

Tulane faculty honored at the 2025 Research, Scholarship and Artistic Achievement Awards ceremony

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One highlight of the Research, Scholarship and Artistic Achievement Awards was President Michael A. Fitts' recognition of the recipient of the inaugural Andrew Schally Tulane Research Hall of Fame Award, named for the winner of the 1977 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine — and a former Tulane researcher who passed away last year. The award went to Dr. Russell Van Dyke (left), professor of clinical pediatrics and former section chief of pediatric infectious diseases in the School of Medicine.

The growing impact of Tulane University's research was celebrated at the annual Research, Scholarship and Artistic Achievement Awards, which took place Nov. 7 at the Higgins Hotel in downtown New Orleans. The awards honor the groundbreaking accomplishments of faculty across the university.

"This year has been one for the record books, and it's building on momentum that shows no signs of stopping," President Michael A. Fitts told attendees and honorees. "Your achievements are driving historic university-wide initiatives that are growing our impact both locally and worldwide."

Chad Steele, chair of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology in the School of Medicine and interim vice president for research, noted that Tulane investigators have received the majority of federal funding they applied for over the past three years.

"We have an extraordinary success rate that illustrates the quality and competitiveness of our investigators' applications," he said. "This level of sustained growth is the best guarantee that Tulane will remain among the top academic institutions participating in the prestigious Association of American Universities."

Fitts also praised the faculty for the research they have published and the citations they have received over the past year.

"This reflects the tremendous scholarly and societal importance of your work, from maternal health, to AI, to water and climate challenges," he said.

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Robin Forman took a moment to highlight what it means to be a faculty member at Tulane. "It's in your job description that you should spend significant time imagining a better world! A healthier, safer, happier, more just and more resilient world. A more beautiful and more meaningful world. It is your job to enhance our understanding and expand the universe of what's possible," he said.

A highlight of the evening was Fitts' recognition of two recipients of the university's Hall of Fame Award, a signature award of the event. The honorees were:

James Gordley, professor and W.R. Irby Chair in Law in the Law School.

Preston Marx, professor emeritus of Tropical Medicine in the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and the Tulane National Biomedical Research Center.

Fitts also recognized the recipient of the inaugural Andrew Schally Tulane Research Hall of Fame Award, named for the winner of the 1977 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine and a former Tulane researcher who passed away last year. The award went to **Dr. Russell Van Dyke**, professor of clinical pediatrics and former section chief of pediatric infectious diseases in the School of Medicine.

Honors bestowed at the ceremony also included:

2025 Spirit of Tulane Award

This award recognizes outstanding achievement during the prior calendar year of a scholar/investigator whose work embodies Tulane's motto: Non sibi, sed suis (Not for oneself, but for one's own) while enhancing the research mission through education, creative expression, mentorship and collaborative effort to advance knowledge. The honorees were:

Jordan Karubian, professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, School of Science and Engineering.

Nicholas Maness, associate professor of Microbiology and Immunology, and director of the Molecular Virology and Sequencing Core, Tulane National Biomedical Research Center.

2025 Innovation Award

This award recognizes a scholar/investigator who develops novel ideas, approaches and insights through their interdisciplinary scholarship to address clinical, public health or societal challenges. The honoree was:

Alexis Culotta, senior professor of practice, Newcomb Art Department, School of Liberal Arts.

2025 Galaxy Award

This award recognizes substantial achievement of a scholar/investigator who has a strong five-year history of funding and of enhancing Tulane's research mission through scholarship, education, mentorship and collaborative efforts. The honorees were:

Emily Harville, professor and program director, PhD in Epidemiology, Department of Epidemiology, Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.

Courtney Bryan, professor of music, and Albert and Linda Mintz Professorship of Music at Newcomb College, Department of Music, School of Liberal Arts.

2025 Student/Trainee Research Mentoring Award

This award recognizes an exceptional research mentor. The honorees were:

Elliott Isaac, assistant professor, Department of Economics, School of Liberal Arts.

