Tulane University honors 2019 Entrepreneurs of the Year

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Dr. Kathy Fields receives the Tulane Distinguished Entrepreneurs of the Year Award from Freeman School Dean Ira Solomon at the Albert Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation Awards Gala on April 8. Dr. Fields and her co-recipient, Dr. Katie Rodan, are the founders of skin care company Rodan + Fields.

Tulane University honored skin care innovators Dr. Katie Rodan and Dr. Kathy Fields with its Distinguished Entrepreneurs of the Year Award and social entrepreneurs Stephanie and David Barksdale (TC ’00) with its Outstanding Social Entrepreneurs of the Year Award at the 2019 Albert Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation Awards Gala. The event, an annual presentation of Tulane’s A. B. Freeman School of Business, took place on April 8 at the Audubon Tea Room in New Orleans.

The Lepage Center 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.

“Dr. Katie Rodan and Dr. Kathy Fields disrupted the skin care industry not once but twice with Proactiv and Rodan + Fields, building each of those brands into billion dollar companies,” said Ira Solomon, dean of the Freeman School. “Stephanie and David Barksdale have employed business principles to help transform the community, both through their work and through their involvement with a host of organizations. While the achievements of our four honorees may differ, each embodies the true spirit of entrepreneurship, and I couldn’t be happier to pay tribute to them with this year’s awards.”

Dr. Rodan and Dr. Fields founded Rodan + Fields in 2002 to give people the best skin of their lives through dermatologically-inspired skin care solutions. After selling the company to Estee Lauder in 2003, the Stanford-trained dermatologists made the unprecedented decision to repurchase the company in 2007 and relaunch it with a disruptive consumer-connected commerce business model and community of entrepreneurs. Today, Rodan + Fields is the leading skin care brand in North America. The company is driven by over 300,000 independent consultants in the U.S., Canada and Australia and provides the closest alternative to a professional skin care experience outside a medical office.

Rodan and Fields are also the developers of Proactiv, a line of medicated acne treatment and prevention products that has been marketed by Guthy-Renker since 1995. When they sold their remaining rights to Proactiv in 2016, the brand was generating over $1 billion in annual sales.

In accepting the award, Fields discussed her and Rodan’s motivation for starting a company devoted to helping women achieve healthy, clear skin.

“This is the most important real estate you will ever own,” Fields said, framing her face with her hands. “This is your calling card to the world. When you don't feel confident in your own skin, you may not get the job, you may not go to school, you

may not have a life. For us, this is a not a want. It's a very important need.”



As David Barksdale looks on, Stephanie Barksdale accepts the 2019 Tulane Outstanding Social Entrepreneurs of the Year Award.

The Barksdales each have strong connections both to the community and to Tulane University. Stephanie Barksdale is director of University Partnerships and Social Innovation for Tulane’s President Emeritus Scott Cowen and an adjunct lecturer who teaches the Leadership and Senior Seminar courses in the Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship minor (SISE). In addition to leading efforts to bring SISE education to Tulane, she developed a partnership with Ashoka, making Tulane one of the nation’s first AshokaU Changemaker Campuses, and launched programs including the NewDay Speaker series, the NewDay Social Innovation Challenge and the Changemaker Institute, a student social venture incubator program. She also helped in securing resources and support for the SISE minor and the creation of the Taylor Center for Social Innovation and Design. Stephanie is currently chairman of Propeller, a nonprofit that supports mission-driven ventures, and a founding board member and chair of Grow Dat Youth Farm, an urban farm and youth development organization that employs over 100 young people from across New Orleans.

David Barksdale is principal of Alluvian Capital, a private investment office with diversified holdings in the telecommunications and software industries. Prior to that, he served as CEO of Spread Networks and as a principal of Barksdale Management Corp., a private family office. He serves on the Board of Tulane as well as the boards of the Idea Village, the Greater New Orleans Foundation and the National World War II Museum.

“Social entrepreneurship can take many forms,” Stephanie Barksdale said in accepting the award. “At its most basic, it simply means being an agent of positive change in one’s community. In this room tonight and in New Orleans, there are numerous social entrepreneurs committed to improving the lives of many. We are truly humbled to be part of this community, part of a network where we can use our resources — our time, our investment, our philanthropy — to support changemakers.”