

Leonard A. Lauder funds Tulane University professorship on American history and values

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Leonard A. Lauder, who spent three decades as chief executive officer of The Estée Lauder Companies, Inc., has made a gift to establish The Leonard A. Lauder Professor of American History and Values. (photo courtesy of the The Estée Lauder Companies)

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Leonard A. Lauder, Chairman Emeritus of The Estée Lauder Companies, Inc., has made a gift to Tulane University to establish The Leonard A. Lauder Professor of American History and Values. The inaugural holder of the professorship will be Walter Isaacson, professor of history in the Tulane School of Liberal Arts and co-chair of The New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University.

The gift will also support speakers on American history and values at The New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University, which debuts March 19-21, 2020, as well as the Values in America Speaker Series, which features a variety of leading voices on the topic of values in America.

“A primary mission of universities is to create a forum for the discussion and exchange of great ideas, as well as to serve as a home for today’s leading thinkers such as Walter Isaacson,” Tulane President Mike Fitts said. “This generous gift helps Tulane achieve both of these goals. Walter’s presence on campus as a Lauder Professor places us at the forefront in the study of history, the examination of social progress and the understanding of social change and innovation.”

“As a student of history, a veteran and someone who loves the common values that unite this nation, I hope that this professorship allows the next generation to learn from the lessons of the past and from a variety of voices so that together we can continue to build a brighter future,” Lauder said.

Lauder spent three decades as chief executive officer of The Estée Lauder Companies, Inc., one of the world’s leading manufacturers and marketers of prestige skin care, makeup, fragrance and hair care products. In addition to his role with the company, Lauder is extremely involved in education, art, politics and philanthropy. His contributions in the education sector are well documented, including the Joseph H. Lauder Institute of Management & International Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, which he co-founded in 1983 with his brother, Ronald, in honor of their father.

“Leonard Lauder has always been interested in American history and how it informs our values,” Isaacson said. “He’s been generous in funding American history and values programs at the University of Pennsylvania and the Aspen Institute. He has helped fund a speaker series at Tulane that brought people such as Madeleine Albright, Jon Meacham, Annette Gordon-Reed and Ken Burns to campus in the past year to talk about American history and values. I am thrilled that he has decided to

make a more significant gift that will help both the teaching of history and bringing speakers to Tulane.”

Isaacson, who joined Tulane University in 2018, is a New Orleans native and a former *Times-Picayune* reporter. A best-selling author, he is the former chairman and CEO of CNN, managing editor of *TIME* and leader of the Aspen Institute.

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- Leonard A. Lauder