

## A Detective, a Gunman and a University President

November 12, 2010 11:30 AM Aaron Martin  
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It's no mystery. James Patterson, the world's best-selling novelist, features Tulane University President Scott Cowen in his latest thriller. *Cross Fire*, next in the Alex Cross detective series, was released today (Nov. 15).



James Patterson displays his book, *Cross Fire*, which debuts today with a special guest character in the pages: Tulane President Scott Cowen. (Photo from Little, Brown and Co.)

During 2009 homecoming festivities at the [Hullabaloo](#) live auction that benefits Tulane student-athletes, the Board of Tulane outbid others and won an auction package that included the dedication of Patterson's next novel and the addition of the winner's name to be used as a character. At the auction party, the board surprised Cowen by honoring him with the two benefits provided to the winner.

In the fictional story, Cross is called to the scene of the assassination of two of Washington, D.C.'s, most corrupt: a dirty congressman and an underhanded lobbyist. While a book teaser asks, "Is the marksman a hero or a vigilante?" the book's dedication is explicit about the university president:

“For Scott Cowen,” Patterson wrote, “the president of Tulane University and a New Orleans hero, whose inspired leadership and Herculean efforts helped secure a brighter future for both Tulane and New Orleans after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.”

Patterson says that he is thrilled that the novel, even in some small way, recognizes Tulane and helps contribute to New Orleans' recovery.

“I'm incredibly impressed and heartened by the way Tulane has stepped up to be a very meaningful part of the New Orleans community. This is the opposite of the traditional 'ivory tower' approach that many universities and colleges seem to follow. It's the Green Wave of the future,” Patterson says.

He adds, “Alex Cross is most definitely a Tulane fan.” Cross and Patterson likely have some new Tullanian fans, as well.

Like a good thriller, this article does not give away the reference to “Detective Scott Cowen” in the storyline. The story continues â?|