

Tulane University names school in honor of Celia Scott Weatherhead's record-breaking support

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The School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine will be renamed in honor of alumna Celia Scott Weatherhead in recognition of her landmark total lifetime giving of more than \$160 million in support of Tulane University. Photo by Kenny Lass.

Tulane University announced today that it is naming its School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine in honor of alumna Celia Scott Weatherhead in recognition of her landmark total lifetime giving of more than \$160 million in support of the university.

Weatherhead's commitment – the largest in Tulane's history – continues her legacy of providing funding to attract world-leading faculty researchers to Tulane and ensuring that top students from all backgrounds can attend the university.

Weatherhead's support includes a new gift that will transform the university's School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine with the goal of establishing it as the premier school of its kind in the United States and one of the top such schools in the world.

“Today, we make history with one of the greatest milestones ever announced at Tulane,” said President Michael A. Fitts. “Improving the health of all members of our society – regardless of their economic background – has long been a driving passion of Celia's. Now her extraordinary and inspirational generosity will continue to drive excellence in education, research and innovation while securing the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine as a leading institution focused on saving lives both locally and around the globe.”

Celia Weatherhead's and her late husband Albert's support for Tulane has spanned decades, focusing primarily on increasing access to Tulane and establishing the Weatherhead Presidential Chairs. Through these presidential chairs, the university recruits renowned faculty in emerging fields who engage in cross-disciplinary teaching and research on a global scale. In addition, the Weatherheads established the Weatherhead Scholars Program, which provides scholarships for academically talented students who are committed to public service.

“Celia is an inspiration in her unwavering dedication to make the world a better place through research and education,” Board of Tulane Chair David Mussafer said. “With her support, Tulane will continue to identify the causes, make the links and discover the strategies necessary to improve human health today and far into the future. Her gift is lifechanging and lifesaving.”

Celia Weatherhead's latest contribution will provide seed funding to support the development of research hubs in areas such as cancer control, climate change and health, health equity, health policy, infectious disease epidemiology, public health workforce development, and applications of artificial intelligence to the study of population health. Her giving will also further strengthen the faculty and enhance student support, especially in the form of scholarships.

In addition, her gift will advance Tulane's plan to expand the downtown campus, where the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine is located. Tulane's downtown expansion is key to reimagining New Orleans as a hub of biotechnology and innovation.

"President Fitts' plans to use research and discovery as economic drivers for the New Orleans region, and Dean Thomas LaVeist's passionate resolve to confront and ameliorate health inequities holds the greatest promise to bring about positive change," Weatherhead said. "I am thrilled to support the university's goals and long-term strategy for educating public health professionals, empowering groundbreaking research and building a healthier world, starting with the city of New Orleans, but aiming for global results."

LaVeist, Dean of the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, hailed the historic and generational impact of the gift.

"Her gift is a true game changer," said LaVeist, who is also a Weatherhead Presidential Chair in Health Equity. "It will further propel research into the most devastating diseases and the most concerning and complex issues of our times. It will provide generations of students with the skills and knowledge they need to help heal our world. We are overwhelmed with gratitude and energized for the future."

"From scholarships and fellowships to expanded research opportunities addressing next-generation public health concerns, Celia Weatherhead continues to enhance the prestige, strengthen the capabilities and deepen the real-world impact of our university," said Robin Forman, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost at Tulane. "The future of our university is brighter than ever with the establishment of the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine."

In addition to her philanthropy, Weatherhead is deeply involved at Tulane. She currently serves on the Public Health Dean's Advisory Council, the school's top advisory board, and is an emeritus member of the Board of Tulane, the university's main governing body. In 2023, she was awarded the Dermot McGlinchey Lifetime Achievement Award, which honors alumni who have demonstrated service, involvement and commitment to Tulane and their hometown communities.

The newly named school will be the first at the university named for a graduate of

Tulane University's Newcomb College where Weatherhead earned a bachelor's degree in theatre in 1965. The Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine will join the A. B. Freeman School of Business as the only named entities among Tulane's 10 schools and college.

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