

Former dean to receive inaugural Creighton Wellman Medal at graduation

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Dr. Pierre Buekens, former dean of the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, will deliver the school's graduation address on May 18, 2019. He will also be named the inaugural Creighton Wellman Medal recipient.

Buekens served as dean from 2003 until 2018 and is the longest-serving dean in the school's history. During his tenure, Buekens launched the school's undergraduate public health program, responded to the challenges brought on by Hurricane Katrina, and helped strengthen the school's research portfolio. He has been on a year's sabbatical from faculty duties since the close of his term at the end of June 2018.

"Pierre Buekens is an ideal choice for commencement speaker," said Dr. Thomas A. LaVeist, current dean of the school. "All of the students graduating on May 18th matriculated under Pierre's leadership, and it's fitting that he provide the send off to the next phase of their professional lives."

"More importantly," Dean LaVeist continued, "Pierre has had a special affinity with Creighton Wellman, founding dean of the school, and it gives me great pleasure to award him the first Wellman medal. We intend to make this an annual tradition."

Buekens is an obstetrician and an epidemiologist, with research interests that span the globe. His primary focus is on reproductive epidemiology, including neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) and pregnancy. He directs the Center for Emerging Reproductive and Perinatal Epidemiology and, together with other researchers, he cofounded Trop-G, a collaboration working group seeking to control and eliminate

NTDs in high-risk areas around the Gulf of Mexico.

Dr. Creighton Wellman joined Tulane in September 1911 as chair of tropical medicine and hygiene department. By 1912 he was operating the department as a school and soon convinced Tulane administrators that they should make the school's designation official. The Tulane School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine was the first such school in the country, which is not surprising considering that the university launched 1834 in response to a series of public health concerns, including Yellow Fever, cholera, and small pox.

The school continues to live up to its legacy as the first school of public health by seeking innovative solutions to current health concerns and endeavoring to make lasting change in communities outside our doorstep and beyond.

Graduation exercises for the school will be held at the Mahalia Jackson Center for the Performing Arts.