups see artificial intelligence and machine learning as likely game changers for their industries, but they're not all sure if that's a good thing.

Approximately 37 percent of area startups cited the technologies, more than any other advancement, as likely having the biggest long-term impact on their businesses, but nearly a third surveyed see them as both their biggest threat — and their biggest opportunity — according to the 2024 Tulane University New Orleans Startup Report.

The report, compiled by the Albert Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Tulane's A. B. Freeman School of Business, is based on a survey of 126 startups across the 10-parish region. Now in its sixth year, the annual report has become the benchmark for tracking entrepreneurial activity throughout the New Orleans region.

"Our report highlights both the immense opportunities and significant challenges posed by AI technologies," said Rob Lalka, Albert R. Lepage Professor in Business and Lepage Center executive director. "While startups in the region are right to view AI as a transformative force — capable of revolutionizing industries and fueling growth — we must also acknowledge the very real risks to business and society if AI is adopted without ethical standards and common-sense safeguards."

Area startups see generative AI such as ChatGPT as the second technology innovation most likely to impact their companies, followed by robotics and automation.

The survey found once-hot areas of interest losing their luster. Only 3% of survey respondents think blockchain or cryptocurrency technology will have a long-term impact on their business. Social media (1%), synthetic users (1%) and the combination of virtual reality and augmented reality (1%) were each regarded as having the least long-term impact.

The report also features responses around the economy, employment and hiring, funding and more. Visit [gnostartupreport.com](http://gnostartupreport.com) to read the full report. 📄

As someone who has been part of the University (and SPHTM) as an MPH student, staff, PhD student, post doc and now faculty it was really monumental and special to be there for that announcement. [Celia Scott Weatherhead] thank you again and again for your generosity and vision for our work.

Lauren E.F. Dunaway

We can win, even when it rains. Just need a little planning, some steel in our spines and a whole lot of togetherness.

What a wonderful Tulane University homecoming weekend. Forever grateful.

Shala Carlson

I spent the last few days volunteering and networking at the Tulane University Future of Energy Forum.

I found myself engaged in conversations with inspiring leaders and new mentors in the energy field, giving me valuable advice as I navigate the beginning of a career in the clean energy transition!

Adina Weizman

# CREATING VIDEO GAMES IN CLASS

BY MOLLY McCORRY



Tulane students interested in video games have the opportunity to design their own in the Games Studio classes taught by Jon Chambers, professor of practice in the School of Liberal Arts.

The classes are part of the Digital Media Practices program, but undergraduate students from across the university can take them. “I have students bringing in their expertise from different programs and departments from all over the school,” said Chambers.

He and his colleagues consider that interdisciplinary approach to media as they create new courses and build spaces for their students to try new things.

“I encourage my students in my courses to experiment, to break things, to kind of push themselves beyond thinking about games as just a first-person shooter or these games that have been made over and over again throughout history,” said Chambers. He teaches students to approach video games as an art form and to look critically at both the games themselves and the industry that makes them.

“This class has given me a completely different perspective than I previously had on video games and video game design,” said Tori Coover, a senior studying communications. “It is such a detail-oriented experience making a game, and things can go haywire so quickly, so it’s given me a newfound respect for game devs.”

“It’s really hard, but it also kind of makes you love it more because you see how much time and passion goes into video games,” said Olivia Maki,

a senior studying digital media production and studio art with a minor in Asian Studies.

To create their games, students can use a motion capture suit, which tracks any movement of the person wearing it, and virtual reality (VR) headsets to experience the worlds they create. Previous students have created a kitchen from an ant’s perspective, an office with a dartboard where anything could be used as a dart, and a pastry shop, for instance.

Even if students don’t use every technology available to them in their final games, the class gives them exposure to every part of making a game, from conception to final product.

“It was definitely a once-in-a-lifetime experience, being able to have the [motion capture] suit on and also be the person working with the footage that was captured,” said Coover. “I got to see the entire process from actor to editor to putting it into a game, which is, I think, a unique experience, even in the industry.”

“When working with VR, students can explore embodied immersion that they potentially have never experienced before,” said Chambers. “It is fun watching students who have never played with VR experience it for the first time, because a lot of times it’s an ‘aha’ moment.”

Above: Close-up of hand wearing the motion capture suit. Opposite page from top: Student wearing a VR headset at the Digital Media Practices mixer. Screenshot of Maki’s video game project. Maki wearing the motion capture suit. (Photos by Vincent Postle)



**“It’s really hard, but it also kind of makes you love it more because you see how much time and passion goes into video games.”**

OLIVIA MAKI, senior studying digital media production

What an exciting game this past Saturday at US Navy. **Thankful for the incredible supporters of Tulane University Athletics whose time, talent, and treasure make our success possible** – and whose passion for Tulane University make the work all the more fun.

**#RollWave**

Justin Berger

I am so thrilled to have spent part of **#International EducationWeek** on campus at Tulane University. We were able to chat with future study abroad students over beignets & coffee, and have them spin-to-win some cool study abroad swag!

Kelsey Eihausen

**What a great alumni weekend!** Some of us have seen each other throughout the years and we did get together virtually during the pandemic but it just goes back to **what an impactful experience and education undergraduate life can be.**

Adam Neiberg

**\$5.2**  
billion

ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

A new study shows Tulane University is an **economic powerhouse** for New Orleans and Louisiana, with its operations, capital investments, research and other activities touching every segment of communities throughout the state. See more at [impact.tulane.edu](http://impact.tulane.edu).

**30,300** JOBS SUPPORTED

**\$4,277** million

ANNUAL OPERATIONS

**\$315** million

CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

**\$223** million

ANCILLARY SPENDING

**\$461** million

ALUMNI WAGE PREMIUM

ANNUAL TAX REVENUE  
GENERATED TO THE  
STATE OF LOUISIANA

**\$88.2** million

The study was conducted by the independent consulting firm Econsult Solutions Inc. of Philadelphia.

## PRESIDENTIAL SPEAKER SERIES

BY BARRI BRONSTON

**W**hat will college athletics look like in the future? How has the student-athlete model changed through the years? What was the greatest Tulane sports moment of our times?

Those were just a few of the questions that Tulane President Michael A. Fitts posed to a panel of Tulanians at the Presidential Speaker Series event that took place during Wave Weekend '24.

The timely topic of the future of college athletics attracted a packed crowd of alumni, families and other visitors eager to hear the panelists' thoughts on issues ranging from the changing landscape of college athletics and paying college athletes to the joy of being a sports fan and the dedication and commitment of the typical Tulane student-athlete.

The panel consisted of Gabe Feldman, director of the Tulane Sports Law Program and associate provost for NCAA compliance; Ashley Langford (B'09), Green Wave women's basketball coach; and Peter Ricchiuti, senior professor of practice in the A. B. Freeman School of Business.

Green Wave athletics is on a roll, Fitts said, with the continued ascendancy of Tulane football, championships

in numerous sports and student-athletes excelling in their studies. There are also new facilities in the works and three new dynamic leaders — Director of Athletics David Harris, Head Football Coach Jon Sumrall, and Langford, who was a stand-out point guard for the women's basketball team from 2005 to 2009.

Fitts asked Langford what it was like to be a student-athlete during her time at Tulane. She said her priority was balancing academics with athletics. "I love basketball, but academics and athletics go together. That's just who I was. That's how I was raised," she said, while crediting her father as her number-one mentor.

She said she also owed her success to support from her advisors and coaches, and she makes sure her athletes know they have that same kind of support at Tulane.

Twenty years later, the landscape has shifted, and she said one of her challenges as a coach is recruiting players under the new N.I.L. rules that allow college athletes to control and profit from their name, image and likeness.

Fitts asked Feldman for his appraisal on how N.I.L. and the transfer portal, which allows student-athletes to place their name

in an online database and declare their desire to transfer to another school, have changed college athletics. Feldman said the changes have been staggering.

"We have to find a happy medium," Feldman said. "The NCAA better do something quickly or they may lose the ability to control it. We still have a window to decide what we want college sports to be like."

Fitts asked Ricchiuti, a rabid Green Wave fan throughout his decades as a beloved Tulane professor, to name his most memorable Tulane sports moments. They included the baseball team's appearance in the College World Series in 2005 and the football team's legendary Cotton Bowl win in 2023.

"We've had some great teams," Ricchiuti said. "I think we do everything well [at Tulane], but sports is just so unifying. Sports is what brings us together." 🏈

Below from left: President Michael A. Fitts, Gabe Feldman, Ashley Langford and Peter Ricchiuti at the Presidential Speaker Series (Photo by Kenny Lass)



# AN EXTRAORDINARY (ORDINARY) TULANE STUDENT

BY ANGUS LIND

POPPER!

Remember the name: That's Popper as in Isaac Popper (B'24, SLA '24), Tulane's resident Renaissance man! He's from the Boston area (Medfield, about 45 minutes away). He's working on his master's degree in the A. B. Freeman School of Business. He's a brilliant sports statistics enthusiast who works on ESPN+ broadcasts through his job at Tulane Athletics. He's also emblematic of today's Tulane student — bright, curious and engaged in any number of seemingly far-flung fields. Interdisciplinarity is the fancy word for it.

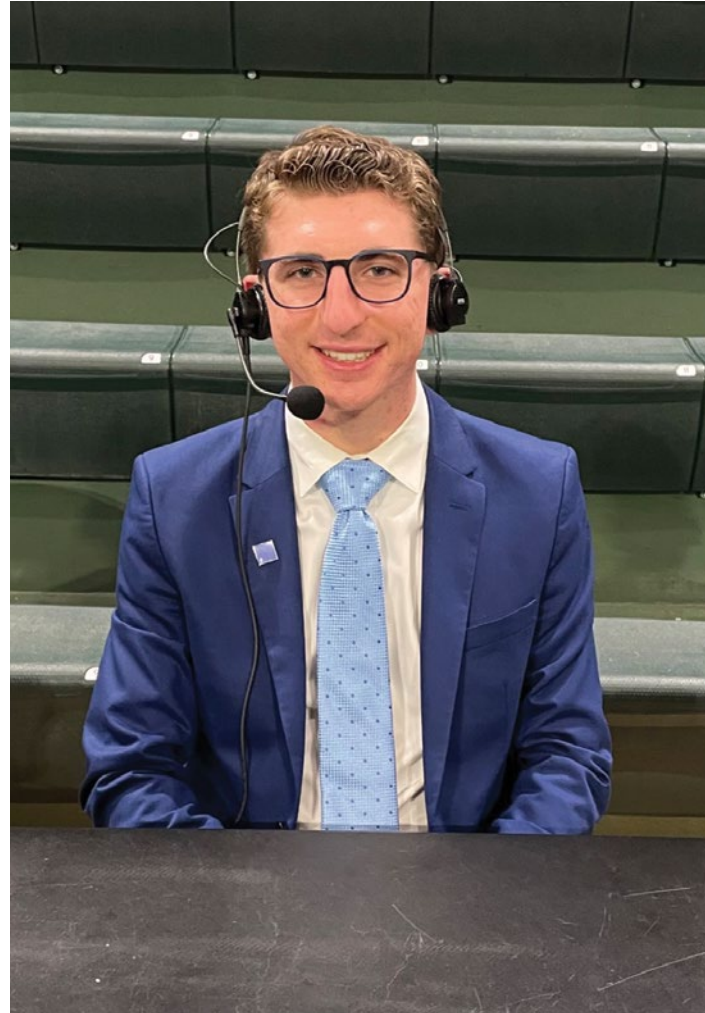
Popper is a campus tour guide and was part of a team of Freeman students who won the inaugural mock NBA Trade Deadline Competition. He analyzes statistics and trends during Tulane and the Pelicans basketball seasons and communicates them to ESPN broadcasters and producers.

He was a data management intern for Tulane Hillel. He graduated with degrees in finance and Jewish Studies and has returned for a master's degree in business analytics.

Before the fall semester started, Popper announced he was joining the Fear the Wave Collective as a Green Wave Insider where he's been collaborating with John Burrows, a teammate from the mock NBA Trade Deadline Competition. The Sports Management classmates have interviewed multiple Tulane football players and coaches each week this season for their Inside the Wave show.

So, what's a Renaissance man? The short answer is that in 15th and 16th century Europe (mainly Italy) there were brilliant cultural, artistic, intellectual and philosophical giants such as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. In the 21st century sports arena, that is Isaac Popper. And he's not alone. When I attended Tulane, students mostly stayed in their lane. English majors took classes in the humanities, biology majors concentrated in the sciences, etc. Not anymore. There is no single lane for a Tulane student, with an increasing number of Renaissance women, and men, having double or even triple majors!

When I asked Popper why he chose Tulane, he did not hesitate. "There were a lot of different reasons. Tulane was the only school that checked off all the boxes. The A. B. Freeman School of Business was a huge reason. New Orleans has both pro and college sports. There's the great food, the campus was beautiful, and I felt I needed a change of scenery. Also, Tulane is in a large metropolitan city and has a high Jewish enrollment."



Isaac Popper, described as Tulane's resident Renaissance man, analyzes sports stats and trends for ESPN+ through his job with Tulane Athletics. (Photo provided by Isaac Popper)

Popper does not have a typical Boston accent such as "Pawk the Cawh in Hahvahd Yahd!" although he is a huge Boston Red Sox fan. As a youngster he watched all the Red Sox games and graded all the players.

Around campus, Isaac has no shortage of nicknames. He's Pop, Popper, iPopStats. He is an extraordinary and yet, by Tulane standards, ordinary student interested and engaged in so many subjects.

