Lepage Foundation commits $12.5 million to Freeman

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The Albert Lepage Foundation has committed $12.5 million to the A. B. Freeman School of Business at Tulane University to establish a new center dedicated to the study, teaching and practice of entrepreneurship.



Albert Lepage (MBA '71), retired chairman of Lepage Bakeries Inc., has committed $12.5 million to the Freeman School to establish the Albert Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

The Albert Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation will oversee the Freeman School's offerings in entrepreneurship, including coursework, academic research and student programing. The center will also have a significant focus on community outreach, developing new programs to support the entrepreneurial ecosystem and address unmet business needs in New Orleans and the Gulf South.

"There is a real need for research in the best practices of entrepreneurship and growing a business," said Lepage Foundation President Albert Lepage, the retired co-chairman of Lepage Bakeries Inc and a 1971 MBA graduate of the Freeman School. "But it is also important to bring that expertise back into the wider community — both the under-served and well-served — to help entrepreneurs and innovators in New Orleans and Gulf South achieve their goals and thrive."

"Business leaders who are successful recognize that economic and social advancements come from tackling issues with an entrepreneurial outlook and embracing innovation of all kinds," said Freeman School Dean Ira Solomon. "We are so grateful for Albert's generosity and vision in helping create what will become an even more vibrant hub for this philosophy at Freeman and the city of New Orleans."

The Freeman School's existing Levy-Rosenblum Institute for Entrepreneurship and the Tulane Family Business Center will continue their important work as segments within the Albert Lepage Center.

Albert Lepage joined the family baking company shortly after graduating from Tulane. He became president in 1978 and chairman in 1983. In 2012, Lepage Bakeries merged with Flowers Foods and Lepage became co-chairman. He served until his retirement in 2014 as chairman of Quality Bakers of America Co-operative, the national licensor of Sunbeam Bread, and as treasurer of the American Bakers Association, the baking industry's leading national organization.