

Gift from Avron and Wendy Fogelman will create Fogelman Hall in Tulane's new residential village

December 13th, 2021

|

Patrick J. Davis pdavis14@tulane.edu

[View PDF](#)



Avron and Wendy Fogelman are making the lead gift to build Fogelman Hall within Tulane's new residential village on the uptown campus. (Photo courtesy of Avron and Wendy Fogelman)

The alumnus whose name is synonymous with Tulane men's basketball is now providing the lead gift to build the pre-eminent student residence hall in the university's new residential village currently taking shape along McAlister Way on

the uptown campus.

The gift from real estate magnate Avron B. Fogelman (A&S '62) and his wife, Wendy (NC '63), will propel the construction of Fogelman Hall, which will replace Irby House, the popular residence hall on the former Bruff Quad next to McAlister Auditorium.

Fogelman Hall will be one of five new residential buildings in "The Village," the name for Tulane President Michael Fitts' vision for reimagining the university's residential spaces. As the largest capital investment in Tulane's history, The Village will dramatically increase on-campus residential capacity and help revolutionize how students experience Tulane by intertwining opportunities for living and learning.

Irby House holds a special meaning for Avron Fogelman. As an undergraduate from Memphis, Tennessee, he was among the first residents of Irby, which was dedicated as a men's residence hall in 1955. While at Tulane, he met Wendy Mimeles, a New Orleans native and Newcomb College student. They married in 1961.

The Fogelmans hope to transform the residential experience at Tulane by providing students with a state-of-the-art living space for academics, socializing, recreation and more. They also want to give back to the university that helped prepare Avron for a successful career not only in real estate but in professional sports management. Under his co-ownership, the Kansas City Royals baseball team won the 1985 World Series.

"The naming of Fogelman Hall in honor of Wendy and me is very meaningful," Avron Fogelman said. "We both are products of the Tulane residence halls and know how important a freshmen residence hall is to an incoming student. It's where they live independently for the first time, where they meet lifelong friends and it helps mold the rest of their lives. Fogelman Hall is designed to meet every need of a freshman entering Tulane and will be another cornerstone on the remarkable renaissance of what makes Tulane so unique and special. We're very pleased and honored to be a part of the continuing and exciting growth of Tulane University and assist in providing Tulane freshmen with a special experience in their on-campus residential life."

Fitts hailed the Fogelmans' generosity to their alma mater.

"Residential living at Tulane is a primary nexus through which we educate the whole student," Fitts said. "Far from being just a dorm room, it is a space that brings

together the intellectual, social and emotional components of student life. The love Avron and Wendy have for Tulane is palpable and infectious and it is so fitting that their names will be forever linked to Tulane in this way. Two leaders in supporting our students' pursuit of excellence on the court and in the classroom are now helping to create an environment for the multi-disciplined and multi-dimensional living, learning and growth of our students."

Tulane's vice president for student affairs, Dusty Porter, PhD, also expressed his appreciation for the gift.

"The Village will become an exciting aspect of the Tulane residential experience as a destination location on the uptown campus for intentional spaces for programs, individual and group study, and meeting up with friends," he said. "Fogelman Hall will be a central component of The Village and will be offering first-year students the opportunity to meet a Tulane faculty member and strengthen the student/faculty interaction outside of the classroom from the moment new students move onto campus. We're very grateful to the Fogelmans for this incredible gift to our community."

Fogelman Hall will house more than 300 residents — an increase from Irby's 220-student capacity — and will feature numerous amenities that foster round-the-clock academic enrichment for the entire student body. A Tulane professor will live in Fogelman as faculty-in-residence, serving as a mentor to first-year students and programming academic activities in the hall. Construction on Fogelman Hall will mark Phase 2 of The Village project, which also calls for replacing Phelps and Paterson halls. Phase 2 will increase the total number of beds on the quad from 821 to 2,065 — a 150 percent gain.

Phase 1 began in 2020 and includes two residence halls that will share a courtyard with Fogelman Hall and have a multipurpose theater, study lounges, television and digital media rooms and other features.

Avron Fogelman and his family have made multiple donations to Tulane through the years, most notably in 1988 with the gift that named the Avron B. Fogelman Arena (previously called Tulane Arena and now recognized as the Avron B. Fogelman Arena in Devlin Fieldhouse) and sparked a new era of men's basketball at the university. In 2018, the Fogelmans established the Fogelman Life Preparation Program, which teaches personal, academic, financial and career success to men's basketball

players and also supports an altitude chamber for cardiovascular conditioning.

After Avron graduated from Tulane in 1962 with a bachelor's degree in political science, the Fogelmans made their home in Memphis, where Avron ran Fogelman Properties — now one of the country's largest privately-owned apartment companies — and at the same time owned several professional sports teams. In recognition of his many civic, charitable and philanthropic endeavors, Interstate 240 circling Memphis is named the Avron B. Fogelman Expressway.

In the 1980s, Avron served on the President's Council at Tulane and then on the Board of Tulane, the university's main governing body. Wendy and Avron are both members of the Paul Tulane Society, which honors individuals and organizations that have donated \$1 million or more to the university.

The Fogelmans live primarily in Boca Raton, Florida, and have three sons, Rick, Mark (B '92) and Hal. Mark earned a bachelor's degree in management from Tulane and currently serves on the President's Council, the Business School Council and the Family Leadership Council. He and his wife, Margo, have two children who attend Tulane: Matthew ('22) will graduate from the A. B. Freeman School of Business with a bachelor's degree in finance, while Alexa ('24) is in the School of Science and Engineering and majoring in psychology and early childhood education.

The ceremonial groundbreaking for Fogelman Hall is set for 2022 and will be a special occasion for the family, with Avron, Mark and Matthew celebrating milestone years for their respective classes at Tulane and three generations of common experiences at the university.