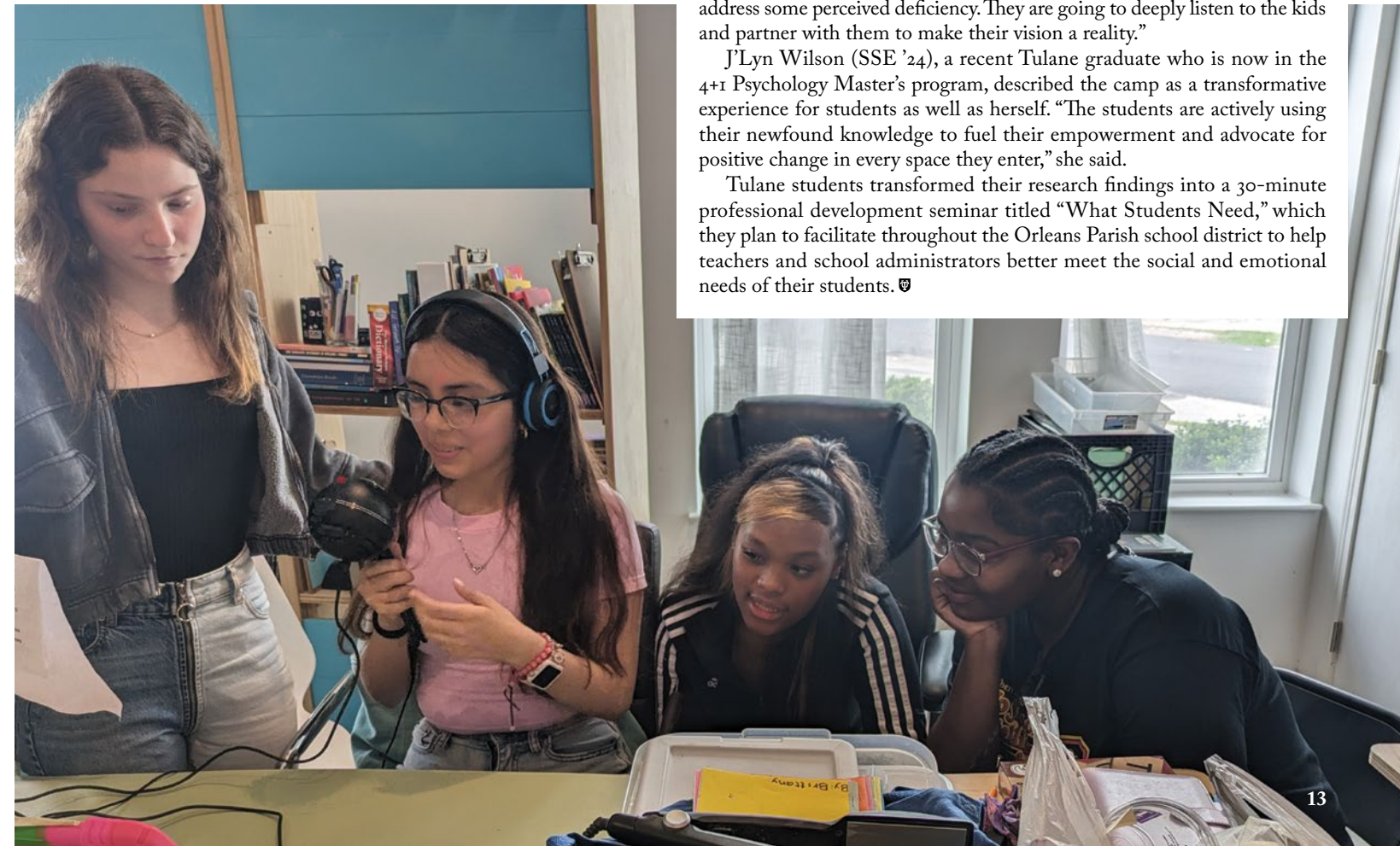
And, like any Tulane student, he loves the local cuisine which was another reason he came to Tulane. His favorites are Nirvana, Shaya, SukhoThai, Vietnamese restaurants, beignets and snowballs.

"People here are super nice," he said. "On campus, I see five or ten people I know when I'm taking a five-minute walk." 🍷

# LITTLE RESEARCHERS OF CREATIVE CHANGE

BY BARRI BRONSTON

Tulane psychology student Camila Collazo Rivera, left, serves as a mentor to middle school students from Community Academies of New Orleans as they write and record a public service announcement highlighting some of their research as part of the Little Researchers of Creative Change program. The recording took place at Be Loud Studios. (Photo by Jesse Chanin)



With Tulane University undergraduate psychology students serving as mentors, New Orleans middle school students are learning how to conduct research into their own lives and communities.

They're part of the Little Researchers of Creative Change (Little ROCCs), a research initiative that empowers students ages 13 to 15 to become agents of change within their schools and neighborhoods.

Little ROCCs is overseen by the Coalition of Compassionate Schools, a program run by Tulane trauma psychologists in the Department of Psychology at the School of Science and Engineering. The coalition, which also includes other local nonprofits, trains teachers and school leaders how to best reach students who are struggling in the classroom.

During the previous school year, the coalition trained 7th and 8th graders at ReNew Schaumburg Elementary School, ReNew Laurel Elementary School and Lafayette Academy to take on the roles of Little ROCCs by investigating such issues as negative student/teacher relationships, low student motivation and overall stress. With the support of Tulane staff and undergraduate mentors from Tulane, Xavier and Loyola universities, the Little ROCCs developed research questions, conducted interviews and focus groups, administered surveys and analyzed findings.

This past summer, the coalition piloted a Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) camp on Tulane's uptown campus, where students learned critical thinking and leadership skills along with the importance of civic engagement.

"I think YPAR is so powerful because it positions kids as the experts," said Jesse Chanin (SLA '21), camp director and youth engagement fellow at the Coalition for Compassionate Schools. Chanin also holds a PhD in sociology from Tulane. "That makes it an impactful intervention on service learning as well. Because the undergrads are not going there to tutor the students or address some perceived deficiency. They are going to deeply listen to the kids and partner with them to make their vision a reality."

J'Lyn Wilson (SSE '24), a recent Tulane graduate who is now in the 4+1 Psychology Master's program, described the camp as a transformative experience for students as well as herself. "The students are actively using their newfound knowledge to fuel their empowerment and advocate for positive change in every space they enter," she said.

Tulane students transformed their research findings into a 30-minute professional development seminar titled "What Students Need," which they plan to facilitate throughout the Orleans Parish school district to help teachers and school administrators better meet the social and emotional needs of their students. 🍷





Above: The fist bump shared by Dr. José Wiley (left) and Dr. Harry Roach (right) is emblematic of the collaboration present at East Jefferson General Hospital under the Tulane-LCMC Health partnership. Opposite page: East Jefferson General Hospital in Metairie, Louisiana. (Photos provided by LCMC Health)

# ONE YEAR IN: TULANE-LCMC HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

BY BARRI BRONSTON

In New Orleans health care news, the major headline of 2022 was a year-end announcement that Tulane University and LCMC Health would join forces to expand access to care across South Louisiana, spur research into treatments and cures, and enhance the training of the next generation of physicians and other vital health care professionals.

Tulane President Michael A. Fitts and LCMC Health CEO Greg Feirn delivered the news, promising to bring the best of community health care and academic medicine to Greater New Orleans and beyond. In January 2025, the partnership marked its official one-year anniversary.

Tulane Medical Center, Lakeview Regional Medical Center and Tulane Lakeside Hospital had finalized the decision to join LCMC Health in January 2023. The integration of Tulane's facilities with LCMC Health took place over the ensuing months with a core component of the partnership — the addition of Tulane Medical Center staff and services to East Jefferson General Hospital (EJGH) — completed in January 2024.

“This partnership is bringing wide-ranging benefits to New Orleans and Southeast Louisiana by expanding access to comprehensive and specialty care for our community members,” said Fitts. “At the same time, it is advancing academic medicine and boosting innovation, discovery and medical training in the region. It also represents a major investment in our area that creates well-paying jobs and ensures an enduring positive impact on the local economy.”

Feirn agreed, saying the milestone is a testament to the power of collaboration and shared commitment to provide extraordinary care. “By bringing together the strengths of LCMC Health and Tulane University, we’ve enhanced access, expanded services and created a stronger foundation for our communities’ health and well-being,” Feirn said. “We are incredibly proud of what we’ve achieved together in just one year and look forward to continuing to grow and serve with excellence.”

One need only visit EJGH to see the host of services that Tulane has brought to the Metairie hospital. The \$216 million investment includes four new critical care units, eight new operating rooms, 15 new clinics and three newly renovated interventional procedure rooms, which are equipped to perform minimally invasive procedures guided by imaging technologies. The workforce has grown as well, with 1,900 medical providers on staff, up by 300 percent, and more than 500 residents and fellows.

The four new critical care units include the Tulane Transplant Institute, where kidney, liver and pancreas transplants have been performed at EJGH for the first time. Later this year, the hospital will open the new and highly anticipated Heart and Lung Transplant Center.

“We have new services that were not here previously,” said Greg Nielsen, EJGH’s chief executive officer. “We are supercharged. We have a very clear, bright and exciting future with this partnership.”

Patients can also expect advanced cardiovascular and pulmonary services. “We handpicked the best faculty available to provide the best possible care to our patients,” said Dr. José Wiley, chair of cardiovascular medicine at Tulane Medical School and chair of cardiovascular services at EJGH. “We’ve added new devices, new approaches and new techniques. We’re providing the latest cutting-edge technology for our patients, whereas in the past, we weren’t able to provide that.”

As a result, he said, EJGH and the other LCMC Health hospitals are treating more patients from the New Orleans area, Louisiana and the Gulf South region.

Dr. Lee Hamm, dean of the Tulane School of Medicine, listed several other accomplishments that have made the partnership so successful. They include a new cutting-edge electronic medical records system, educational spaces for residents and students, and the convenience of calling one number — 504-988-5000 — to get an appointment with a Tulane physician.

“Our partnership with LCMC Health and EJGH marks a transformative chapter for Tulane Medicine, strengthening our clinical programs and unlocking new opportunities for collaboration and advancement,” said Hamm. “Together, we are shaping a future of medical innovation and comprehensive care that will profoundly impact our community and beyond.”

In addition to the Heart and Lung Transplant Center, plans for 2025 include opening a new 54-bed emergency department, adding new operating rooms and increasing surgery capability. Plans are also underway for EJGH to become a Level 2 trauma center, which would offer high-quality care for most trauma cases.

“The partnership has resulted in improved access to care for our community and broader region and is leveraging synergies to improve quality of care and outcomes for all patients we serve,” said Dr. Aaron Dumont, associate dean and vice president of clinical affairs at the Tulane School of Medicine and co-chair of the Neuroscience Line at LCMC Health. “In addition, the partnership has created

“Together, we are shaping a future of medical innovation and comprehensive care that will profoundly impact our community and beyond.”

DR. LEE HAMM, Dean of the Tulane School of Medicine



new, groundbreaking research efforts including the availability of innovative clinical trials to improve the care of our patients of tomorrow.”

Dumont said the partnership is also advancing the training of future generations of doctors, nurses and other health care team members, through innovative and coveted education programs for students, residents and fellows.

Dr. Sarah Bond is among the Tulane Internal Medicine chief residents and has worked at EJGH as both a resident and attending physician. She said the partnership has allowed Tulane residents to serve a new community in the Greater New Orleans area and has provided facilities that enable the expansion of sub-specialty programs such as heart failure and transplant services.

“It has also allowed us to work with private EJGH consultant teams, which gives residents exposure to how private practice medicine operates,” said Bond.

Kim Peters, CEO of the Tulane University Medical Group, said, “Building on the proud tradition of EJGH, the LCMC Health-Tulane Medicine partnership merges world-class research and education to shape the next generation of physicians — all while honoring the community physicians that have made EJGH so exceptional to date.”

“Although in a nascent stage, the Tulane-LCMC Health partnership is poised to create an indelible, impactful legacy for our local community, region and beyond,” said Dumont. “We share tremendous excitement for our future and what we can achieve together.”

TULANE  
Celia Scott Weatherhead School of  
Public Health & Tropical Medicine



# a gift of a lifetime

The School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine was renamed in honor of alumna Celia Scott Weatherhead, recognizing her total lifetime giving of more than \$160 million in support of the university.

BY BARRI BRONSTON



*“I am thrilled to support the university’s goals and long-term strategy for educating public health professionals, empowering groundbreaking research and building a healthier world, starting with the city of New Orleans, but aiming for global results.”*

CELIA SCOTT WEATHERHEAD

**T**homas LaVeist, dean of the newly named Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine at Tulane University, had a secret. It was one that he knew would transform the school’s trajectory and redefine its future, heralding an unprecedented era that would not only elevate the school’s standing among its peers nationwide, but also expand its influence on public health globally for generations to come.

But he was bound to keep the news to himself. A select group of colleagues was in on the surprise, and they, like LaVeist, had been sworn to secrecy.

Then, on Sept. 18, 2024, Tulane President Michael A. Fitts made the historic announcement.

“Today, with the eyes of the world upon us, I am delighted to announce that the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine will henceforth be known as the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.”

The school, Fitts said, was being renamed in honor of the beloved alumna in recognition of her landmark total lifetime giving of more than \$160 million in support of the university.

“Celia’s gift will establish the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine as one of the top such programs in the world,” Fitts said. “This will have a monumental real-world impact, improving and saving countless lives, both here in Louisiana and across the globe.”

