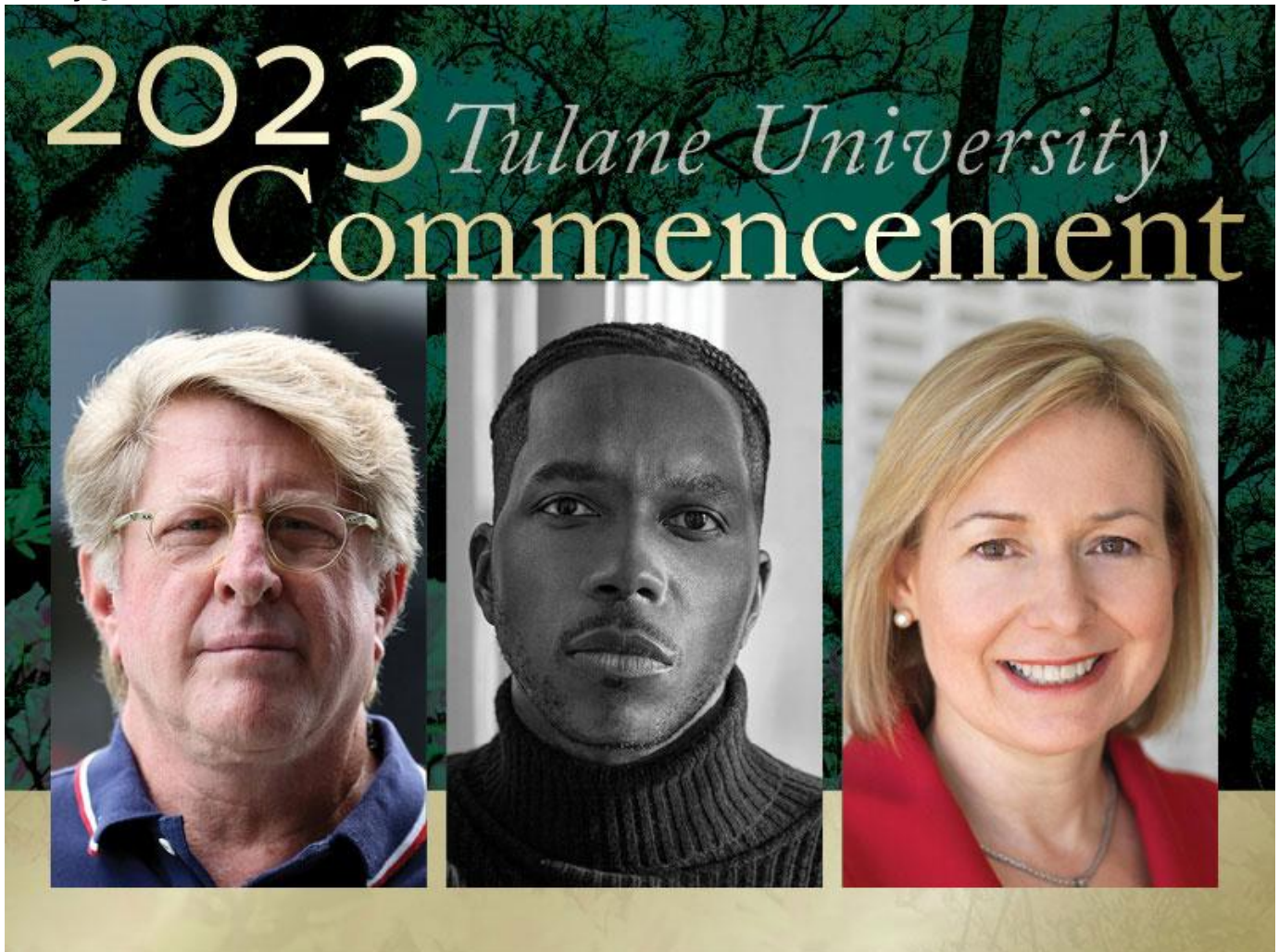


AI Pioneer, 'Hamilton' star, Jazz Fest producer to be honored at Tulane Commencement

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At Tulane University's Unified Commencement Ceremony, held on May 20, 2023, Commencement honors will be awarded to (from left) Jazz Fest producer Quint Davis, "Hamilton" star Leslie Odom, Jr., and AI pioneer Rosalind Picard. Davis and Picard will receive honorary degrees, and Odom, who will serve as the ceremony's keynote speaker, will receive the President's Medal.

