

Yardi Gras comes to Tulane, with a little help from friends

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No. 2 Audubon Place — visible from St. Charles Avenue — is decked out with a Tulane Athletics theme, spotlighted in the Carnival colors of purple, green and gold. The display was made possible by the generous support of Morris and Cathy Bart, Tulane parents, and Tulane alumni John Georges and Barry Kern. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Contrary to what you might have heard, Mardi Gras is not canceled this year. It's just different.

While parades, balls and other large gatherings are prohibited because of the ongoing global pandemic, New Orleanians are keeping the spirit of Carnival alive in their inimitable, creative style.

Not to be left out, President Michael A. Fitts is joining the socially distanced celebration, with a little help from friends. No. 2 Audubon Place — visible from St. Charles Avenue — is decked out with a Tulane Athletics theme, spotlighted in the Carnival colors of purple, green and gold.

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[Bart, an attorney, approached President Fitts only last week, writing in an email, "I'm sure you've](#)

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seen and admired the beautiful house floats on St. Charles Avenue. The Tulane house on Audubon Place would be a perfect venue for a display. Have you considered doing a display in the yard? I would be interested in making a donation to make it happen if you would be interested in moving forward with it. But we would have to move quickly!"

President Fitts replied enthusiastically. And Georges and Kern jumped on board. Kern is the owner of Mardi Gras World and Kern Studios, the company that designs and builds hundreds of Carnival floats every year. Georges is the owner of *The Times Picayune/New Orleans Advocate*, including the news website Nola.com.

This week — just in time for the typically biggest weekend of Carnival — Tulane Facilities Services crew, in coordination with Mardi Gras World staff, completed the “Yardi Gras” installation. No. 2 Audubon has been transformed into a house float with figures of Green Wave basketball and football players, the Angry Wave mascot — and even a replica of old Tulane Stadium.

All these elements had been in storage at Mardi Gras World, remnants of previous years’ parades and events.

Carnival lives on!



A replica of Tulane Stadium is visible from St. Charles Avenue.



President Mike Fitts (center left) is joined by alumna John Georges (left) and Tulane parents Morris and Cathy Bart. (Photo provided by President's Office)