Fintech entrepreneur Todd Schwartz to serve as 2024 Freeman Distinguished Lecturer

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More than 60 million people have credit scores too low to obtain credit despite being fully employed and having stable incomes. This lack of access to credit makes them vulnerable to emergencies that can lead to financial hardship, heavy debt and ultimately bankruptcy.

Todd Schwartz (BSM '03) recognized that troubling disparity. In 2012 he launched OppFi to empower customers to improve their financial security and well-being through credit access, savings and wealth accumulation. A tech-enabled, mission-driven specialty finance platform, OppFi broadens the reach of community banks to extend credit access to everyday Americans and supports consumers turned away by mainstream options to build better financial health.

For the Freeman School's 2024 R. W. Freeman Distinguished Lecture, Schwartz, founder, CEO and executive chairman of OppFi, will sit down with Myke Yest, senior professor of practice in finance, for a wide-ranging discussion that will chart OppFi's journey from a Chicago pawnshop to a $265 million public company and highlight the company's future prospects as well as those of the broader fintech sector. This year's lecture will take place on Wednesday, April 3, at 5 p.m. in the Goldring/Woldenberg Business Complex's Marshall Family Commons.

In addition to serving as CEO and executive chairman of OppFi, Schwartz is managing principal of Schwartz Capital Group and a partner with Strand Equity Partners. He previously served as president of Beach Coast Properties in Manhattan Beach, California. He earned a bachelor's degree in finance from Tulane University's A. B. Freeman School of Business in 2003.

Schwartz is also an active philanthropist. In 2023, he and his wife, Gina, donated $5 million to Tulane University to establish the Schwartz Family Center for Experiential Business Learning, a new center of excellence within the Freeman School that will dramatically expand opportunities for hands-on, real-world learning.

The R.W. Freeman Distinguished Lecture is an annual presentation of Tulane University's A. B. Freeman School of Business. The series is named in honor of Richard W. Freeman Sr. (BBA '34), who served as president and chairman of the Louisiana Coca-Cola Bottling Co. and chairman of the board of Delta Air Lines. Freeman served on the Board of Tulane for 13 years and led the effort to name Tulane's business school in honor of his father, A. B. Freeman.

The lecture is free and open to the public. For those unable to attend in person, this year's lecture will be livestreamed on the Freeman School's Facebook and Instagram pages.