Alumni shine at first Black Alumni Weekend

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Freeman School Associate Dean Erick Valentine, far left, introduces the Generational Wealth panel members. From left to right, Stephanie Navarre, Brian Egwele, Shannon Brice, Derrick Strozier, Kenny Welcome and moderator Charisse Gibson.

Hundreds of alumni, guests, faculty and staff converged on Tulane's uptown campus the weekend of Feb. 22-24 to celebrate Tulane's first annual Black Alumni Weekend.

Hosted by Tulane's Office of Alumni Relations, the weekend featured a variety of events for and about the university's Black alumni, but one of the weekend's highest profile events shined a special light on alumni of the A. B. Freeman School of Business.

“Generational Wealth: Creating Pathways for the Next Black Wall Street,” presented by the Freeman School's Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, featured five accomplished alumni who discussed their careers and offered advice for building

financial security. The panel featured Shannon Brice (MBA ’04), Brian Egwele (BSM ’01), Stephanie Navarre (MBA ’86), Derrick Strozier (BSM ’14) and Kenny Welcome (BSM ’15) and was moderated by Charisse Gibson, Emmy award-winning journalist with WWL-TV.

According to Erick Valentine, associate dean for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, the panel embodied the Freeman School's focus on building a more equitable and inclusive institution.

"We're being very intentional in re-engaging with our Black alumni," Valentine said. "Black alumni have tended to be underrepresented in many school activities. By inviting this panel of outstanding Black alumni, we're recognizing their excellence and bringing their professional expertise back to campus and also providing current students with role models and potential mentors, which is critical to helping them be the best they can be."

In keeping with the theme of generational wealth, Freeman's EDI office invited students from Eleanor McMain Secondary School and New Orleans Charter Science & Math High School (Sci High) to attend the panel, tour the business school with Freeman EDI Ambassadors, and have lunch with students in the Commons.

"One of the key messages from our panelists was the importance of financial literacy and education in creating generational wealth," said Roz Butler, director of EDI. "By reaching out to high school students, we're hoping to emphasize that message much earlier for the next generation and help them see Tulane and Freeman as viable, welcoming spaces for higher education."

To see more photos from Black Alumni Weekend, visit the Freeman School's Flickr page.