Hundreds turn out to celebrate Freeman Centennial

May 6, 2014



It was advertised as the “Party of the Century,” and for the more than 650 alumni, faculty and staff members, and guests who turned out, the Freeman School’s Centennial Celebration just might have lived up to that billing.

After more than a year of planning, the long-awaited celebration took place on Friday (May 2) at the Pavilion of the Two Sisters in New Orleans' City Park. Festive spirits, a gorgeous setting and spectacular spring weather combined for a very special evening honoring the Freeman School's 100 years of business education.

In attendance were alumni from across the U.S. as well as Great Britain, Mexico and Colombia. Classes represented at the party, which also honored alumni celebrating milestone graduation anniversaries, spanned 1956 to 2013.

A 100th anniversary only comes around once in most people's lives, so nothing was spared to make the celebration a memorable event. The evening featured an incredible menu of New Orleans classics — including oysters en brochette, crab cakes, turtle soup, crawfish pasta, mini roast beef debris po-boys, sno balls and more — as well as an open bar serving beer, wine, cocktails and the Freeman Centini, a custom-crafted cocktail — in Freeman School blue — created especially for the centennial by "Cocktail Chick" Ti Martin (MBA '84), co-proprietor of the Commander's Family of Restaurants, which includes Commander's Palace, Café Adelaide and SoBou in New Orleans and Brennan's of Houston.

Attendees danced to music from the Boogie Men, a nine-piece band whose repertoire spans six decades, and enjoyed special attractions including a giant outdoor screen showing vintage Freeman School photos, a timeline display highlighting significant events in school history, life-size cardboard cutouts of favorite Freeman professors, and a photo booth for friends and alumni to take souvenir pictures.

During a brief program, Dean Ira Solomon greeted alumni and guests and introduced Centennial Co-chair Jay Lapeyre (MBA/JD '78), who announced that he and co-chair Frank B. Stewart Jr. (BBA '57) had helped raise $520,000 for the Freeman Centennial Scholarship Initiative. Next, Jenny Kottler (A&S '83, MBA '84), speaking on behalf of this year's reunion chairs, presented a check for $112,000, representing the collective gifts of this year's reunion classes, which included the graduate classes of '09, '04, '99, '94, '89, '84, '79, '74, '69 and '64.

But fundraising wasn't the focus of this special evening. Before leading guests in a rendition of "Happy Birthday" and cutting the cake, Solomon thanked everyone in attendance and proclaimed that with their support and engagement, the Freeman School's next 100 years promises to be even more exciting than its first.

To see more photos from the Centennial Celebration, visit the Freeman School's Flickr page.