

The 15 presidents of Tulane University

February 06, 2014 12:00 PM Fran Simon

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[Michael A. Fitts](#) will become the 15th president of Tulane University on July 1, as President [Scott Cowen](#) retires from the position after 16 years. When President Cowen dons the academic regalia of his office for commencement, his robe bears 14 embroidered “frogs” (embellishments) on the velvet hem as a historical reference to the 14 presidents who have served the university during its history. On the academic mace carried at commencement, the names and dates of service of the 14 presidents of Tulane University are engraved in a spiral silver band around the mace's wooden shaft. Who were those who came before Cowen and Fitts?

THE 15 PRESIDENTS *of* TULANE UNIVERSITY

SCOTT S. COWEN
1998-2014



MICHAEL A. FITTS
JULY 1, 2014

WILLIAM
PRESTON JOHNSTON
1884-1899



EAMON M. KELLY
1980-1998

WILLIAM OSCAR
ROGERS
1899-1900



FRANCIS SHELDON
HACKNEY
1975-1980

EDWIN ANDERSON
ALDERMAN
1900-1904



HERBERT EUGENE
LONGENECKER
1960-1975

EDWIN BOONE
CRAIGHEAD
1904-1912



MAXWELL EDWARD
LAPHAM
1960

ROBERT SHARP
1912-1918



Another bit of historical trivia: There were four additional men who served as presidents of the University of Louisiana, before the university was named Tulane University. They were: Francis Lister Hawks (1847-1849), Theodore Howard McCaleb (1850-1862), Thomas Hunt (1865-1867), Randell Hunt (1867-1884).

The official founding date of Tulane University is 1834.

“If you go back to the actual inception of the university, it was the Medical College of Louisiana in 1834,” says university archivist Ann Case. “But rather than having a president, the Medical College of Louisiana had the faculty as its administrative body. After the Medical College of Louisiana became the University of Louisiana in 1847, there were four presidents.”

The university was closed during the Civil War from 1862-1865.