

Department of Surgery establishes Kinchen award to support underrepresented med students

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WATCH: Dr. Kinchen has a long and distinguished career in medicine. (Video by Ian McLachlan)

The Department of Surgery at Tulane University School of Medicine offered its first-ever visiting student clerkship award this year. The clerkship award was offered to 4th-year medical students who are underrepresented in medicine and are interested in pursuing a career in general surgery. The award was named in honor of Dr. Ernest W. Kinchen, Jr., the first African American graduate of the Tulane Department of Surgery's residency program in 1971.

On October 7th, 2022, the Tulane Department of Surgery held a ceremony to honor Dr. Kinchen's legacy and to recognize the first student award recipient, Kenya Thrasher. Thrasher is currently a 4th-year medical student at Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, GA.

"I believe this award is of the utmost importance just in showing that those faculty members and people who come through the Tulane Department of Surgery doors as underrepresented minorities have a place in terms of leaving a legacy with our program." said Tulane resident Kristen Sheard, MD.

During the ceremony, Dr. Kinchen was presented an award from Mary Killackey, MD, Department of Surgery Chair.

"Dr. Kinchen's success at Tulane Surgery broke a huge barrier," said Killackey. "Especially in New Orleans, I think it's really important to know that he was a light and a role model for many people who came after him."

"His accomplishments opened the door for the rest of us," said Steven Jones, MD, MPH, assistant professor of surgery at Tulane University School of Medicine.

The Dr. Ernest W. Kinchen, Jr. Visiting Student Clerkship Award will be offered annually by the Department of Surgery. The award includes housing and a \$1,000 stipend while the visiting student attends a one-month sub-internship educational experience.

[Read more about Dr. Kinchin's long and distinguished career in medicine here.](#)