

'Bold' campaign goals are within reach, says best-seller, professor Walter Isaacson

December 08, 2017 5:45 PM

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Walter Isaacson speaks at the campaign luncheon in the newly opened Marshall Family Commons in the Goldring/Woldenberg Business School Complex on Friday (Dec. 8). (Photo by Paul Morse)

Walter Isaacson hit all the right notes at the launch of the “bold” and “audacious” fundraising campaign kicked off by Tulane on Friday, Dec. 8.

More than 300 of the university’s most dedicated supporters from around the country listened intently to Isaacson, a master storyteller and renowned, best-selling biographer, as he talked about the ingredients needed to create a cradle of innovation and creativity.

All these ingredients — diversity, crossing disciplines and collaboration — “are here at Tulane in the DNA and in the future of this university,” said Isaacson. “And they are unique to the city of New Orleans in which Tulane is so interwoven.”

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Isaacson, University Professor at Tulane, tied luminaries in history, including Ben Franklin, Steve Jobs and Leonardo da Vinci, to the goals of the campaign. Isaacson has been chairman and CEO of CNN, managing editor of *TIME* and leader of the Aspen Institute. He's also an emeritus member of the Board of Tulane.

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To be a place of "joyful diversity," means to not merely tolerate diversity but to celebrate and nurture it. That requires occasionally dealing with the friction that "leads to the sparks of diversity and the sparks that come from that friction," said Isaacson.

That's where collaborative teamwork comes in. At Tulane, people work together across disciplines to figure things out, he said.

Tulane President Mike Fitts, who introduced Isaacson and then spoke briefly at the conclusion, was thrilled with his talk.

What Isaacson said about creativity and innovation is a "rally cry for what we are doing here today," said Fitts. "I can't think of a better description of what we're about and what a university should be about than what we've just heard."

[View the full video from the Big Reveal [here](#).]

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Walter Isaacson addresses the crowd of Tulane supporters at the campaign launch luncheon.
(Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)