Weatherhead’s commitment — the largest in Tulane’s history — continues her legacy of providing funding to attract world-leading faculty researchers to Tulane and ensuring that top students from all backgrounds can attend the university. The Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine is only the second of Tulane’s 10 schools and colleges to be named.

“I am thrilled to support the university’s goals and long-term strategy for educating public health professionals, empowering groundbreaking research and building a healthier world, starting with the city of New Orleans, but aiming for global results,” Weatherhead said.

Opposite page: Celia Scott Weatherhead sits with her dog in her Ohio home.

*“Celia’s gift will establish the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine as one of the top such programs in the world. This will have a monumental real-world impact, improving and saving countless lives, both here in Louisiana and across the globe.”*

MICHAEL A. FITTS

Those global results include breakthrough research in areas such as health inequities, hypertension, maternal care, violence, infectious diseases and much more.

“The Weatherhead gift will further propel research into the most devastating diseases and the most concerning and complex issues of our times,” said LaVeist, who is also Weatherhead Presidential Chair in Health Equity. “It will provide generations of students with the skills and knowledge they need to help heal our world.”

### Transforming public health education

The Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine has a long and proud history, its founding dating back to 1912 when it became the first school of its kind in the United States. Tulane’s commitment to public health goes back even further as a university, having been established as a medical school in 1834 to address epidemics of cholera, yellow fever, smallpox and malaria that were running rampant across the United States in the 19th century.

Today, with more than 130 full-time faculty members and a student body of 1,400, the school is tackling the most critical public health issues of today.

During the COVID-19 crisis, the school conducted studies related to the spread of the virus. Its research helped inform national policy decisions and health interventions, putting the school at the forefront of the fight against this global threat. Tulane’s public health experts also worked closely with communities to educate the public about COVID-19 and help minimize the spread of the virus.

More recently, Tulane public health researchers conducted a study linking high salt consumption to risk of type 2 diabetes, another study showing simple diet swaps can cut carbon emissions and improve overall health, and yet another finding that climbing more than five flights of stairs daily could reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease by 20%.

Weatherhead’s record-setting support will provide seed funding for the development of research hubs in areas such as cancer control, climate change and health, health equity, health policy, infectious disease epidemiology, public health workforce development, and the use of artificial intelligence in the study of population health. Her gift will also further strengthen the faculty and enhance the student experience, especially in the form of scholarships.

Weatherhead’s generosity will further advance Tulane’s plan to expand the downtown campus, where the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine is located. Tulane’s downtown expansion is key to reimagining New Orleans as a national hub of biotechnology and innovation.

“It is fitting that such an integral part of Tulane’s mission of research, education and service bears the Weatherhead name,” Fitts said.

### Investing in public health professionals

LaVeist describes Weatherhead’s gift as a game-changer, representing a doubling down of Tulane’s commitment to health research. The Weatherhead gift is also part of the overall momentum the university is experiencing with record success on every metric used to measure the quality of a university, including an incredible 75 percent increase in research funding over the past seven years.

Tulane is unique among major research universities — home to a school of public health and tropical medicine, a school of medicine and a National Primate Research Center. It is a configuration that inspires interdisciplinary research to advance and improve health worldwide while working to systematically restructure the entire health system.

LaVeist has long considered Tulane on par with the three public health schools that were founded shortly after Tulane — Harvard, Johns Hopkins and Columbia, all of which have named public health schools. He said the significance of a naming cannot be overstated, as it enhances the school’s prestige and influence while attracting top scholars and students.

For prospective students, both graduate and undergraduate, that means more scholarship opportunities. For the school, it means attracting the best and brightest, with the added incentive of tuition assistance.

That’s not to say that Tulane doesn’t already have top-notch public health students, LaVeist said. But a boost in the number of scholarships will translate into an even stronger student body, he added.

The Weatherhead gift will also help to transform public health by providing ongoing education and training for the public health workforce.

### Expanding opportunities for students and faculty

As a health equity researcher, Katherine Theall, a social epidemiologist who holds the Cecile Usdin Professorship in Women’s Health, has seen firsthand how social and structural factors such as violence, socioeconomic status, education and employment access, and racial and gender discrimination impact health inequities.

She said she was delighted to learn that a portion of Weatherhead’s gift would go toward the training of local and state health care workers, as they are the ones on the ground dealing with these issues on a daily basis.

“Having a workforce that is partnered with us, and most often leading the way, to solve



Opposite page, clockwise from left: Weatherhead smiles during the gift announcement. The Tidewater Building in downtown New Orleans, home to the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Left to right: Thomas LaVeist, Weatherhead, Michael A. Fitts, Board of Tulane Chair David M. Mussafer and Robin Forman applaud the announcement.

*“This will help us build a workforce of people who come from every background and every walk of life, especially those experiencing the very health inequities we are trying to solve.”*

KATHERINE THEALL

some of the most complex inequities is essential,” said Theall, co-director of the Mary Amelia Center for Women’s Health Equity Research and senior director of the Violence Prevention Institute.

“The areas that Weatherhead is investing in are extremely important,” Theall said. “To have that kind of investment, not only locally but globally, will further strengthen our place as a premiere school in the Gulf South and one of the best in the world.”

That a major part of the funding will go toward scholarships is equally important, Theall said. “This will help us build a workforce of people who come from every background and every walk of life, especially those experiencing the very health inequities we are trying to solve.”

### Inspiring the next generation

Theall was among the overjoyed faculty members in the audience for the Weatherhead gift announcement along with graduate students such as Shriya Dev, who is pursuing a Master of Public Health in epidemiology, and Jared Christian, who is working toward a Master of Public Health in disaster management.

Christian, president of the school’s Student Government Association, said the gift’s emphasis on student scholarships is significant, in large part because public health jobs are not especially lucrative.

“We’re not in it for the money,” he said. “If you want to make money, there are other options to do that. When I think of public health, I think about how I can make a difference in my community. How can I make it healthier and more sustainable? The jobs are meaningful and impactful, and they matter.”

Dev, a registered doctor from India who enrolled in the Celia Scott Weatherhead

School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine because of her interest in population health, said the Weatherhead gift is life changing.

“As an international student, I know how much scholarships help lighten the financial load, allowing us to focus on learning and growing instead of worrying about tuition fees,” Dev said. “This generous gift will not only help students like me but also push the school to new heights as a leader in public health research and education. It’s a step toward making Tulane the best public health school in the country and shaping the future of public health leaders.”

Christian said he had the opportunity to meet Weatherhead at the celebration, and the first thing he did was thank her for her dedication to Tulane. “She’s very intentional. She’s very passionate. That stood out for me. I think so highly of her because of her contributions to Tulane and how that will affect the field of public health overall.”

### A longstanding commitment to Tulane

Weatherhead’s love of Tulane dates back to the early 1960s when she enrolled in Newcomb College as a freshman. A native of Boynton Beach, Florida, she earned a Bachelor of Arts

degree in theater in 1965 from Newcomb, followed by a Master of Education degree from Florida Atlantic University.

Weatherhead’s and her late husband Albert’s support for Tulane has spanned decades, focusing primarily on increasing access to Tulane and establishing the Weatherhead Presidential Chairs. Through these faculty positions, the university recruits renowned experts in emerging fields who engage in cross-disciplinary teaching and research on a global scale. Additionally, the Weatherheads established the Weatherhead Scholars Program, which provides scholarships for academically talented students who are committed to public service.

“Her commitment to the Presidential Chair program has allowed us to recruit some extraordinary scholars who are now holding Weatherhead Presidential Professorships,” said Robin Forman, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost. “It simply would not have been possible without her belief in the university and our potential.”

In addition to her philanthropy, Weatherhead serves on the Dean’s Advisory Council, the school’s top advisory board, and is an emeritus member of the Board of Tulane, the university’s main governing body. In 2023, she was awarded the Dermot McGlinchey Lifetime Achievement Award, which honors alumni who have demonstrated service, involvement and commitment to Tulane and their hometown communities.

LaVeist said Weatherhead was one of the first people he met when he became dean in 2018, and he was immediately struck by how passionate she was about the research taking place at the school.

“Celia’s gift is awe-inspiring because of what we’re going to be able to do in terms of enhancing our research capacity, improving the student experience and educational experience for our students, and elevating the prestige of this institution,” LaVeist said. “We’re so grateful to have her on our team.”

*“Celia’s gift is awe-inspiring because of what we’re going to be able to do in terms of enhancing our research capacity, improving the student experience and educational experience for our students, and elevating the prestige of this institution.”*

THOMAS LAVEIST



Clockwise from left: LaVeist shares his gratitude during the naming ceremony. Katherine Theall presents research on inequities in birth outcomes. Charles Stoecker, JP Morgan Chase Professor of Health Care Finance, teaches a class on health economics.



TIERA Scholars perform science and find community in the Chocó region of South America, one of the most biodiverse places on Earth.

**BY MOLLY McCrORY**

# research in the rainforest

**T**he Chocó region of South America, nestled between the Andes Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, is one of the most biodiverse places on Earth.

It receives an average of eight meters of rainfall each year, more than twice the amount in many parts of the Amazon Rainforest. It's situated on the equator, spanning from southern Panama into northwestern Ecuador, surrounded by drier regions, and shared by a massive number of endemic species found nowhere else on the planet. The region is of great interest to conservationists hoping to preserve the natural habitat and reverse decades of deforestation.

It is to this unique place that Tulane students travel as part of the Tulane Interdisciplinary Environmental Research & Action (TIERA) Program — the result of a relationship between Tulane and Fundación para la Conservación de los Andes Tropicales (FCAT), an Ecuadorian NGO focused on grassroots research and conservation.

Students in the program participate in a two-week immersive field trip at the FCAT field station over the summer, usually between their sophomore and junior years. They work in groups on ongoing, community-engaged projects that range from water quality and bird diversity to art and social attitudes about conservation.

After the field course, students can apply to be a TIERA Scholar and independently develop a project of their own. If chosen as a TIERA Scholar, these students first take a course in research design, where they work with a faculty advisor and a partner at FCAT to co-design their research and apply for grants, before conducting their research the following summer.

Many TIERA Scholars have focused on ecological projects, but that is only a small part of the research covered by the program. Over the past two years, 32 unique majors were represented among undergraduate students who participated in the field course.

“There were people studying land tenure, the more social side of climate change, looking at carbon credits,” said TIERA Scholar Darbhi Durvasula, a senior studying ecology and evolutionary biology and international development, describing the variety of projects in 2024. “There are a lot of different ways you can tie in more political or economic or social studies into a TIERA Scholar research project.”

“The involvement of the undergraduates serves as a vehicle to foster interdisciplinary research by faculty, as well,” said Jordan Karubian, program director of TIERA and professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology in the School of Science and Engineering. He noted that while many faculty from his department are involved with TIERA, faculty from other departments and schools become advisors to TIERA Scholars and participate in research every year.

Between the fundamentally Tullanian ideals of interdisciplinarity, experiential learning and service work, blended with the community-focused nature of FCAT, TIERA is truly one of a kind. “This program is unique at Tulane, and honestly, I think it's unique at the national level,” said Karubian. “I don't know of any other program that exists like this, and I think it's a real differentiator for Tulane.”

## A partnership blossoms

After finishing his PhD in ecology and evolution at the University of Chicago, Karubian wanted to use his degree to make a tangible impact on conservation efforts. As a postdoctoral fellow, he moved to Ecuador to study the endemic species there.

Previous page: An aracari, a tropical bird of Ecuador. Madelyn Seward and fellow TIERA Scholars hike on the FCAT reserve. Right: Through his studies of the long-wattled umbrellabird, Karubian formed relationships that would lead to the founding of FCAT. Opposite page: Durvasula (left) and FCAT researchers Darwin Zambrano (center) and Julio Looor (right) create clay caterpillars to help track insect predation rates in deforested areas. One clay caterpillar rests on a leaf.



“I was thinking I was going to use this experience as a bridge for myself to move into sustainable development, real-world-type work,” said Karubian, “and when I visited this area where TIERA is currently based, it really had a strong effect on me.”

Karubian was studying the long-wattled umbrellabird, a rare bird native to the area. This meant he spent a lot of time exploring agricultural land and patches of forest near farms. While doing this field work, he developed working relationships and friendships with local farmers, which helped to shape his view of how conservation work can be most effective not solely for the environment, but for the community the environment supports.

FCAT was born from these relationships. Karubian and his colleagues formalized the NGO in 2011 based on the principles of community-engaged conservation and the relationships they developed over the previous eight years.

“Conducting research at FCAT is very special because of the organization's grassroots nature,” said Sunshine Van Bael, associate professor in the School of Science and Engineering, who has performed research at FCAT and served as a faculty advisor for TIERA students. “The station was built by the hands of people who care about the forest around them, who want to preserve it and work with farmers to make it better.” While most research stations are owned and operated by a university or other institution, the FCAT station is run and owned by local Ecuadorians.

When Karubian joined Tulane in 2010, he continued working with the growing team at FCAT from afar. He and his wife and colleague Renata Durães Ribeiro, professor of practice in the School of Science and Engineering, developed a field course called “Tropical Field Biology and Conservation,” which allowed students to develop a project and perform research in Ecuador alongside researchers from FCAT.

The field course was limited in scope, however, and Karubian decided to expand it into a dedicated program: TIERA. The expansion led the way to not only the Scholars program but also to the involvement of faculty, graduate students and other researchers in a variety of fields. As a dedicated program, TIERA now has a scholarship fund that removes financial barriers that might limit involvement by some students.

