

Graduating in tandem

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Amanda Thurmon, left, and Lynnette Thurmon will make history as they earn Master of Social Work degrees together on Friday (Dec. 12). (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

When the mother and daughter duo of Lynnette and Amanda Thurmon walk across the stage on Friday (Dec. 12) at Avron B. Fogelman Arena in the Devlin Fieldhouse, it will be the culmination of a rewarding journey. The pair, along with 76 other social work students, will receive their master's degrees from the Tulane University [School of Social Work](#).

Lynnette Thurmon said the journey was only possible because of their close friendship.

“We're really best friends. We have boundaries and respect each other. She respects me as her mother, and I respect her as an adult - most of the time,” she said, laughing.

The Chicago natives chose New Orleans because of its unique culture and temperate climate. Amanda was originally slated to attend Rutgers, but a snowstorm led to her change of heart.

“It was interesting because when we first got here, we'd registered for all of the same classes together,” Amanda Thurmon said. “But we were encouraged not to, so a couple of days before school started, we registered for separate classes. This was a great idea! It was interesting because where I thrived, she had issues and vice versa.”

They have overcome challenges together especially when Lynnette Thurmon's father died during the first week of the program.

“It was a blessing that we traveled this path together because I probably wouldn't be sitting here without her,” she said.

The two also worked through being on different continents for the first time when Amanda Thurmon took part in the school's two-week [South Africa course](#), and now they want to continue to help those in need.

“I've always felt that my destiny was to serve,” Lynnette Thurmon said. “Coming into social work, it just always felt right. I get so much personal pleasure when I know that I have made a difference in someone's life, no matter how small or large the task.”

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

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