

Make Way for Green Space

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Students and faculty and staff members were in a crowd of well-wishers on Thursday (March 18) to dedicate the McAlister Place Pedestrian Way on the uptown campus in true Louisiana style, with heaps of boiled crawfish and shrimp, the Sophie B. Wright Charter School marching band and live Cajun music.



Marching down McAlister Place to lead off the dedication ceremony on Thursday (March 18) is the Sophie B. Wright Charter School band. (Photos by Paula Burch-Celentano)

With less than a year of construction, the [McAlister Place walkway](#) has replaced McAlister Drive to unite the uptown campus around walking, bicycling and other outdoor activities.

At the lively dedication ceremony, speakers noted that the transformation of McAlister between Freret Street and Drill Road is just the beginning of a long-term strategy to foster a pedestrian-friendly culture at Tulane.

President Scott Cowen, who called the walkway one of his favorite projects, said McAlister Place is an innovation for Tulane and a model for the future. Pointing to the

Newcomb Place boulevard across the quad, Cowen said, "Now what I want you to do is look in this direction. What do you think should come next?" The crowd laughed and Cowen added, "But that is for another time and another ceremony."

Designed by a team of architects, the new promenade was the gift of Clement and Stephanie Benenson, both of whom received their undergraduate degrees from Tulane in 2004, and his family, who made the donation through the Vesper Foundation.



James Benenson Jr., right, whose family's philanthropy made the project possible, was named an honorary Tulane alumnus. His son, Clem, left, graduated in 2004.

Three generations of the Benenson family were present for the dedication, including its newest member, James IV, the infant son of James and Fiona Benenson III. In a surprise twist, Clem Benenson's father, James Benenson Jr., was named an honorary alumnus for his support of campus beautification and scholarly initiatives.

Clem Benenson expressed his family's admiration for Tulane. "At Tulane they don't just fund-raise; they build a community. And they don't just collect money; they collect ideas."

Tim Clinton, president of the Tulane Associated Student Body, said students appreciate the pothole-free path. "Where else in the city can you find that?" he joked.

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