Karubian describes TIERA as the relationship between Tulane and FCAT, rather than just the field course and Scholars program, and he hopes it continues to grow. Since 2022, 27 faculty have visited FCAT, along with 21 graduate students and a postdoctoral

researcher. Just last year, 42 undergraduate students participated in TIERA — eight of whom were TIERA Scholars — and 10 new TIERA Scholars have been accepted to return this summer.

## Research takes root

The forests in Ecuador have been subject to deforestation for decades, and FCAT has been working on reforestation efforts since the organization's inception. The team is tackling the challenge from all angles, as evidenced in the variety of TIERA Scholar projects.

Meryl LaRue, a junior majoring in earth and environmental science, is studying the efficacy behind some of the reforestation methods by evaluating the carbon storage capacity of the reforested areas. She measured the diameter and height of fully grown trees and calculated the biomass and carbon content of each one.

“By using the planting plans for the different restoration plots and the average carbon content for each species, I calculated the amount of carbon each plot could potentially store when the trees are fully grown,” LaRue said.

Treasure Joiner, a senior studying public health, focused her research on the social impacts of climate change on the local community, specifically for women. She asked women who are FCAT employees and local residents about their knowledge and perception of climate change, as well as how it impacts their community and their stress levels.

“I learned that it was a very layered issue,” Joiner said. “Not only are they dealing with the environment, but also the history, the culture and social dynamics.”

While Joiner said many people she interviewed found it difficult to adapt to climate change, the concept of community plays a crucial role. “They're all working toward a

common goal and trying to use environmental leadership and environmental work to help their communities,” she said.

CeCe Acosta (SLA '24), who graduated from Tulane in spring 2024 with degrees in environmental biology and Latin American Studies, looked at the effectiveness of reforestation efforts through insect predation rates, measuring the number of creatures who tried to eat a decoy caterpillar she placed in various areas.

She placed the caterpillars in different habitat types: pastures, reforested areas and intact forests that had not faced deforestation. Rather than using real caterpillars to track predation, she made fake caterpillars out of non-toxic clay. When predators attempted to eat the clay caterpillars, they left bite marks that helped Acosta determine their species and number. These predators ranged from birds to mammals to bugs, like ants.

Durvasula continued Acosta's project the following summer, adding research into the importance of scent cues. With the project's continuation, the effectiveness of

these reforestation methods can be tested over time. “It all tells a story,” Durvasula said.

Like all other TIERA Scholar research, these projects were conducted in close collaboration with FCAT researchers. FCAT plans to build upon the outcome of these projects to refine their reforestation methods and education and support initiatives.

### Community in the field

A central part of the TIERA experience is the sense of community felt at the FCAT station.

“There's a lot of opportunity for learning that's not strictly science, but also learning how to exist in a space that's different from your home,” said Acosta. “It's cool to work in a scientific space that's outside the U.S. and see people doing conservation who aren't just people in academia.”

She and Durvasula both talked about playing games and listening to music with other volunteers when they weren't in the field. Joiner and LaRue enjoyed having the chance to get out in nature and hike in their downtime.

“Coming off a busy semester, especially, just having a month that I'm out there in the field, interacting with the environment, with lots of cool people, it's really special, honestly,” said Durvasula.

The community that students build in Ecuador each summer isn't left behind when they come back to Tulane.

“[TIERA] has given me a community here on campus, too,” said LaRue. “Everyone that I became close with on the field course, and especially in the TIERA Scholars program, we've all stayed connected.”

### Paying it forward

Likewise, the students' work with TIERA isn't over when they return to Tulane, either. Students present their research at symposiums and poster presentations throughout the year, and many also work with their advisors to publish their research in journals. It is common for TIERA Scholar projects to develop into honors theses.

“An implicit expectation is that there's some kind of product that they generate that gives back,” said Karubian.

Giving back might look like creating posters that describe best practices, or running Zoom workshops,



Opposite page: A patch of land in Ecuador. Student projects take place across a variety of ecosystems in the region. Above: Karubian (blue shirt) and students learn about the local ecosystem from an FCAT researcher (left) during the summer field course. Below: Treasure Joiner hikes in Ecuador during her downtime.



“There's a lot of opportunity for learning that's not strictly science, but also learning how to exist in a space that's different from your home.”

CECE ACOSTA

or creating pamphlets that share results with the community. Even publishing papers or writing an honors thesis helps give back to FCAT, since they can point to the resulting number of publications to show its efficacy as a research station.

In one wide-reaching example, Acosta's study was picked up by HHMI BioInteractive, a pedagogical biology website for high school and college students. The website includes data from real studies, like Acosta's, that helps students learn how biological experiments work and how to analyze data. The data she collected, as well as a video about the study itself, will live on the site for classrooms around the world to review.

For the students in TIERA and for the year-round researchers at FCAT, the summer program provides an influx of excitement and inspiration. For the team at FCAT, it motivates their real-world, on-the-ground research, which is done in relative isolation for much of the year. For the students, it gives them concrete examples of their work making a difference, something that Karubian said was essential for him, and something he views as one of the major goals of TIERA.

“If you can provide people with a belief that they can make a difference, then that's transformative,” he said. 🍷







The inaugural Future of Energy Forum gathered global thought leaders, experts and the Tulane community to explore interdisciplinary solutions to securing our energy future.

BY MOLLY McCORRY

# The future of energy



Global thought leaders and experts across academia, industry, government and nonprofits convened with faculty, students, alumni, local community members and attendees across the country on Tulane's uptown campus last fall to answer a central question, "Can Energy Pragmatism Secure Our Energy Future?"

This was the theme of Tulane's inaugural Future of Energy Forum, held Nov. 13-15, 2024, at the Lavin-Bernick Center for University Life.

"Energy demand worldwide is skyrocketing, driven by forces all the way from global industrialization to artificial intelligence," President Michael A. Fitts said during the event's opening remarks. "As a world-class research university located, as we all know, in one of the world's most significant regions for energy production, Tulane is uniquely positioned to address this complex issue. Our home state of Louisiana is a major energy producer that also faces significant environmental challenges."

Tulane's ability to foster interdisciplinary conversations was reflected in the packed schedule of 30+ panels, keynote sessions and networking roundtables. The varied range of energy topics covered offshore wind, oil and gas, hydrogen, LNG, fusion and others; and the diversity of perspectives crossed engineering, law, technology, business, architecture, social sciences and more.

There were up-close conversations with speakers such as author and presidential and energy historian Jay Hakes along with Aniket Shah, Global Head of Sustainability at Jefferies. There were hyperlocal topics around place-based energy solutions, as well as deeper dives into energy solutions for Latin America, with a panel moderated by A. B.

Freeman School of Business Dean Paulo B. Goes. All three days drove home that Tulane is at the forefront of energy studies and research.

"Addressing how to secure a sustainable energy future is one of the vital challenges that research universities are uniquely equipped to tackle," said Marcilynn Burke, dean of the Law School, as she set the tone for the forum in her opening remarks.

**"As a world-class research university located, as we all know, in one of the world's most significant regions for energy production, Tulane is uniquely positioned to address this complex issue."**

PRESIDENT MICHAEL A. FITTS

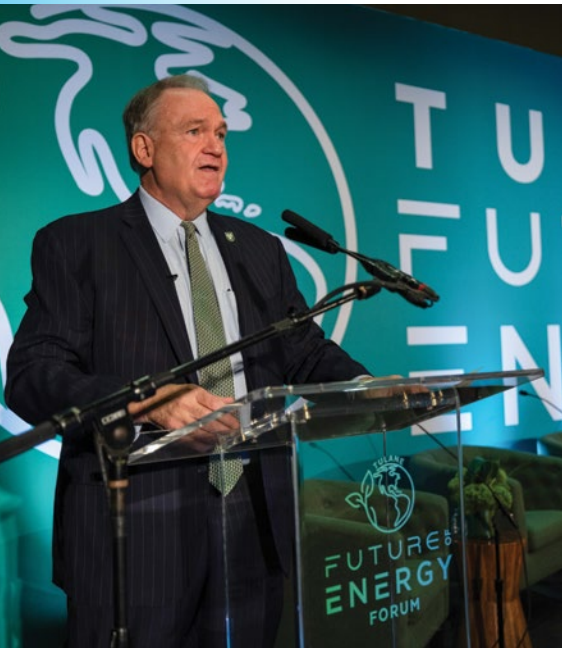
A remarkable example of finding pragmatic solutions across disciplines at the state level was highlighted during the opening keynote session on the Future Use of Energy in Louisiana (FUEL) initiative.

This statewide effort, funded by the National Science Foundation, brings together Louisiana universities with industry leaders, nonprofits and government partners to position Louisiana as a global energy transition leader. FUEL has created a statewide innovation ecosystem that allows for a feedback loop between researchers and industry and streamlines the process of going from science to an invention to innovation.



Opposite page, top from left: Rodney Sampson in a session on place-based energy solutions. Baraynia Robillard, Donovan Thompson and Salem Habte discuss workforce development. Middle from left: Aniket Shah delivers his keynote session. Jay Hakes delivers his keynote session. Bottom from left: Kimberly Gramm, Ashwith Chilvery, Lacy McManus, Stephen Loy and Michael Mazzola in a FUEL session.

PHOTOS BY KENNY LASS AND TYLER KAUFMAN



“No state is better positioned to lead the future use of energy than Louisiana,” said panel moderator Kimberly Gramm, the David and Marion Mussafer Chief Innovation and Entrepreneurship Officer at the Tulane University Innovation Institute.

Energy pragmatism was a key part of the conversation around energy transition, balancing newer energy solutions with traditional forms of energy like oil and gas.

“Louisiana is just one of the best places to do business, for traditional energy and for the energy transition,” said Stephen Swiber (SLA ’15, B ’16), Chief Resilience Officer in the Office of the Louisiana Governor and a Tulane alumnus.

During a Thursday session, Hon. Mark Menezes, president and CEO of the United States Energy Association and former deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy, and Hon. Dan Brouillette (B ’24), president and CEO of Edison Electric Institute and former secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy, spoke on the importance of Louisiana’s oil production industry as well as its place in the energy transition.

“Energy transitions are nothing new,” said Brouillette, pointing out that our current energy transition is the most recent in a long line from wood to coal to steam and onward.

Hydrogen also factored into the transition conversation and was the main theme of a session featuring Hon. John Bel Edwards, former governor of Louisiana. “Louisiana is ideally suited and situated for these hydrogen efforts,” he said.

The crux of these pragmatic solutions will require all hands on deck, not just among people in different sectors but also leaning on AI technology to aid the human-led effort, panelists noted. Speakers discussed both the potential benefits of using AI to increase efficiency of energy systems and the challenges of providing energy for the massive data centers that AI needs to operate.

At a panel on the role of AI and analytics in the future of energy, Hridayesh Rajan, dean of the School of Science and Engineering, said that he was an “AI for energy and energy for AI guy,” emphasizing that the future role of AI in energy goes both ways.

## Alumni voices at the forum



**“Tulane is a place where you find people who are thinking about how to blend the environmental, industrial and societal aspects of energy, and I think that’s exactly what we need right now: thoughtful, balanced, fast progress toward a sustainable energy future.”**

LEIGH D’ANGELO (SOPA ’17)



**“I am confident that Tulane will continue to build on [its] history by educating future generations of professionals and leaders who will support the energy business through practical innovation and creativity.”**

RANDALL EBNER (L ’80)



**“I think all of us appreciate our alma mater in some unique way, so to have the opportunity to come back to interact with my undergraduate institution is pretty exciting.”**

RODNEY SAMPSON (TC ’95)



**“We have the right mindset for [this discussion], in that we know that one specific research arm or one specific business school or group isn’t going to solve this. The best solutions are going to come out of a multidisciplinary, deep and broad approach.”**

BOARD OF TULANE MEMBER  
WILLIAM MARKO (E ’81, E ’83)



**“I’ll show my double grad bias and say [Tulane is a good place to have this discussion] because Tulane is the best university there is! [Tulane] has an excellent interdisciplinary approach to thinking holistically about the business of energy and the environment of Louisiana’s working coast.”**

STEPHEN SWIBER (SLA ’15, B ’16)

The answers to the questions about AI and energy will not come from a single place, however, according to Rajan. “Students, industry and faculty working together — that’s where the magic will happen,” he said.

That statement was indicative of one of the other consistent themes of the forum: the importance of students and how they can be supported to do the most for the future of energy.

“There’s the pedagogy, the curriculum, all of the important things, but it’s also really important to make sure students are exposed to events like this,” said Rodney Sampson (TC ’95), chairman and CEO of Opportunity Hub and a Tulane alumnus.

From Career Services roundtables to socializing hours, the forum dedicated time to ensuring students could speak with panelists and industry leaders. Sophie Strobl, a student who said she had been attending panels all day on Thursday, said she appreciated the variety of each panel. “It’s not everyone in the same position,” she said.

Another student, Emma De Leon, was able to trace the panel topics back to what they actively discuss in class, speaking specifically of a panel that included her professor, Joshua Basseches, the David and Jane Flowerree Assistant Professor in Environmental Studies and Public Policy in the School of Liberal Arts.

The panel on updating policy and infrastructure to aid in the energy transition brought Basseches together with Hon. Davante Lewis, Louisiana Public Service Commissioner for District 3, and Drew Story, the policy director at the MIT Climate Policy Center. The panel considered, in part, how researchers can be of most help to local communities and policymakers.

