

## 'One of the great visionaries for advancing the city'

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*Editor's Note: In this [series of articles](#), colleagues and friends of Tulane University President Scott Cowen write a remembrance of their work with him. [Arnie Fielkow](#) was executive vice president of the New Orleans Saints, a member of the New Orleans City Council and an adjunct Tulane faculty member, working with Cowen in all those roles. He is now president and CEO of the National Basketball Retired Players Association in Chicago.*



On the road as Fleur de Lis Ambassadors in 2009, Arnie Fielkow, left, and Tulane President Scott Cowen are guests at a Newsmakers Press Conference of the National Press Club of Washington, D.C. (Photo by Hilary Schwab)

Even before Hurricane Katrina, I believe that Scott was one of the great visionaries for advancing the city of New Orleans. His heart was in the city and for the people in the city ? I appreciated that as someone who also came from outside New Orleans. Scott fell in love with the city as I did, and truly threw himself all in to make the city a better place.

After Katrina, what an incredible contributor he's been. Take public education. Scott was unafraid to go outside the box and explore best practices from around the country. He saw something had to be done with public education ? that it would always be the root problem, and that we could achieve many other things if we could solve it.

He and I worked closely together to form the [Fleur de Lis Ambassadors](#) after Katrina. I was just elected to the New Orleans City Council, and I felt there were tremendous distortions about the city by national media. I reached out to Scott to co-lead an effort to put a group of community, business and political leaders together, to go to different areas and tell the true story of what was happening in this great city.

We had 40 ambassadors over the years, and Scott played a lead role in it. Those appearances we made ? I really think it helped turn the tide.

Scott also had the wisdom to mandate that Tulane students perform community service as part of their education, and they have been an integral part of New Orleans' revitalization.

Just look at Tulane today. I come from the sports field, and I love Tulane and Tulane athletics. Scott had the wherewithal and courage to go to bat for the on-campus stadium that will open this fall. It will tremendously energize the fan base, alumni and city of New Orleans.