Monica Embers, associate professor of Microbiology and Immunology and director, Vector-Borne Disease Research, Tulane National Biomedical Research Center.

2025 Rising Star Award

This award recognizes the works of an assistant professor, within five years of appointment to Tulane, who demonstrates exceptional growth and impact in one or more research areas. The honorees were:

Jorge Castorena-Gonzalez, assistant professor, Department of Pharmacology, School of Medicine.

Ilana Horwitz, assistant professor and Fields-Rayant Chair in Contemporary Jewish Life, Department of Jewish Studies, School of Liberal Arts.

2025 Convergence Award

This award recognizes a Tulane scholar or team of scholars who successfully collaborate across schools, units and departments to surpass traditional academic disciplines and further the research mission. The honorees were:

A team including **J. Quincy Brown**, associate professor, Mark and Diana Tipton Professor, Department of Biomedical Engineering, School of Science and Engineering, and Tulane Cancer Center Member – Translational Oncology Research Program and **Brian Summa**, associate professor, Department of Computer Science, School of Science and Engineering

Aron Culotta, professor and Nicholas J. Altiero professor, Department of Computer Science, School of Science and Engineering.

2025 Funding Awards

These awards recognize the scholar/investigator in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields who has been awarded the largest combined dollar amount of funding for direct costs during the prior calendar year; and artist/scholar/investigator in the arts, humanities and social science fields who has been awarded the largest combined dollar amount of funding for direct costs during the prior calendar year. The honorees were:

Allison Trigg, associate professor and psychiatry division chief, Department of Psychiatry, School of Medicine.

Marcello Canuto, professor, Department of Anthropology, School of Liberal Arts, and director, Middle American Research Institute.

2025 Entrepreneurship Award

This award is given to the individual faculty member whose contribution to entrepreneurship is reflected in a record of sustained entrepreneurship and new venture creation. The honoree was:

Chad Roy, professor of Microbiology and Immunology, associate dean for research, School of Medicine, and director, Infectious Disease Aerobiology, Tulane National Biomedical Research Center.

2025 IP Innovator Award

This award recognizes the faculty member who develops new patentable intellectual property that leads to or is expected to lead to a licensable technology or commercialization event. The honoree was:

Monica Embers, associate professor of Medicine and director, Vector-Borne Disease Research, Tulane National Biomedical Research Center.

2025 Citation Award

This award recognizes the Tulane author of the peer-reviewed article with the highest number of citations during the prior calendar year. The recipient must be the corresponding author and Tulane must be the corresponding institution. The honoree was:

Yi-Ping Li, Dean's Endowed Chair Professor and director, Division in Cellular and Molecular Medicine, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, School of Medicine, for "The roles and regulatory mechanisms of TGF- β and BMP signaling in bone and cartilage development, homeostasis and disease," *Cell Research*, 34, 101-123 (2024).

2025 Publication Awards

These awards are designed to honor scholars and investigators at Tulane University for their exceptional contributions to academic literature by acknowledging the best journal article published in the preceding calendar year and the best book published within 24 months of the award selection date, which occurs annually in August. These awards recognize significant contributions to the scholarly record at the

intersection of impact, merit and relevance. The honorees were:

(Journal article) **Dr. Lu Qi**, professor and HCA Regents Distinguished Chair, Department of Epidemiology, and director, Tulane University Obesity Research Center, Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, for “Improvement of Social Isolation and Loneliness and Excess Mortality Risk in People with Obesity,” JAMA Network Open. 2024: 7(1).

(Book – Social Impact) **Rob Lalka**, professor of practice, Albert R. Lepage Professorship in Business, and executive director, Albert Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, A.B. Freeman School of Business, for “The Venture Alchemists: How Big Tech Turned Profits Into Power,” Columbia Business School Publishing, May 2024.

(Book – Scholarly Impact) **Nghana Tamu Lewis**, professor, associate chair and director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of English, School of Liberal Arts, for “Black Women’s Health in the Age of Hip Hop and HIV/AIDS,” Ohio State University Press, January 2025.