“These kinds of questions are the ones we’re asking here as deans at Tulane as we’re evaluating faculty,” said Brian Edwards, dean of the School of Liberal Arts, who moderated that panel. “We’re really pushing on publicly meaningful, community-engaged scholarship.”

The conversations that began at the inaugural forum will continue at Tulane and beyond. “It’s our hope that the collision of ideas from different people, different sectors, different areas, will literally lead to real-world applications with a positive and lasting impact, both here in Louisiana and across the globe,” Fitts said. 🌱



Top left: President Michael A. Fitts delivers welcome remarks at the forum. Bottom right, from left: Monique Edwards, Megan Biven, Kelisha Garrett and Adam Peltz in a session on end-of-life oil well management.

# Achievement ABOUNDS

The Research, Scholarship and Artistic Achievement Awards recognize the outstanding work of Tulane faculty. The winners' works span disciplines, but all play a role in elevating Tulane's prominence as a top-level research institution.

As faculty from every school at Tulane University gathered for the annual Research, Scholarship and Artistic Achievement Awards, it was clear that it had been a landmark year for Tulane exploration, discovery and creativity. The ceremony, which took place last fall in downtown New Orleans, honored the groundbreaking accomplishments of faculty across the university.

President Michael A. Fitts welcomed attendees and recognized the tremendous work of the night's award winners.

"All of tonight's honorees have had a hand in elevating Tulane to a new level of prominence as a research institution internationally," Fitts said. "Everyone in this room should take great pride in being part of this pivotal moment as we continue to catapult our research enterprise to the next level."

Emcee and medical reporter Meg Farris celebrated the incredible work of these faculty members. "Fueled by the urgent and pressing needs of society, Tulanians craft solutions with lasting impact, leading to real changes that make a difference in the lives of others," she said, before welcoming Vice President for Research Dr. Giovanni Piedimonte to the stage.

Piedimonte praised Tulane's extraordinary growth in funding for research, scholarship and artistic activities over the past few years. "Our sustained growth is the best guarantee that Tulane will remain among the top academic institutions participating in the prestigious Association of American Universities," he said.

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Robin Forman congratulated the honorees and described the importance and beauty of research. "There is something magical about the kind of research that happens at a university like Tulane," he said.



## HALL of FAME *Lifetime achievement award*

### **Dr. Pierre Buekens**

*W.H. Watkins Professor, Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine  
Director of the Center for Emerging Reproductive and Perinatal Epidemiology  
Adjunct professor of obstetrics and gynecology,  
School of Medicine*

Described by his colleagues as "among the best perinatal researchers in the world," Dr. Buekens has focused his life's work on studying both neglected and emerging infectious diseases that impact pregnancy. He first came to Tulane as dean of the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. He served in that role for 15 years, overseeing the school's evolution and launching its first undergraduate degree program. As a nationally and internationally recognized leader in his field, he published more than 250 peer-reviewed publications and served on the editorial boards of some of the most respected medical journals in the world.



## HALL of FAME

### Lifetime achievement award

#### Jeffrey Tasker

*Catherine and Hunter Pierson Chair in Neuroscience, School of Science and Engineering  
Professor of cell and molecular biology  
Leading member of the Tulane Brain Institute*

Tasker is an internationally recognized leader in the neurobiology of stress and stress disorders, receiving continuous funding from the National Institutes of Health since 1994. He has nearly 10,000 citations and over 100 peer-reviewed publications to his name. He embraces a collaborative approach, with co-authors on his publications ranging from Tulane faculty across different departments and schools, as well as postdoctoral researchers and graduate and undergraduate students. A member of the Tulane faculty for over three decades, he has committed to building on Tulane's strengths in neuroscience to make the university a leader in the field.

#### SPIRIT OF TULANE

Outstanding work that embodies “Non sibi sed suis”

**Kailash Pandey**, *Professor, School of Medicine*  
Pandey's discoveries have advanced the understanding of cardiovascular health and expanded drug discovery efforts to address heart failure and hypertension. His collaborative research programs and teaching efforts have nurtured the growth of countless students and researchers.

**Karissa Haugeberg**, *Associate professor, Eva-Lou Joffrion Edwards Newcomb Professorship in History, School of Liberal Arts*  
Haugeberg has made significant contributions to the fields of history, reproductive health and community engagement, with her research deepening the understanding of complex social movements. Her leadership in securing a prestigious Mellon Foundation Grant for the School of Liberal Arts is

creating opportunities for global dialogue on women's health access.

#### INNOVATION

Development of novel ideas and insights through interdisciplinary scholarship to address clinical, public health or societal challenges

**Kyle Straub**, *Professor and Chair of the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, School of Science and Engineering*  
Straub's research in experimental sedimentology has advanced knowledge of river deltas and submarine channels and provided critical insights into climate history and natural resource sustainability. His interdisciplinary approach integrates cutting-edge technology and engineering to address global challenges.

**Eric Dumonteil**, *Associate professor, Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine*  
Dumonteil demonstrated creativity and scientific rigor in tackling the complex and neglected

Chagas disease, developing a nucleic acid-based vaccine that offers protection against acute and chronic stages of this infection. By combining deep knowledge of parasite biology with modern vaccine technology, he has shown success in experimental models.

#### ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Record of sustained entrepreneurship and new venture creation

**Tony Hu**, *Weatherhead Presidential Chair in Biotechnology Innovation, Director of the Center for Cellular and Molecular Diagnostics, School of Medicine*  
Hu has transformed funding from esteemed organizations into impactful technologies that benefit society. He has published over 150 papers, filed 25 patent applications, with 14 of those licensed, and cofounded four biotech startups. His numerous accolades, including the National Academy of Inventors Fellowship and the university's Galaxy Award, underscore his contributions to the field.

#### IP INNOVATOR

New patentable intellectual property that is expected to lead to a licensable technology or commercialization

**Lisa Morici**, *Professor, School of Medicine*  
**James McLachlan**, *Associate professor, School of Medicine*

Morici and McLachlan have co-developed a biodefense vaccine currently in human phase 1 clinical trials in Australia, expected to launch in mid-2025. They also pioneered T-vant, an OMV-based adjuvant for which they obtained a patent and are seeking funding to initiate a clinical trial aimed at eliminating whooping cough. They have supported and mentored dozens of trainees, many pursuing innovations of their own, enhancing the culture of innovation at Tulane.

#### GALAXY

Recognizes a scholar with a five-year history of funding and of enhancing Tulane's research mission

**Dr. Ronald Veazey**, *Professor, School of Medicine and Chair of the Division of Comparative Pathology, Tulane National Primate Research Center*  
Dr. Veazey's work has advanced the understanding of HIV and SIV and impacted the training and mentorship of future scientists. He has over 200 peer-reviewed publications, numerous invited presentations at national and international meetings, and a research portfolio including nine active awards totaling over \$14 million.

#### PROVOST'S AWARD FOR EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Excellence in research that addresses societal inequalities and promotes social change

**Carla Laroche**, *Felder-Fayard Associate Professor of Law, School of Law*

Laroche draws on her experience as an attorney and clinical law teacher to confront disparities at the intersection of criminal legal systems and voting rights. Her work illuminates the legal and nonlegal obstacles individuals face, offering practical solutions to dismantle these barriers.

#### FUNDING

Largest combined dollar amount of funding for direct costs for calendar year 2023

**(STEM) Emily Harville**, *Professor, Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine*

Harville has a calendar year grant portfolio of just over \$5 million, including two NIH research grants and one National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine grant. Her research focuses on how pregnancy and reproduction relate to health throughout life.

**(Non-STEM) Hazel Woods**, *Professor of Practice and Associate Director of Education Programs, School of Professional Advancement*

In the NOLA Seed Project year two, SoPA will operate as lead recipient of a \$3.7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education and will partner with other New Orleans organizations to recruit and develop over 500 certified educators to be placed in New Orleans public schools.

#### CONVERGENCE

Successful collaboration to surpass traditional academic disciplines

**Byron Mouton**, *Director of URBANbuild and Lacey Senior Professor of Practice, School of Architecture*  
Through a unique blend of pedagogy, design and community engagement, Mouton has led his students in the hands-on design and construction of 20 homes in New Orleans' Central City neighborhood. These projects result in peer-reviewed publications co-authored with colleagues across disciplines. His partnerships with researchers, developers and the local community create an innovative model for integrating education, research and service.

**Frédéric Sourgens**, *James McCulloch Chair in Energy Law and Director of the Tulane Energy Law Center, School of Law*

Sourgens' work has deepened understanding of the global energy transition, with his work spanning energy law, environmental law, international law and business, while drawing on the expertise of engineers, technologists and policymakers. His efforts to organize the Tulane Energy Forum brought together scholars and professionals from diverse fields, providing a platform for critical conversations on climate change, geopolitical risks and energy markets.

#### STUDENT/TRAINEE RESEARCH MENTORING AWARD

Recognizes an exceptional research mentor

**Sarah Lindsey**, *Associate professor and Dr. Barbara S. Beckman Professorship in Pharmacology, School of Medicine*

For over 12 years, Lindsey has led an independent research lab at Tulane, focusing on understanding cardiovascular diseases, with a strong emphasis on women's health. She has mentored 20 undergraduate students, 9 graduate students and 5 postdoctoral fellows directly, in addition to serving as co-mentor for 17 trainees and participating in 13 research-focused dissertation committees. The numerous awards her trainees have received underscore her commitment to their success.

#### RISING STAR

Demonstrates exceptional growth and impact within five years of appointment to Tulane, in one or more research areas

**Sönke Dangendorf**, *David and Jane Flowerree Assistant Professor, School of Science and Engineering*

Since joining Tulane just over two years ago, Dangendorf has achieved remarkable success in the field of global sea level change. His research has led to nine publications in 2023 alone, including three in journals like Nature Communications and Science. His work has received \$4.6 million in funding and established him as a leading voice in this area of climate science.

#### CITATION

Highest number of citations for a peer-reviewed article in 2023

**Dr. Lu Qi**, *HCA Regents Distinguished Chair and Professor and Interim Chair of the Department of Epidemiology, Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and Director of the Tulane University Obesity Research Center*, for “Association of Cardiovascular Health With Life Expectancy Free of Cardiovascular Disease, Diabetes, Cancer and Dementia in UK Adults,” JAMA Internal Medicine, April 1, 2023

The article received more than 70 citations over the past year and has been deemed a Web of Science “Highly Cited Paper,” with enough citations to place it in the top 1% of the field of clinical medicine for the 2023 publication year. It is in the top 5% of all research publications scored by Altmetric.

#### PUBLICATION

Exceptional contributions to academic literature

**(Journal article) Sönke Dangendorf**, *David and Jane Flowerree Assistant Professor, School of Science and Engineering*, for “Acceleration of U.S. Southeast and Gulf Coast Sea-level Rise Amplified by Internal Climate Variability,” Nature Communications, April 10, 2023

Dangendorf's cross-institutional team's work was reported to the public through 219 new outlets and 17 blogs. The article focuses on sea level rise and features collaboration by a team of researchers, including Thomas Frederikse at NASA's jet propulsion laboratory.

**(Book) Jesmyn Ward**, *Professor of English and Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities, School of Liberal Arts*, for “Let Us Descend,” Scribner, October 2023

The chosen novel, which follows a slave's life journey, was described as “angry, beautiful, raw, visceral and heartfelt” by NPR. The jury selected the book based on its scholarly value, originality and innovation, relevance and timeliness, writing quality, contribution to Tulane's reputation and multidisciplinary appeal. 🏆

# Wavemakers

## THE LUX RECOVERY HOUSE

**T**ulane Recovery Community Center — the first dedicated collegiate recovery facility in Louisiana — was renamed the Lux Recovery House in honor of alumni Leslie (NC '78) and Paul (A&S '79, M'83) Lux of St. Louis, who made a \$1.5 million gift to support students actively engaging in a recovery lifestyle or exploring recovery.

Located near the university's uptown campus on Calhoun Street, the recently renovated Lux Recovery House was dedicated last fall to celebrate the Luxes and all of the philanthropic supporters of this critical initiative.

The Luxes' generosity has aided in the building's renovation and supported vital student services. The bulk of their gift will create an endowment to provide long-term programmatic support and facilities enhancement.

Along with university-wide wellness initiatives such as Wave of Support, the Lux Recovery House underscores Tulane's dedication to assisting its students in their recovery process.

"Tulane is a special university not just because of its incredible academics but because it truly cares about its students," said Paul Lux, a renowned orthopedic surgeon who graduated in 1979 with a bachelor's degree in biology, earned a medical degree in 1983, and is a member of Tulane School of Medicine's Board of Governors. "The Tulane Recovery Community impressed us with its compassionate dedication to supporting students in every way possible on their recovery journeys."

Leslie Lux, an interior designer who graduated in 1978 as an art history major, shared her enthusiasm for the center. "I'm originally from New Orleans, and dozens of my and Paul's extended family have attended Tulane," she said. "We're delighted to give back in this meaningful way by ensuring that present and future Tulanians confronting addiction have this warm and welcoming space for honest connections and personal growth."

Associate Vice President and Dean of Students Erica Woodley expressed Tulane's gratitude for the Luxes' philanthropic leadership.



Leslie (third from right) and Paul (second from right) Lux sit with President Michael A. Fitts (right) during the dedication ceremony. (Photo by Kenny Lass)



Guests gather at the Lux Recovery House for the dedication ceremony in October 2024. (Photo by Kenny Lass)

"Thanks to the generosity of the Lux family and other donors who believe in the importance of this resource, we not only have a strong and supportive community for students in recovery, but a beautiful physical space for them to continue building that community. We are so grateful to have the Lux Recovery House and to the Luxes for facilitating this work."

