Freeman honors Maurin, Besh as Entrepreneurs of the Year

April 17, 2015

Tulane University's A. B. Freeman School of Business honored real estate executive James E. Maurin (MBA '72) as Tulane Distinguished Entrepreneur of the Year and restaurateur John Besh as Tulane Outstanding Social Entrepreneur of the Year at the 2015 Tulane Council of Entrepreneurs Award Gala. The ceremony took place on Thursday, April 16, at the Audubon Tea Room.

The Freeman School's Levy-Rosenblum Institute for Entrepreneurship presents the awards each year to highlight outstanding entrepreneurs in the community. The Tulane Distinguished Entrepreneur of Year Award honors individuals who combine a history of entrepreneurial success with philanthropic generosity and service to the community. The Tulane Outstanding Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award recognizes individuals who are solving social problems and meeting community needs through the use of entrepreneurial principles. Tulane President Michael A. Fitts and Freeman School Dean Ira Solomon presented the awards.



James E. Maurin (MBA '72)

Maurin is co-founder and retired chairman and CEO of Stirling Properties, one of the Gulf South’s leading commercial real estate companies. Founded in 1975, the company’s business areas include brokerage services, development and redevelopment, acquisitions and investments, and property and asset management over a wide array of property types. Maurin is a member of Tulane University’s Business School Council, and his professional and civic activities include serving on the boards of the International Council of Shopping Centers, Ochsner Health System, Blueprint Louisiana, the LSU Foundation, the LSU College of Business Dean’s Advisory Committee, the Northshore Community Foundation, the Urban Land Institute and the World President’s Organization. He earned his undergraduate degree in aerospace engineering from LSU in 1970 and an MBA from Tulane’s A. B. Freeman School of Business in 1972. Maurin began his career as a CPA with Ernst and Ernst and has been active in the shopping center industry for over 37 years.



John Besh

Besh is a chef, businessman and entrepreneur dedicated to the culinary riches of southern Louisiana. In his 11 restaurants, entrepreneurial pursuits and public activities, he aims to preserve and promote ingredients, techniques and heritage. Besh is the author of three award-winning cookbooks, and he hosts two national public television cooking shows. His non-profit organization, the John Besh Foundation, works to protect and preserve the culinary heritage and foodways of New Orland and the Gulf Coast area. In 2011, the foundation established the Chefs Move! scholarship program to send a minority recipient to the International Culinary Center in New York City. The scholar pledges to return to New Orleans and work in the restaurant industry for five years, promoting and supporting diversity in the kitchen. To date, seven Chefs Move scholarships have been awarded. The foundation also started a microloan program in partnership with the A. B. Freeman School of Business to financially assist and advise farmers and artisanal producers within 200 miles of New Orleans to grow their businesses.

“Jimmy Maurin has devoted his career to developing commercial real estate properties that anchor communities, promote further development and spread economic prosperity,” said Dean Solomon. “John Besh, through his philanthropic foundation, is working to help provide the region’s farmers and culinary professionals with the training and business support they need to become sustainable. I am delighted to be able to recognize these two outstanding business

people with our 2015 Entrepreneur of the Year awards.”