

Tulane University

Tulane University Honors Entrepreneurs Who Make a Difference

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The A. B. Freeman School of Business at Tulane University has named two distinguished businessmen with close ties to New Orleans as this year's Tulane Entrepreneurs of the Year.

James J. Reiss Jr., a private investor and manager of Reiss Companies, was honored as the 2008 Tulane Most Distinguished Entrepreneur, and Allan Houston, former NBA player and founder of the Allan Houston Foundation, was honored as the 2008 Tulane Social Entrepreneur of the Year.

The awards were presented at the annual Tulane Council of Entrepreneurs Awards Gala on Friday, April 18, at the Westin New Orleans at Canal Place. The Freeman School's Levy-Rosenblum Institute for Entrepreneurship presents the awards each year to highlight individuals whose support of for-profit and nonprofit entrepreneurial initiatives improves the community.

"Jimmy Reiss and Allan Houston each exemplify the true spirit of entrepreneurship and philanthropic generosity," said John Elstrott, executive director of the Levy-Rosenblum Institute. "Jimmy has spent his career growing businesses and creating wealth while remaining committed to the community. Allan, through his foundation, created an entrepreneurship education program to help young adults in New Orleans achieve economic empowerment."

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Also recognized at the gala were the winners of the 2008 Tulane Business Plan Competition, a program where student-led business ventures compete in one business track “general business or social entrepreneurship” for two top prizes of \$10,000 in startup capital. Just-In-Time Logistics, a startup led by Tulane students, won first place for its venture to improve efficiencies in the waste management industry. Brown University students placed second with EnviroBlinds, a venture that plans to market window blinds equipped with solar panels. Tulane students behind Coursepack.net, took third place for their idea to deliver security-free, ad-subsidized electronic course reading materials to high school and college students.

In the social entrepreneurship division, students from Tulane won first prize for the Audubon Global Opportunities Fund. The venture plans to invest in stable micro-finance institutions to enable them to provide greater credit access to persons living in poverty. Shallow Crossings, a startup that plans to use renewable energy sources to provide clean water and ice for food and medical storage in undeveloped regions of the world, took second place, and Banque Pour Tous, which plans to offer banking services to mobile users in Africa, took third place. Shallow Crossings is led by students from the University of Texas at Austin, while Banque Pour Tous is backed by students from the University of Georgia.

Second place teams in each track received \$5,000 and third-place teams received \$2,500.

The Levy-Rosenblum Institute for Entrepreneurship trains students for entrepreneurial careers through coursework, community service projects and internships. In 2007, the institute's entrepreneurship program was ranked 15th in the nation by *Entrepreneur* magazine and the Princeton Review.

The Freeman School of Business was established in 1914 and is a founding member of AACSB, the premier accrediting body for collegiate schools of business. Today, Freeman is a leading, internationally recognized business school with more than 1,800 students in programs spanning three continents.