

From security guard to doctor, Class of 2022 student speaker proves that ‘anything is possible’

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Russell J. Ledet, who is graduating from Tulane School of Medicine and the A. B. Freeman School of Business this year, is the Class of 2022 student speaker at the Unified Commencement Ceremony on May 21. (Photo by Rusty Costanza)

Russell J. Ledet faced and conquered many challenges on his journey to become a doctor.

As a boy growing up in Lake Charles, Louisiana, he never imagined that he would one day be where he is today, graduating from medical school and serving as the Class of 2022 student speaker at the Unified Commencement Ceremony on May 21.

“Being selected as a student speaker means so much because I never imagined that I would accomplish all that I have,” Ledet said. “Years ago, when I was working as a security guard at a hospital and I saw doctors taking care of people, I thought, maybe this is something that I can explore. So, I started thinking about what I needed to do to become a doctor. I asked a few of the doctors that I saw during my shifts at the hospital if I could shadow them, and I was told that security guards don't really become doctors — but I didn't let that stop me.”

At this year's Commencement, Ledet, who had already earned a PhD prior to arriving at Tulane, will receive an MD from the School of Medicine and an MBA from the A. B. Freeman School of Business. Ledet said he decided to apply to be a student speaker at this year's Commencement ceremony because he knows his unique journey can be an inspiration to many young Black boys and children everywhere.

“I think the main thing that's going through my head right now is anything is possible,” Ledet said. “If you can come from what I come from and get to where I am, then anything is possible. It doesn't mean that it won't come without challenges, and you might even begin to doubt what you're trying to do when you're trying to accomplish something challenging, but you just have to stay focused.”

Ledet credits his wife, children and many loved ones for supporting him over the years as he strived to get to this point.

“My wife was the one who convinced me I was smart enough to go to college,” Ledet said. “She has supported me every step of the way, and I don't think I could have done this without her.”

After graduation, Ledet is headed to Indiana University for a triple board residency in pediatrics, adult psychiatry, and child and adolescent psychiatry.