

## **Marine vets at law school get national spotlight**

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Former U.S. Marine and first-year law student Jackson Smith, right, is pictured with his friend Brian McKenna when they were employees at the Boot. The Boot will host a fundraiser Sunday (Nov. 8) for McKenna, who was injured in a bike accident. (Photo from Jackson Smith)

Before they even got into the meat of their first semester, [Tulane Law School](#) students Andrew Darlington and Jackson Smith were attracting national attention.

In July, Darlington was featured in a [National Public Radio story](#) about the

rejuvenation of New Orleans" Veterans of Foreign Wars post.

Then, a [Washington Post column](#) Smith wrote about his friend Brian McKenna led to two appearances on ["The Ellen DeGeneres Show."](#)

It's a lot to juggle. But both are used to demanding duty: Darlington and Smith are U.S. Marine Corps veterans, and each deployed twice to Afghanistan.

Darlington helped his Afghan translator secure a job and housing to relocate in Houston.

Meanwhile, Smith is raising funds for McKenna, who has been undergoing rehab after being paralyzed in a bike accident.

In his *Post* column, Smith wrote that while he was in Afghanistan in 2010, McKenna took a life-size cardboard cutout of him in Marine uniform to Carnival events, where he snapped a picture with Saints quarterback Drew Brees.

This summer, Smith returned the favor, getting a shot of Brees with McKenna's cutout at a Saints practice at Yulman Stadium on the Tulane uptown campus.

When Smith and McKenna appeared on DeGeneres' show Sept. 30, she surprised them with a Skype visit from Brees, who presented McKenna with a \$40,000 check to buy a specialized wheelchair.

"I'm so fortunate to be at the intersection of so many incredible things happening and incredible people being involved," Smith said.

A party for will benefit the recovery fund for McKenna, a 2007 graduate of the [A. B. Freeman School of Business](#), on Sunday (Nov. 8) at The Boot, 1039 Broadway St. VIP tickets (\$100) include brunch from 10-11:30 a.m. The party from 11:30 a.m.-7 p.m. is open to the public with a \$20 cover and bottomless bloody marys and mimosas. The event includes a silent auction.

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