

Patron saints

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Tom and Gayle Benson provided a leading gift through the Gayle and Tom Benson Charitable Foundation that will allow Green Wave student-athletes to play on a field that is comparable to the best collegiate and professional teams around the nation. (Photo by Sally Asher)

Aside from owning two of New Orleans' most prized sports franchises – the Saints and the Pelicans – Gayle and Tom Benson are known for being devoted philanthropists to the city they call home. That's why it came as no surprise that the couple, who genuinely understands the value of a football team to its community, provided a leading gift through the Gayle and Tom Benson Charitable Foundation to construct Green Wave football's new home.

Benson Field, a state-of-the-art synthetic turf field featuring signature green and white checkerboard end zones, will allow Green Wave student-athletes to play in [Yulman Stadium](#) on a field that is comparable to the best collegiate and professional teams around the nation.

The Bensons hope this gift will inspire New Orleanians to stand behind Tulane the same way they've continued to stand behind the Saints.

The Bensons drive down Broadway Street and Claiborne Avenue every day on the route from their uptown home to their Metairie, Louisiana, offices. During their morning and afternoon drives, they have noticed the excitement building as preparations continue for the opening Georgia Tech vs. Green Wave football game on Saturday (Sept. 6).

"I'm very proud of the students. I see them every day, and their conduct and energy is really great," Tom Benson beams. "I can't wait for opening day. It's such a great thing for this whole community, and I'm just looking forward to Tulane to keep growing."

The Bensons have always adored Tulane University. In fact, Tom Benson's great uncle, Herbert Benson, served as the architect of record for the old Tulane Stadium. In addition to their strong ties to the Green Wave, Gayle Benson was elected to the Board of Tulane recently.

"It's with a great sense of humility that we've been able to do this for Tulane," she says. "We'll be helping the whole student body, the athletes, the fans. It's going to bring a new awareness to the university. It needed this."

When asked how they will feel when the football team runs onto Benson Field for the first time, Tom Benson immediately cheers, "I can hardly wait!"

Needless to say, the Bensons are ready to bring the boys back uptown.

A list of all the donors who gave \$50,000 or more for Yulman Stadium is [here](#).

Allison Hjortsberg is a communications specialist in the Office of Development Communications.

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