

Law student's love of New Orleans infuses his leadership

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Graham Williams helped organize a law school chapter of the Federal Bar Association, connecting students with federal judges and lawyers who practice in their courts. His Student Bar Association efforts ranged from launching a law school-logged sweatshirt sale to making sure students had a say in the selection of a new assistant dean of students. (Photo by Ryan Rivet)

Graham Williams, who will receive his law degree on May 16, always knew he'd return to the city he adores and calls interchangeable with family. After graduating from Jesuit High School, Williams went off to the University of Virginia, then came back to New Orleans for [Tulane Law School](#).

He'll soon start working on commercial litigation at Adams and Reese in New Orleans.

"I don't think you can overstate the importance of New Orleans to the soul of the United States," he said. "It is such a special and unique place."

As Student Bar Association president, Williams one day was lamenting with Tulane Law Review editor Alston Walker that Tulane is underappreciated, despite its high-quality education.

Instead of just grouching, they assembled a diverse team of 21 soon-to-be graduates, started asking classmates to donate, and by late April had raised more than \$12,600 for the class of 2015 gift to the law school, exceeding 60 percent participation.

A \$10,000 match from the Tulane Law School Dean's Advisory Board turned the gift into \$22,600 for student scholarships.

"We decided to designate the funds for scholarships because that's something everyone could get behind," said Williams, who has been instrumental in building the Tulane brand along with students' buy-in toward improving their school.

"Tulane plays such an important role in the city of New Orleans," he said. "Any way that I can influence and improve Tulane is a way to improve the city of New Orleans."

Among his many activities interspersed with his law school studies, Williams initiated law student visits each semester to the Waldo Burton Boys' Home for games, pizza and conversation with the 35 pre-kindergarten to high school age boys who live there.

The 2015 Commencement ceremony will be [streamed live online](#). Follow us on social media at #tulane15.

Linda P. Campbell is Tulane Law School's director of communications.

“New Orleans is all about the people. Having evacuated and left for six months and gone away for college, it really does drive home the innate happiness of the people here and the kindness.”—Graham Williams, law school class of 2015