

Gift from Tulane alumnus establishes Herb Weil, PhD Professorship in the Humanities

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Tulane alumnus and retired English professor Herbert Weil Jr. — pictured at right with his wife, fellow University of Manitoba scholar Judy Weil — has made a gift to create the Herb Weil, PhD Professorship in the Humanities at the university's School of Liberal Arts. (Photo courtesy of the Weils)

Tulane alumnus and retired English professor Herbert S. Weil Jr. has made a gift to the university that will establish the Herb Weil, PhD Professorship in the Humanities, an endowed faculty position in Tulane's School of Liberal Arts.

“Our faculty is Tulane’s greatest strength, and Herb Weil’s gift ensures that we will continue to recruit scholars of highest caliber in this critical field — ones who push the boundaries of humanities research while collaborating with other disciplines and inspiring their students to do the same,” Tulane President Michael A. Fitts said. “We are incredibly grateful to Herb Weil for his generous support.”

Weil, an emeritus professor of English at the University of Manitoba in Canada, has published extensively on various writers. Perhaps best known for his writings on Shakespeare, his scholarship extends from Sophocles to contemporary authors such as Alice Munro and Carol Shields, as well as filmmakers including Ingmar Bergman and Yasujirō Ozu. He authored or co-edited works including *Reading, Writing and Rewriting: A Rhetoric Reader*; *Discussions of Shakespeare’s Romantic Comedy*; and *The First Part of King Henry IV*. The latter was co-authored with his wife, Judy Weil, who also is an emeritus professor at Manitoba.

A New Orleans native, Weil grew up blocks away from Tulane’s uptown campus. He attended one year at Yale before enrolling at Tulane on a Navy ROTC scholarship, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in English in 1954 and was senior class president and editor of the *Jambalaya* yearbook. After studying in France as a Fulbright Fellow at the University of Lille and serving as a Navy officer, Weil, a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, completed a double PhD in English and Humanities at Stanford in 1964. He taught at the University of Connecticut from 1962 to 1978.

Weil credits Tulane’s help in obtaining scholarships for his own education, as well as his time as president of the Canadian Association of Chairs of English, as inspiration for his desire to give back.

“In nine years at four universities, I paid only \$35 in tuition,” he said. “No wonder I now want to help younger scholars. I have increased my giving to Tulane because the global humanities are being prioritized. Outstanding teaching in the humanities not only provides a more rewarding life for people in all fields including those in business and medicine, among others, it also provides an opportunity for experts to show mastery of broader humanistic matters.”

“At a time when many pundits have proclaimed a crisis in the humanities, Herb Weil’s generosity makes a powerful statement about their continued vitality and centrality to understanding our world,” School of Liberal Arts Dean Brian Edwards said. “I have greatly enjoyed my conversations with Herb and Judy Weil and have been deeply impressed by their commitment to the advanced study of literatures

and cultural production of multiple national traditions. This gift will have a tremendous positive impact on the humanities at Tulane and help us to fulfill ambitions to amplify research and teaching in literature and the global humanities more broadly.”