Business school mourns legendary accounting teacher

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During Beau Parent's accounting lectures at the A. B. Freeman School of Business, he would pause, look around his class and say in a booming voice, "Make sense? Make sense?" But the news of Parent's sudden death just doesn't make sense to the thousands of students who learned accounting from the legendary Tulane University instructor.



"Beau Parent helped everyone understand accounting and get through that class," one of his colleagues said. (Photo by Sabree Hill)

When word began to spread that the 73-year-old Parent died on Sunday (July 20), calls of concern from former students began streaming into the school. For 37 years, Parent taught Financial Accounting to every business undergraduate.

A memorial service will be held on Monday (July 28) at Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church, 6367 St. Charles Ave. Visitation will be from 9–11 a.m., with a memorial mass at 11 a.m. A reception will follow in the Kendall Cram Lecture Hall at the Lavin-Bernick Center on the Tulane uptown campus.

“It’s difficult, starting the fall term without Beau in his classroom,” said Michael Hogg, professor of practice who has known Parent for nearly 25 years. “He was one of the most gifted teachers I’ve ever met.”

A CPA, Parent was a frequent winner of the BSM Honor Roll teaching award, and also earned the James Murphy Award for Excellence in Teaching. Twice he received the Howard Wisner Award given by undergraduates to teachers who demonstrate special interest in students. He was faculty adviser for the school’s chapter of Beta Alpha Psi honorary national accounting fraternity.

Parent developed the school’s five-year Master of Accounting program, taking pride in helping students get internships at firms all across the country, Hogg said.

Parent’s Tulane roots extend throughout his family. His daughter Colette Raphel is university registrar; his daughter Christine Smith is a professor of practice who teaches accounting; his son-in-law David Raphel is assistant technical director in the Department of Theatre and Dance; and his widow, Elizabeth Parent, is an adjunct lecturer in the Department of Theatre and Dance.

In lieu of flowers, gifts can be made in memory of Parent to the Tulane University Scholarship Fund, Office of Development, P.O. Box 61075, New Orleans, LA 70161, or at this website. Gifts will be used to support scholarships for students like those he taught and mentored throughout his career.

– Carol Schlueter