The Lux Recovery House provides space for support meetings and socializing, staff offices and even a housing component. Most importantly, it allows students to continue the college experience and have fun without sacrificing their recovery.

Since the program's inception, the Tulane Recovery Community, or TRC, has hosted more than 500 peer recovery support meetings for students. It also sponsors recreational activities, including outings to local events and out-of-town trips during Mardi Gras and spring break.

"I am profoundly thankful to the Luxes and other donors who have helped secure a dedicated space for students in recovery," said the center's director Jacob Goldberg. "This significant investment in infrastructure signals Tulane's commitment to destigmatizing recovery identities on campus. With this gift, the TRC is set on a path to sustainability. We know that students in recovery thrive when supported, and I deeply appreciate the Lux family for enabling us to have this resource as we continue to serve our students and community."

Leslie is the retired owner of LPL Interiors in St. Louis. Paul, who is also retired, was an associate professor of orthopedic surgery at Washington University School of Medicine and still enjoys providing expertise as a surgeon and inventor in hip and knee replacement. The Luxes live part-time in New Orleans and serve on the Louisiana National Campaign Council. Paul is currently serving on his 45th Reunion Committee, and Leslie recently completed a committee term for her 45th Reunion. 🍷

### WAVEMAKERS

## MARSHALL FAMILY GIFTS \$10 MILLION TO FIGHT CANCER

**A** combined \$10 million gift from the Marshall Heritage Foundation and the Marshall Legacy Foundation will help transform Tulane University's fight against cancer by creating a faculty chair, a dedicated research fund and state-of-the-art laboratories at the School of Medicine.

The gift, prompted by Board of Tulane member and alumnus E. Pierce Marshall Jr. (B '90), honors the memory of Marshall's father, E. Pierce Marshall, who died in 2006 of complications from leukemia at age 67.

"Tulane was founded in 1834 as a medical school focused on combating yellow fever in the New Orleans region. This gift will exponentially enhance Tulane's efforts against one of the most devastating scourges of modern times — cancer. We could not be more grateful to Pierce and his family for this extraordinary investment in Tulane's School of Medicine through a gift that is a moving and consequential tribute to his father," said President Michael A. Fitts.

The donation also helps advance Tulane's plans to make its downtown campus a regional hub for biotechnological innovation and bolsters the university's pursuit of a prestigious National Cancer Institute designation for the New Orleans metro area in partnership with LCMC Health, the Louisiana Cancer Research Center and LSU Health New Orleans.

"Of all the gifts our family has made to Tulane, this one is the most meaningful," said Marshall, the president and chief executive officer of Élevage Capital Management, a Dallas investment firm. "My father passed away prematurely from leukemia. By making this investment in Tulane School of Medicine, my family hopes to make a substantial difference in the fight against cancer. I look forward to seeing Tulane's doctors and scientists make incredible breakthroughs in the years ahead."

The gift will dedicate \$3 million to establish the E. Pierce Marshall Memorial Chair, an endowed faculty position whose holder will focus on cancer research. The gift will also provide \$2 million to create the E. Pierce Marshall Memorial Research Endowed Fund, which will specifically support cancer research.

An additional \$5 million is committed to finance the renovation of the seventh floor of the School of Medicine's Hutchinson Memorial Building, including the construction of a suite of laboratories for cancer research to be named the E. Pierce Marshall Memorial Laboratories.

"This tremendous gift is a boon for the advancement of oncological science at our medical school," said Dr. Lee Hamm, senior vice president and dean of the School of Medicine. "It gives Tulane the ability to hire a brilliant mind in cancer research and provides us with both the ample resources and the top-notch facilities to unlock the mysteries behind this disease and develop medical solutions. I thank Pierce and his family for their exceptional generosity."

Marshall graduated from Tulane's A. B. Freeman School of Business with a bachelor's degree in management in 1990. In addition to his role on the Board of Tulane, the university's main governing body,

he serves on the Freeman Business School Council and the Executive Campaign Council for the *Always the Audacious* fundraising campaign. He lives in Dallas with his wife, Kristen, and their son.

The Marshall family's anchor gift in 2014 created the Marshall Family Commons inside the expanded Goldring/Woldenberg Business Complex on Tulane's uptown campus. Pierce Marshall has been a recurring judge for the annual Tulane Business Model Competition and has philanthropically supported its operations. He is a member of the Olive and Blue Society of top donors to Tulane Athletics and was inducted into the Paul Tulane Society, which honors individuals and organizations who have given \$1 million or more to the university. 🍷



Hutchinson Memorial Building, home of the Tulane School of Medicine in downtown New Orleans. (Photo by Kenny Lass)

## \$2.5 MILLION FOR NEXT WAVE SCHOLARSHIP CHALLENGE



A \$2.5 million anonymous donation kickstarts the third phase of Tulane University's Next Wave Scholarship Challenge, a dollar-for-dollar matching program that has vastly expanded undergraduate scholarship opportunities. This challenge match is specifically reserved for need-based undergraduate scholarships.

"We are grateful to these generous donors for their belief in the importance of a Tulane education and for their commitment to ensuring that cost is never a barrier for the best and brightest students whose dream is to attend Tulane," said President Michael A. Fitts. "The third phase of the Next Wave Scholarship Challenge will open the door to a transformative Tulane education for many deserving students."

The third installment of the Next Wave Scholarship Challenge will double the impact of newly endowed undergraduate scholarships ranging from \$100,000 to \$500,000 by offering a dollar-for-dollar match. Additionally, many existing endowed undergraduate scholarships and new scholarships established by returning donors will be eligible for matching funds up to \$125,000.

"Our family is delighted to contribute to a cause we hold dear: ensuring that every deserving student has the opportunity to attend Tulane, regardless of financial circumstances," said the donors, parents of a junior at the School of Architecture who wish to remain anonymous. "We chose to support need-based scholarships because they create pathways to success. We have been welcomed into the Tulane family with open arms, and we are delighted to play a role in promoting one of the university's greatest priorities."

Launched in 2021, the Next Wave Scholarship Challenge was initiated with a \$5 million donation from longtime Tulane donors Richard Yulman, his daughter Katy (NC '05) and son-in-law Greg Williamson. This contribution has been matched dollar-for-dollar by 170 donor households, significantly enhancing the scope and reach of endowed scholarships for both undergraduate and graduate students at Tulane.

In 2023, anonymous Tulane parents made a \$5 million gift to start a second phase of the scholarship program. That phase is almost completely matched. Ultimately, when this third phase is complete, the Next Wave initiative will have raised a total of \$25 million for scholarships.

This surge in scholarship funding aligns with one of the primary objectives of *Only the Audacious*, the most ambitious and comprehensive fundraising campaign in Tulane's history. The success of the Next Wave Scholarship Challenge enabled the campaign, which transitioned to *Always the Audacious*, to exceed its target for endowed scholarship support. 🍷

## GAYLORD BICKHAM LEAVES \$4 MILLION ESTATE GIFT TO TULANE

A devoted Tulane alumnus who was known for his quick, dry wit, lively conversational talents and extensive knowledge of history, Gaylord M. Bickham (A&S '56) was a man who knew the power of a legacy.

So, when the time came to consider his own legacy, he looked for a way to support the work of an institution that had meant so much to him throughout his life — and honor his beloved parents at the same time.

Bickham left an estate gift of more than \$4 million to Tulane, meaningfully supporting priorities at his alma mater that were dear to his heart. He generously elected to support the field of study that meant so much to him throughout his life and honor his parents' memories as well by establishing the Mouton and Leatrice Bickham Memorial Chair in European History at Tulane University.

His estate gift to Tulane further established the Gaylord Mouton Bickham (A&S '56) Scholarship in Liberal Arts, which welcomes students to enjoy all Tulane has to offer.

Bickham was a lifelong Louisianan. Born and raised in Franklinton, for many years he owned and managed the Bickham Oil Company, which served the local community and surrounding parishes. But New Orleans was forever in his heart.

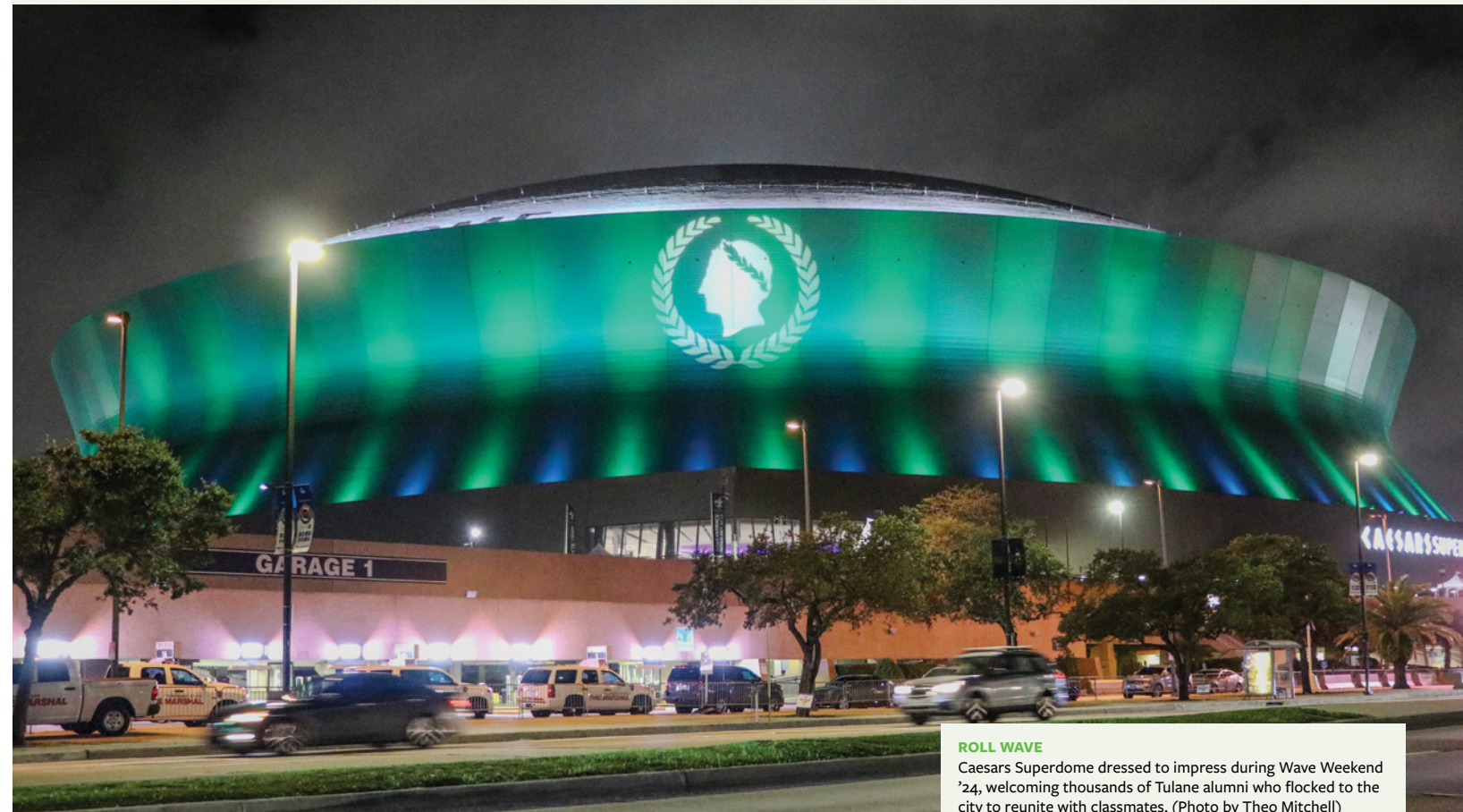
Throughout his life, when he wasn't on one of his many excursions to London and Paris, he'd return weekly to the city to dine at some of New Orleans' finest restaurants.

As Tulane and New Orleans made a lasting impression on Bickham, so too did he decide to leave a lasting impression on the university.

Bickham's estate gift to Tulane demonstrates how personal philanthropy can amplify one life-changing educational experience into a legacy that touches countless students' lives for generations to come. 🍷

# Tulanians

Submit your news to [tulanian.tulane.edu/contact](mailto:tulanian.tulane.edu/contact) and follow @tulanealumni on Facebook to share your memories and join the conversation.



**ROLL WAVE**  
Caesars Superdome dressed to impress during Wave Weekend '24, welcoming thousands of Tulane alumni who flocked to the city to reunite with classmates. (Photo by Theo Mitchell)

1960  
1969

**BRENDA SEABROOKE (NC '63)** has authored a second collection of pastiches titled "Sherlock Holmes: The Crimson Trail and Other Stories," which has been published by MX Publishing in London.

**HELEN STONE (NC '63)** was selected to compete with the United States team at the 2024 Funakoshi Gichin Karate World Championship Tournament in Japan. Stone, who is the oldest member of the team, competed in the kata competition in the 70 and older age group. Additionally, Stone produced the play "The Enigma of the Torah" at the Marigny Opera House in spring 2023.

**STEVEN ZEGAR (A&S '64)**, optometric physician, completed 50 years in private practice serving patients' visual and medical needs.

**CATHERINE NORR (NC '66)** has authored her second poetry chapbook "Goat Farm Road, Poems from the Adirondacks," published by Finishing Line Press. The poems capture Norr's time living off-grid in a wooded, little-populated area of upstate New York.