Dr. Rosalind Picard, an artificial intelligence pioneer; *Hamilton* star Leslie Odom, Jr. and New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Producer Quint Davis will be honored during Tulane University's 2023 Commencement at 6:30 p.m., Saturday, May 20, in Yulman

Stadium.

“Commencement is a time to celebrate the achievements of nearly 2,000 Tulane graduates. It is also a time for us to recognize individuals whose accomplishments have had a major impact on our society, often well beyond the boundaries of their fields – individuals who, through their discovery, expertise or art, inspire our graduates to aim high and think expansively as they seek to engage and improve the world,” Tulane University President Michael A. Fitts said.

Rosalind Picard is a pioneer of affective computing or “Emotion AI,” which seeks to train computers to recognize and respond appropriately to human emotional cues. Her book *Affective Computing* is internationally recognized as the cornerstone of this field. She has published over 350 peer-reviewed articles in digital health, machine learning, wearables, and affective computing.

Picard has co-founded two companies to bring her life-enhancing and lifesaving technologies to market: Empatica, the first AI-powered smartwatch approved by the FDA to monitor seizures, and Affectiva, whose Emotion AI software and services were recently acquired by SmartEye, a global company dedicated to reducing traffic fatalities through Driver Monitoring Systems.

Picard is a professor at MIT where she teaches and directs research at the Media Lab. She is also the founding faculty chair for MindHandHeart, MIT’s campus-wide well-being initiative. Picard will receive an honorary Doctorate of Science.

Quint Davis has been the driving force behind the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival for over 50 years. While a student at Tulane, he left to answer a call for local co-producers to launch the first Jazz Fest in 1970.

Davis took the original vision of impresario George Wein and built Jazz Fest into an international phenomenon by showcasing Louisiana music, food and crafts alongside national headlining acts. As CEO of Festival Productions Inc. – New Orleans, he remains a familiar face to festivalgoers in Jazz Fest’s sixth decade.

With hundreds of thousands of attendees making the pilgrimage to the Fair Grounds each year, Jazz Fest’s annual impact on the New Orleans economy numbers in the hundreds of millions. Additionally, Jazz Fest promotes, preserves and perpetuates the music, culture and heritage of local communities through free programs,

lectures, music lessons and more offered by the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation.

In 1995, Davis partnered with *Essence Magazine* to design and produce the Essence Music Festival (now the Essence Festival of Culture), an internationally recognized annual celebration of African-American music and culture. Davis will receive an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters.

Leslie Odom, Jr. is a multifaceted, award-winning vocalist, songwriter, author, and actor. As the original “Aaron Burr” in the musical *Hamilton*, his Tony Award-winning performance helped the show become a cultural juggernaut that changed the landscape of modern musical theater. His performance on the *Hamilton* cast recording earned him a Grammy Award, and he recently received an Oscar nomination and a Critics’ Choice Award for “Speak Now,” the original song he wrote, composed and performed for Regina King’s *One Night in Miami...* in which he starred as soul legend Sam Cooke.

Odom’s film appearances also include *Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery* and a starring role in the upcoming *Exorcist* trilogy. His television work includes a guest role on the hit ABC comedy “Abbott Elementary” and an Emmy-nominated voice acting role on the AppleTV+ series “Central Park.”

In his first book *Failing Up: How to Take Risks, Aim Higher, and Never Stop Learning*, Odom shares the life lessons that enabled him to overcome challenges, pursue his passions, and achieve artistic excellence. His children’s book *I Love You More than You Will Ever Know* was released on March 28. Fitts will present Odom, who will also deliver the keynote address at the commencement ceremony, with the President’s Medal.