

## "We just have to learn to adapt and overcome"

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"I'm of the belief that we need to invest in human capital," said retired Lt. Gen. Russell HonorÃ© in an interview that was part of a class on trauma presented by the Tulane University School of Social Work. (Photo by Ryan Rivet)

Retired Lt. Gen. Russell HonorÃ© has been hailed as a celebrated civic leader and U.S. Army veteran who became the face of law and order when he returned to New Orleans in the wake of Katrina in 2005.

On Monday (Nov. 10), HonorÃ© gave the Tulane University community a peek into how he's been shaped by his experiences, and how he was able to process his own trauma and still help others.

“There are some things you can't control,” he said about growing up in the segregated South. “The quicker you learn that things aren't fair, the quicker you'll get over that. We just have to learn to adapt and overcome.”

Honoré took part in a 40-minute one-on-one interview with [Charles Figley](#), who holds the Paul Henry Kurzweg Distinguished Chair in Disaster Mental Health, as part of the undergraduate course Social Work 1000: Trauma! in the [School of Social Work](#). A video of the interview will be used for future online offerings.

Honoré's experience with trauma began at a young age as he recounted spending a month at Charity Hospital after getting hit in the head at the age of 9. Fast forwarding to his service in Desert Storm, he said suicides and troop deaths were tough hurdles, including the traumatic death of a female sergeant with two children.

“It's different when you know somebody,” he said. “It's all the difference in the world. I still think of her today sometimes; her kids are probably in college now.”

He called upon all those experiences after Hurricane Katrina, and today, he's an advocate for teaching youth how to read, write and even swim.

“I'm of the belief that we need to invest in human capital,” Honoré said. “Many have died so we can sit here today, so my advice to you is to give back. Teach a young person how to read, how to swim and how to be successful. I think we can make a difference.”

*Joseph Halm is marketing/communications coordinator for the Tulane School of Social Work.*

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