A salon for the 21st century

May 4, 2022



Mariska Morse (SOPA '21), standing left, is co-founder of Salon22, a professional women's club set to open in New Orleans later this year. Also pictured, left to right, are co-founders Fresh Johnson, Fay Kimbrell (SW ’17)

and Christa Talbott.

Mariska Morse (SOPA ’21) co-founded Salon22 on the idea that women work best when they’re collaborating and accomplishing goals together. She and co-founders Christa Talbott, Fay Kimbrell (SW ’17) and Fresh Johnson wanted to create an inclusive, thoughtfully designed space for co-working, networking, nurturing and growing.

“Women are thirsty for spaces to be together and they’re thirsty for being successful in their lives, so that entails a professional-personal community,” says Morse. “We wanted to create a dedicated space – a club, a salon — for women across the city to come together.”

Set to open in mid-2022, the professional women’s club will serve as both a workspace and social hub supporting the professional and personal growth of women in New Orleans. All members will have daily access to comfortable couches, nooks, quiet work zones and a “caffeine station” along with a daily happy hour featuring free wine by the glass. Being a part of Salon22 also includes admission to monthly events including talks, workshops, fitness classes and live music.

The salon offers three levels of membership to accommodate each woman’s needs and some membership proceeds will go towards Salon22’s philanthropic efforts to provide access and drive change.

Morse is no stranger to women’s leadership and advocacy. For 19 years, she served in key leadership positions with the Forté Foundation, a nonprofit working to advance women in business. For the past two years, Morse has been pursuing her master’s degree in gender studies at Tulane University, and she credits Tulane with increasing her awareness of the gender gap in Louisiana and informing her vision for advancing gender equity through business.

Since fall 2021, Salon22 has been a participant in the Student Venture Incubator program at the Freeman School’s Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. In that role, Morse has been working with the center to develop the business, including receiving business advice and mentoring from Lepage Center Innovators-in-Residence Selina Ip and Allison Piper Kimball.

“As a first-time entrepreneur, the Lepage Center has been an incredible resource for learning and mentorship,” Morse says. “Timekia Mallery at the Lepage Center has

been extremely supportive and encouraging, always giving me a heads-up about different opportunities.”

In the future, Morse says she hopes to connect more women by expanding Salon22 into cities similar to New Orleans.

“I think we’re unique in that we’re bringing the co-working and the social under one roof with this diversity commitment and with the longer term investment in elevating women in Louisiana,” concludes Morse. “When you put that package together, we have an extremely unique value proposition.”

-- *Natalie Maher (SLA ’24*)