

Gift from Gayle and Tom Benson Charitable Foundation completes chapel at Tulane

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Gayle Benson, pictured, on behalf of the Gayle and Tom Benson Foundation, recently provided funding for completion of the Fr. Val McInnes, OP, Center for Catholic Life.

A \$500,000 gift from the Gayle and Tom Benson Charitable Foundation will fund completion of the chapel in the Fr. Val McInnes, OP, Center for Catholic Life. The chapel, located on Tulane University's uptown campus, will be named *The Chapel of St. Martin de Porres, donated by Gayle and Tom Benson*.

The Fr. Val Ambrose McInnes, O.P. Center for Catholic Life opened in 2015 as a new home and starting point for efforts to strengthen the Catholic presence on campus and better serve the Tulane community. Fundraising has been ongoing for construction and maintenance of the center, including putting the final touches on the 140-seat chapel.

As a gift to close the new center's capital campaign, the donation will help to provide artwork, furnishings, and other improvements for the chapel.

"We are very excited to finish the chapel thanks to the generosity of the Bensons and to name it for St. Martin de Porres, a great apostle of charity and patron of social justice who, despite suffering greatly because of his mixed race, set a profound example of love of God and neighbor," says Fr. Thomas Schaeffgen, chaplain of Tulane Catholic Center.

"The chapel will be a space of refuge and transcendent beauty for all those at Tulane who seek an encounter with God. Tulanians for many generations to come will find a place here to set aside the cares of the world and encounter the beauty of God through art, light, prayer, music and the sacred liturgy," Schaeffgen adds.

"St. Martin de Porres was committed to inclusivity and harmony, so it is fitting that a space that is open to Tulanians from all walks of life be named in his honor," says Gayle Benson. "I am proud and honored to help Tulane students, faculty, alumni and staff experience the beauty and love of the Catholic religion."