

School of Medicine honors Trailblazers in Hutchinson Auditorium display

Audrey Burroughs

today@tulane.edu

December 16, 2022 2:11 PM

, The School of Medicine has a new display of Tulane alumni Trailblazers in Hutchinson Auditorium on the downtown campus. Dr. Michael DeBakey, Dr. Ruth Kirschstein and Dr. Clyde Yancy were selected for their achievements in the medical field, along with honorees (not pictured) Dr. Rachel Levine, Dr. Anna Cherrie Epps and Dr. Alberto G. Garcia. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

The Tulane University School of Medicine recently installed a visual display of Tulane Trailblazers along the walls of Hutchinson Auditorium in downtown New Orleans. The six honorees – [Dr. Michael DeBakey](#), [Dr. Anna Cherrie Epps](#), [Dr. Alberto G. Garcia](#), [Dr. Ruth Kirschstein](#), [Dr. Rachel Levine](#) and [Dr. Clyde Yancy](#) – were selected for their monumental achievements in the medical field and their lasting impact on the Tulane medical community.

The [Tulane Trailblazers](#) initiative, launched by President Michael Fitts in 2019, recognizes individuals from diverse backgrounds whose contributions furthered a more inclusive and diverse academic community during their time at Tulane.

This Trailblazers display was born out of student feedback for a more inclusive representation of the vibrant Tulane medical community on the downtown campus.

“The students here today follow in the footsteps of truly remarkable individuals who broke barriers and changed medicine for the better,” said Dr. L. Lee Hamm, senior vice president and dean of Tulane University School of Medicine. “In recognizing our Trailblazers, we also hope to encourage our future physicians and researchers. There’s no limit to what they can achieve.”

Dean Hamm’s administrative team, led by Rhonda Coignet, senior director for Graduate Medical Education, and Bennetta Horne, assistant dean for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, started brainstorming how to make this representation come to life. They leaned into the concepts of “famous firsts” and “excellence at Tulane”

and ideated large displays of diverse faculty and alumni in buildings that are integral to the Tulane School of Medicine experience.

They chose Hutchinson Auditorium for the inaugural display because of its daily use as one of the larger teaching spaces in the School of Medicine, as well as its impact on potential students, parents and visitors. The banner installations, delayed by the pandemic and Hurricane Ida, were completed on July 27 of this year.

“People of color, women and underrepresented groups can identify with the honorees in a way not possible before,” Horne said. “It shows them what they can attain, and that Tulane honors and values those individuals.”

The visual display investment was made with the intent to periodically change the banners and honor a myriad of diverse faculty and alumni who are critical to the fabric of Tulane School of Medicine’s history.

“This project opened my eyes, and will open the eyes of others, to the School of Medicine’s rich history and excellence past what has been traditionally perceived,” Horne said. “And we need to celebrate that.”