1970  
1979

**RONA SIMMONS (NC '72)** published the nonfiction book "No Average Day: The 24 Hours of October 24, 1944" with the

University of Missouri Press. The book covers the day when 2,600 Americans perished in World War II.

**DR. WILLIAM P. COLEMAN III (M '74)** received the 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Tulane School of Medicine. Coleman has served as the editor-in-chief of the journal *Dermatologic Surgery* since 2001 and his son, **DR. KYLE COLEMAN (M '05)**, serves as assistant editor. Coleman is an adjunct professor of dermatology and surgery at Tulane and has authored 340 medical publications as well as 10 books. He practices dermatology in Metairie, Louisiana, with his son **DR. PATRICK COLEMAN (M '03)**.

**JOE TRAHAN III (A&S '76)** was awarded The U.S. Army Ancient Order of St. Gabriel Award for his outstanding

achievements and contributions to the U.S. Army public affairs community and practice.

**RONALD L. BOOK (L '78)**, Lauren's Kids chairman, humanitarian and legal advocate, was nominated for a 2024 Nobel Peace Prize for his work addressing homelessness and preventing childhood sexual abuse.

**JENNIFER BRUSH (NC '78)** has completed her Head of Mission assignment with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Parliamentary Elections Observation Mission in Mongolia.



IMPRESSION

## BOBBY YAN

**B**obby Yan (TC '95), an eight-time Emmy Award-winner with two new movies that recently premiered, has built a successful career as a full-time filmmaker. But if he could offer advice to his 21-year-old self on the eve of graduating from Tulane, he'd tell himself to aim high and believe in his potential.

"Think of your highest goal — think big and go from there," Yan said. "Don't allow anyone to create doubt in your vision of who you are. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't do it, because if you do the work, and you're passionate and really believe in what you're doing, you can achieve it."

It's advice he'd extend to anyone with dreams of their own. Yan's career traces back to his time

at Tulane, where he first got hands-on experience at the Tulane television channel, TSTV. He joined the production team of "Hip Hop Half Hour," a show popular not only on campus but throughout New Orleans.

During his sophomore year, Yan founded AASU, the Asian American Student Union. As a second-generation Chinese American, he felt driven to create a community for students to share their experiences and build connections. "This became, for me, a passion to create a home base for us to really discuss our experiences on campus, and also to unify us as a whole and to have fun, ultimately," he shared.

While Yan knew at age 21 that he was destined to be a filmmaker, he wasn't quite certain of the

steps to get there. Torn between his passion for filmmaking and a possible career as a Broadway singer, he described his early post-graduate years as "a time of discovery."

"It took several years before I found my roots," he said. Eventually, his path became clear through directing music videos, which allowed him to blend his love for filmmaking with his deep connection to music.

Over time, Yan's talent earned him eight Emmy Awards, the television industry's highest honor for artistic and technical excellence. These awards recognized his contributions as an associate producer and online editor for the MLB Network.

In 2019, Yan was honored as a Tulane Trailblazer, a recognition celebrating individuals from diverse backgrounds who have made a lasting impact on the university. Tulane also established the Bobby Yan Lecture in Media and Social Change in his name.

"I was honestly floored and humbled to be selected as a Trailblazer."

Looking ahead, Yan hopes to leave a lasting impact through his work. "I want to create stories that resonate," he said. "I also want to be a filmmaker who can inspire others to pursue their own dreams and goals. It's really important for me to help support, inspire and influence future filmmakers who have unique stories to tell." 📽️

1980  
1989

**LAURA STARKS (E '80)**, who writes under the pen name L.A. Starks, has authored "Winner's Curse: A Lynn Dayton Thriller" (Nemaha Ridge Publishing Group LLC), the fourth novel in her Lynn Dayton thriller series. The book, an "energy technothriller," follows protagonist Lynn Dayton, who is the first woman to lead the drilling division of TriCoast Energy but faces undercutting by international power players and former executives who conspire to sabotage the company's dealings.

**ANDREW SHENKAN (A&S '84)** has accepted the position of general manager at WBRZ-TV, the ABC affiliate in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Shenkan previously worked at the television station as a sales manager from 1984 to 2002.

**BRIAN FITZPATRICK (A&S '85)** received a patent on AI gunshot detection technology.

**DAVID HEDDEN (G '85)** resigned as chief scientific officer at BioDuro, a drug development company in San Diego, California, at the end of 2019 and became an independent pharmaceutical sciences/drug product development consultant. Hedden retired last July after a 37-year career in new product research and development in the pharmaceutical industry. Hedden and his wife are enjoying retirement in San Diego.

**DR. JAVAD "SCOTT" MASHKURI (A&S '86)** received the National Association of Addiction Drug and Alcohol Counselors 2024 Davida Coady Gorham Medical Professional of the Year award for his work providing low-barrier access to addiction services in Vermont emergency departments. He has worked at the University of Vermont Health Network, Central Vermont Medical Center Emergency Department since 2011. He was director from 2016-2020 and is now the physician lead for the Central Vermont Prevention Coalition.

**LAURENCE ALEXANDER (L '87)** was named the tenth chancellor of the University of Michigan-Flint. He previously served 11 years as chancellor of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. In 2022, former President Joe Biden appointed Alexander to chair the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development, an advisory board that ensures the United

States Agency for International Development brings the assets of universities to bear on development challenges in agriculture and food security and supports their representation in United States Agency for International Development (USAID) programming.

**LATRENDIA KNIGHTEN (NC '87)** has begun her two-year term as president for the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Knighten previously served as president-elect for the council for the 2023-2024 term.

1990  
1999

**LUCY KLAUSNER (NC '90, B '94)** has been named vice president of resource development at Episcopal Children's Services (ECS4Kids), which serves over 27,000 north and central Florida children and families. In this role, Klausner will be responsible for fundraising and development to build visibility, impact and financial resources.

**DAVID GARDNER (B '91)** was named a visiting scholar and Industry Expert-in-Residence at Tulane's A. B. Freeman School of Business. Gardner previously served as an adjunct professor in New York City and former chief information officer for a Fortune 100 company. Gardner continues to serve as a board advisor for multiple startups and part-time as a service quality assurance executive.

**MARLA MORRIS (UC '91)**, who holds a PhD in Philosophy from the European Graduate School, was named a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

**LARRY WEISS (A&S '91)** was appointed chief legal officer of AngioDynamics, Inc., a leading medical technology company, in December 2024. Weiss lives in Andover, Massachusetts, with his wife **CHARLY WEISS (NC '91)** and their two boys.

**MARGARET FENTON (NC '92)** released "Little Blue Boy," published by Aakenbaaken & Kent. The book is the latest installment in Fenton's southern mystery series featuring child welfare social worker Claire Conover from Birmingham, Alabama.

**JAN RAINES (NC '92)** has accepted the position of director of veterinary medicine at Black Beauty Ranch, a sanctuary

for rescued exotic animals, equids and livestock. Raines previously served as a veterinarian at the Dallas Zoo for 19 years.

**MARK TAYLOR (A '94)** was hired as a principal architect for DAHLIN Architecture, Planning and Interiors in its Bellevue office. Mark joins DAHLIN with 25 years of design and sustainability experience leading complex projects for large-scale retail and mixed-use development in the Pacific Northwest and nationally.

**PATTY HEYDA (A '95)** has authored a book titled "Radical Atlas of Ferguson, USA," which explores the structural forces that continue to lead to racial segregation, fragmentation, poverty and police targeting in the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson. The book's publication coincides with the 10-year anniversary of the Black Lives Matter uprising and national movement that followed the murder of teenager Michael Brown by a police officer in Ferguson.

**DONALD TYER (E '95)** was awarded the Navy Superior Civilian Service Award for his role as director of logistics services of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. The award, which recognizes employee contributions that are exceptionally high in value, is the second highest honorary award under the Department of the Navy Civilian Awards program.

**REBECCA HELLER (NC '96)** earned her doctorate in education in Leadership & Innovation from Arizona State University's Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College. Her research focused on mindfulness and well-being of students from high-achieving schools.

**EVAN MAROWITZ (A&S '96)** has been named one of the "Best Lawyers in America" for 2025 by the publication "Best Lawyers." He was recognized for his expertise and experience as a medical malpractice defense trial attorney.

**JAMIE VAN LEEUWEN (PHTM '97, G '99)** has been named the managing director of the BuildStrong Education Foundation, a nonprofit focused on improving housing affordability and workforce development. Van Leeuwen previously served former Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper for more than 15 years as senior advisor and deputy chief of staff, leading community partnerships.

**JULIE HAFFNER (L '99)** has been named head of motion picture business affairs at talent agency WME, which represents

## What was your favorite research project that you worked on while at Tulane?



I took experimental animal behavior and we did a cool research project on the sun bears at the zoo who were bored and pacing on a rock! Spent a lot of time at the zoo that semester!

**Lauren Rosen (NC '92)**



We used to go twice a week to the DMV and collect data from people waiting to be serviced. In 2003, before everyone had a smart phone, this was a prime audience of people with nothing to do but fill out your survey.

We were studying driving behaviors and personality.

**Eileen Linnabery (NC '06)**

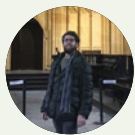


Working with a native Mayan from the Yucatan doing a paper on maize farming and its importance to the culture in the Spoken Mayan course offered through the Anthropology department.

**Michael Wood (A&S '76)**

Submit your news to [tulanian.tulane.edu/contact](mailto:tulanian.tulane.edu/contact) and follow @tulanealumni on Facebook to join the conversation.

### What was your favorite research project that you worked on while at Tulane?



In my Diversity of Animal Behavior ecology class I had an assignment to observe the Amur Leopards at the Audubon Zoo & write a research report. I received a free zoo pass for the entire class! It was awesome! Thank you Dr. Donata Henry!  
**Austin Bloom (SLA '11)**



Worked with the Mary Amelia Center and my colleagues in MCH with the Qualitative Research of "I Choose: Giving New Orleans adolescents a voice in their reproductive health" phenomenal work with Tulane CEMCH and Tulane University Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.  
**Maudra B. (PHTM '11)**

numerous artists, creatives, actors and more across the entertainment industry. Haffner will oversee motion picture client deals and serve as an advisor to WME agents, executives and clients on structuring and negotiating motion picture and talent deals.

2000  
2009

**DR. NAVEEN PEMMARAJU (TC '00)** has been promoted to professor of medicine in the Department of Leukemia at MD Anderson Cancer Center. Pemmaraju, whose research focuses on ultra-rare blood cancers, led the clinical trial for a new drug to treat blastic plasmacytoid dendritic cell neoplasm, which led to FDA approval in 2019.

**ASHLI ROSENTHAL BLUMENFELD (NC '03)**, co-president of Standard Meat Company, and her brother Ben Rosenthal, CEO of the company, have been named national Entrepreneur of the Year 2024 winners, after winning the Southwest regional award last year. The award recognizes business leaders for their ingenuity, courage and entrepreneurial spirit. The program celebrates original founders who bootstrapped their business from inception or who raised outside capital to grow their company, transformational CEOs who

have infused innovation into an existing organization, and multigenerational family business leaders who reimaged a legacy business model.

**JESSICA HOPPE (L '04)** has been appointed as the president and chief executive officer of The World Residences at Sea, the largest privately owned residential mega yacht with 165 luxury residences. Hoppe, who previously served as chief administrative officer and general counsel at the company, will now oversee the company, which maintains personnel in a corporate office in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and on board the yacht.

**LEENA PRADHAN-NABZDYK (G '04)** is the CEO and co-founder of Canomiks, a life sciences startup company. Canomiks was awarded a nearly \$1 million grant by the National Science Foundation to develop a testing platform to measure the biological effects of botanical ingredients and their impact on human health.

**DR. TRACEY HENRY (G '05)**, associate professor of medicine in the Division of General Internal Medicine at Emory University School of Medicine, was selected for the National Academies of Medicine's Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellows 2024-2025 cohort. Since 1973, the nonpartisan program has offered hands-on policy experience with the most influential congressional and

executive offices in the nation's capital, providing the opportunity for fellows to help transform the nation's health care policy and practice.

**JESSI KLEINMAN (SLA '09)** and Jonathan Byer welcomed their first child, Jacob Asher Byer, on May 9, 2024.

2010  
2019

**LEE P. GARY (PHTM '10)**, a Fulbright Specialist, was appointed as a Visiting Faculty Research Scholar at the University of Makeni, located in the Northern Province of Sierra Leone for the 2024-2025 academic year. During summer 2024, he and his wife **JENNIFER S. GARY (B '91)** visited Makeni and toured the former Ebola Treatment Center where he served as WASH Coordinator during 2015 with the International Medical Corps.

**SAMANTHA GERLACH (SSE '10)**, currently a tenured professor at Dillard University, has been working with a team at Brain Chemistry Labs on research around the brain disease glioblastoma. The team's paper was recently published in the Swiss journal *biomedicines*.

**HANNAH (B '11)** and **JOHN (SSE '11, A '14) HUPPI** will row the Arctic Ocean this summer as part of the Arctic Challenge. They will join a 4-person team on an unsupported row as they vie for a world record and raise money for charities supporting New Orleans youth.

**STEELE M. HULL (B '17)**, commercial director at Florida Marine, had a push boat named after him in summer 2024. The 2000 hp vessel was delivered by Steiner Shipyard in Bayou La Batre. Hull helps to oversee Florida Marine's annual budget among other duties.

