

Med Students Step up to White Coats

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"Today 177 newly minted medical students are entering the medical profession," said Dr. Marc Kahn, senior associate dean of admissions and student affairs at Tulane University School of Medicine. The occasion was the medical school's traditional White Coat Ceremony, at which incoming medical students set out on their training to become physicians.

The students of the incoming Class of 2013, joined by families, friends and loved ones, were on hand to receive their first white coats, the emblem of their new career. The gala event was held in the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton New Orleans Riverside on Monday (Aug. 3).

The faces of the Tulane doctors of tomorrow shine in this video featuring photography by Paula Burch-Celentano and production by Nick Marinello.

"You are no longer schoolboys and schoolgirls," cautioned Dr. Norman McSwain, professor of surgery who delivered the event's annual Wallace K. Tomlinson Lecture, reminding the assembled students of the seriousness of their undertaking. "Your patients will look to you, with pleading in their eyes, to save their lives."

Dr. Earnest J. Sneed, assistant dean for student affairs, placed a white coat on each student in turn. He also presented each with an embroidered badge with the medical school's seal to be worn on the coat, as well as a pin from the Arnold P. Gold Foundation for Humanism in Medicine. The students received their first stethoscopes as a gift from the Tulane Medical Alumni Association.

"The White Coat Ceremony is the point where these students turn from lay person to physician professional." Kahn said. "What's really important is the white coat doesn't imply privilege, but rather, responsibility. We teach them that having the white coat puts responsibility on them to behave professionally and to care for their fellow human beings."

There were 9,431 applicants for the 177 places in this year's incoming medical class, according to Kahn. "The students come from 33 states and they are typical of the high quality that we get at Tulane," he says. Twenty-seven are from Louisiana.

The students plunged into their new studies without delay, with classes beginning on Tuesday (Aug. 4).