2020  
2024

**YVETTE BURCESCU (B '21, '22)**, who played volleyball at Tulane, was inducted into the Walter Panas High School Hall of Fame in 2024.



**ANDIE REGAN (B '20)** is the founder of cake jar shop Andie's Eats. The inspiration for the New York City-based business first began on Tulane's campus, where Regan served cake scraps from her baking ventures to the Tulane community.



## IMPRESSION SUE OPPLIGER

**103**-year-old Elvera Sue Oppliger (SW '53), who graduated with her Master of Social Work from Tulane in 1953, is no stranger to change. An avid activist and changemaker, she made waves in Louisiana politics on multiple fronts.

On top of her active roles in the civil rights and feminist movements, her career as a social worker would go on to change the future of mental health care in Louisiana. In 1963, President Kennedy signed into law a decree that mental institutions were to be replaced by community mental health centers, which would allow patients to live and receive care in their communities.

Oppliger helped to lead this transition in North Louisiana. She was one of the first three people employed at Shreveport's brand-new mental health center in 1965. As the director of community services for the Shreveport Mental Health Center, Oppliger established community infrastructure to rehabilitate and socialize schizophrenic children who had previously been held in state institutions.

"We built support systems, set up social clubs in women's groups and churches, and they met every week to help patients reintegrate to society," Oppliger said. "We also helped high school and college students tutor the children."

She helped design an integrated volunteer program to develop academic confidence and social skills. "Volunteers can play a vital role in community mental health programs, not only by augmenting available manpower but by focusing on and reinforcing the healthier aspects of the patients' functioning," Oppliger wrote in a 1971 article published in the journal *Psychiatric Services*.

In the first four years of the program's existence, it impacted some 111 children, later blooming into a parish-wide program hundreds of volunteers and children strong.

Oppliger retired from full-time social work in 1979, though she continued to do consultation work, picked up real estate and antiquing jobs, continued her volunteerism, and traveled to at least 45 countries.

"At 103, I'm still very much a part of and care about what's going on. I read the newspaper every day and keep up with things that are going on," Oppliger said. "I've stayed active in every way — in my community, in my body, in my mind."

She remains committed to service, dedicating time to her church and the many valuable friendships she has fostered during her journey. So, what does she have to say to today's social workers? One thing: "Keep working. All we can do is continue to work." 🍷





TRIBUTE

# DR. ANDREW SCHALLY

Renowned endocrinologist and Nobel Laureate Dr. Andrew Schally has passed away, leaving a legacy of groundbreaking scientific contributions. Schally, who spent over four decades advancing medical research at Tulane University and the New Orleans VA Medical Center, was particularly celebrated for discovering key peptides in the hypothalamus that control pituitary hormone secretion. This pioneering work earned him the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1977. His research paved the way for the preferred treatment of advanced prostate cancer, and contributed to significant advancements in contraception, diabetes and depression.

Schally's commitment to innovation and excellence was evident throughout his career. The recent donation of his Nobel Prize medal to the Tulane School of Medicine is a testament to his dedication to inspiring future scientists. Tulane President Michael A. Fitts praised Schally's "bold, unrelenting pursuit of discovery," which has improved countless lives globally. Schally's contributions will continue to be celebrated, and his influence will remain a guiding light for researchers worldwide.



Top: Archival photo of Dr. Andrew Schally receiving his Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1977. (Photo contributed by Tulane University) Bottom: The Nobel Prize that Schally donated to Tulane with the hope of inspiring the next generation of researchers. (Photo by Sabree Hill)

## Farewell

We say goodbye to Tulanians whose deaths were reported to us during the past quarter.

- Lois Seidenbach Shepard (NC '47)
- Charles R. Capdepon Jr. (B '48)
- Benjamin F. Landreth (B '48)
- Robert A. Longmire (E '49)
- Joyce Caldwell Randazzo (NC '50)
- Donald P. Maynard (E '51)
- John K. Saer Sr. (A&S '51, M '54)
- Mary Elizabeth Patton Lamon (NC '52)
- Barbara Cohn Marcus (NC '53)
- James A. Mundie Jr. (L '53)
- Marion D. Hargrove Jr. (M '54)
- Cecil Morgan Jr. (A&S '54, M '59)
- Morton B. Sarlin (A&S '54, M '57)
- Robert T. Brooks Jr. (A&S '55, M '58)
- Andree Briant Lago (NC '55)
- Mary Land (NC '55)
- Milton J. Retif Sr. (A&S '55)
- Eugenie Wilson Alsobrook (NC '56)
- Oran W. Chenault Jr. (A&S '56, M '59)
- Marjory Manget Lyman (NC '56)
- Ann McGovern McIntyre (SW '56)
- Mary Harrell Reeves (NC '56)
- James E. Brown Sr. (A&S '57, M '60)
- Paul B. Deal (L '57, A&S '59)
- Leila Rossner Thissell (NC '57)
- Roy S. Heitkamp (E '58)
- Jeron J. LaFargue (L '58)
- Laurence D. Rudman (A&S '58, L '60)
- Mary Coutret Woodman (NC '58)
- Arion R. Boyle (A&S '59, L '61)
- Lisa Young Donely (NC '59)
- John K. Monlezun (E '59)
- John H. Overton (A&S '59, M '62)
- Charles F. Seemann Jr. (A&S '59, L '62)
- Henry J. Bodenheimer (B '60)
- White E. Gibson III (M '60)
- Loanne Ibele (SW '60)
- Robert A. Little Sr. (M '60)
- Maxwell E. McCombs (A&S '60)

- Otto B. Schoenfeld III (A&S '60, L '64)
- Robert B. Brannen Sr. (B '61)
- Marshall A. Burns (M '61)
- Henry L. Lomasney Sr. (E '61)
- Augustine Meaher III (A&S '61, L '63)
- Dolores Cornelius Bess (PHTM '62)
- Goodman B. Espy III (M '62)
- William D. Hall (A&S '62)
- William C. Johnson Jr. (M '62)
- Herbert D. Halpern (B '63)
- Lucie Pasquier Harris (NC '63)
- Gerald A. Donaldson (A&S '64, G '66)
- Larry J. Green (L '64)
- William A. Guynes Jr. (M '64)
- Uwe J. Lorenz (E '64, E '70)
- Newton G. Quantz Jr. (M '64)
- Laura Herring Tanner (NC '64, L '67)
- Joseph S. Trapani (A&S '64, M '68)
- Helen Herd Bednarczyk (G '65)
- Edward O. Bufkin Jr. (B '65, B '66)
- Isaac J. Burson Jr. (L '65)
- Raymond F. Heyd (UC '65, B '67)
- George H. Latham (M '65)
- Carter F. RuBane (M '65)
- Barbara Hillery Saik (UC '65)
- Edward H. Stolley (A&S '65, L '66)
- Jimmy P. Sumner Sr. (SW '65)
- John A. Sutherland Jr. (A&S '65, L '66)
- Oswald A. Decuir Jr. (L '66)
- Thomas J. Halpin Sr. (A&S '66)
- Charles E. Hamilton III (A&S '66, L '69)
- Nia Katechis Terezakis (M '66)
- Charles A. Bush (M '67)
- Jack R. Goodman (M '67)
- Ronald E. Haag (UC '67)
- Paul H. Kronlage (UC '67)
- Spencer Lawton Jr. (A&S '68)
- Sandra Duff Newkham (SW '68)
- William W. Powell (E '68, E '72)
- Sophia Hencken Stone (G '68)
- Russell I. Burgdahl (A '69)
- George P. Dorsey Jr. (A&S '69, B '73)
- Janis Kostash (G '69)

- John F. Rouquette (A&S '69)
- Herbert R. Alexander Jr. (L '71)
- William F. Danaher Jr. (A&S '71)
- Alan B. Goer (A&S '71)
- Robert J. Kaminski (M '71)
- Edward J. Moskowitz (A&S '71, M '75)
- Norman J. Currier (B '72)
- Jacques F. de Boisblanc (B '72)
- James J. Pomroy (SW '72)
- Rebecca Whitten Provenza (NC '72)
- Robert M. Herrick (B '73)
- John G. Simmons (M '73)
- Sharon Weisler Leader (NC '74, SW '75)
- William B. Williams (B '74)
- Terry D. Barnett (UC '75)
- Sherrill G. Hebert (B '75)
- Lois Pruski (B '75)
- Martha Startzman (G '75)
- Jon B. Latson (G '76)
- Roger M. Orth (M '77)
- Andy J. Peters Jr. (A&S '77)
- Elsa Pagoaga Charlie (UC '78)
- Richard G. Sellers (E '78, M '82)
- Nicholas T. LaCour Sr. (A&S '79)
- Wilson W. Locke (A&S '79)
- Alan M. Johnson (M '80)
- Albert J. Ochsner III (PHTM '80)
- Kevin R. Cole (UC '81)
- Philip M. DeLony (G '81)
- Carl N. Hall (A&S '81)
- Robert E. King Jr. (A&S '81)
- Craig J. Coenson (A&S '83, M '87)
- Bernice Forrest (G '83)
- Margaret Plettinger Mitchell (SW '83)
- Joyce Bennett Oakland (B '84)
- Karen Kravtin-Shadrick (NC '85)
- Stephen C. Smith (L '85)
- Scott M. Downing (B '86)
- Deborah Hacker (NC '87)
- Laura Shiffman Cheney (NC '89)
- Frances Murphy (NC '91)
- Samuel R. Arden (A&S '92, L '96)
- Robin Baber Banks (UC '93)

- Thomas F. Haddox (TC '94)
- William B. Greene III (A&S '96, B '97)
- Nancy Maurin Pavur (B '97)
- Jeffrey N. Theiler (PHTM '97)
- Amy Johnson (NC '99)
- Cherie Orillion (UC '00, UC '03)
- Robyn Ellis Guidry (B '05)
- Josephine King McNary (M '06)
- Dhaval R. Patel (M '06, PHTM '06)
- Alejandro J. Rodriguez (L '06)
- Kelly McGuire Rednour (CS '11)
- Jennifer Roth (SoPA '19)

KEY TO SCHOOLS

- SLA (School of Liberal Arts)
  - SSE (School of Science and Engineering)
  - A (School of Architecture)
  - B (A. B. Freeman School of Business)
  - L (Law School)
  - M (School of Medicine)
  - SW (School of Social Work)
  - PHTM (School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine)
  - SoPA (School of Professional Advancement)
- A&S (College of Arts and Sciences, the men's liberal arts and sciences college that existed until 1994)  
 TC (Tulane College, the men's liberal arts and sciences college that existed from 1994 until 2006)  
 NC (Newcomb College, the women's liberal arts and sciences college that existed until 2006)  
 E (School of Engineering)  
 G (Graduate School)  
 UC (University College, the school for part-time adult learners. The college's name was changed to the School of Continuing Studies in 2006.)  
 SCS (School of Continuing Studies, which changed its name to the School of Professional Advancement in 2017.)

# EMPOWERING OUR IMPACT

BY MICHAEL A. FITTS, President

Great universities are driven by great philanthropy. Tulane's ongoing ascent as a world-class research institution is empowered by the generous support of alumni, families and friends who recognize our tremendous impact on the world and want to help it grow. As I write this, our historic campaign — now called *Always the Audacious* — has raised over \$1.7 billion from nearly 100,000 donors. Among these scores of dedicated supporters, one visionary Tulanian's extraordinary giving recently led to a major milestone in university history: the naming of the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.

As a young Newcomb College student and theatre major, Celia could hardly have imagined the impact she was destined to have on her beloved alma mater. Along with her late husband Albert, Celia has transformed every corner of the university with decades of impactful giving. For example, the Weatherhead Scholars Program enables more students to achieve the dream of a Tulane education, while Weatherhead Hall elevates the student experience, engaging them socially and intellectually with



The Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine on Tulane's downtown campus (Photo by Kenny Lass)

faculty-in-residence. Celia also established the Weatherhead Presidential Chairs to recruit globally renowned faculty who are changing the world with their groundbreaking, cross-disciplinary research.

Celia's latest gift builds on Tulane's long history at the vanguard of public health, from yellow fever and cholera in the 19th century to COVID-19 and cancer in the 21st century. Thanks to our boundary-crossing approach, our leadership in public health is deeply intertwined with our strengths in other areas, from medicine to social work to Latin American studies. Our interdisciplinarity, our outward-facing focus and our collaborative culture are driving the explosive growth of our research enterprise.

We saw this growth reflected in the historic visit to campus this fall by the

then-president and first lady of the United States, announcing \$23 million in research funding as part of the bipartisan cancer moonshot initiative. We saw it in the selection of the Tulane National Primate Research Center as the NIH-funded national coordinating center for research on aging, which follows the TNPRC's success as the coordinating center for COVID-19 research. And we saw it in the inaugural Tulane Future of Energy Forum, which convened nearly 1,000 industry experts and thought leaders to explore the role of energy pragmatism in securing our energy future. This three-day event showcased how our research capabilities and our location in the Gulf South make us the perfect institution to tackle the complex and critical issues related to the global energy transition.

From energy and the environment, to cancer and infectious disease, to music and literature, to aging and brain science, Tulane is building a better future — and our efforts are multiplied exponentially by heroes of the university like Celia Scott Weatherhead. The Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine joins the A. B. Freeman School of Business as only the second named school among our ten academic units. By my count, that leaves eight schools that are ready for their own champion. 🏆



Our interdisciplinarity, our outward-facing focus and our collaborative culture are driving the explosive growth of our research enterprise.



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