

Alumnus Mel Lagarde will receive Outstanding Alumni Award

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Mary Sparacello

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Maurice "Mel" L. Lagarde III (A&S '79, PHTM *82) will receive this year's Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine Outstanding Alumni Award. Lagarde is president and chief executive officer of [HCA MidAmerica Division](#). His leadership in the immediate days after Hurricane Katrina, along with HCA

Healthcare's support and response, is today considered a textbook example of disaster response.

The hospitals he manages have been on the frontline of the response to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, and now, the vaccination process.

Prior to his role as HCA MidAmerica Division president, Lagarde served as president of the HCA Healthcare's Delta Division from 1995 to 2011 and chief executive officer of HCA's Gulf Coast Division in Texas from 1994 to 1995. In total, Lagarde has served in executive positions overseeing operations for more than 53 HCA Healthcare hospitals.

Lagarde received a bachelor's degree from Tulane University in 1979 and a master's degree in public health from Tulane's School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine in 1981. In 2001, Lagarde was named Tulane University's School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine Distinguished Alumnus of the Year. He also serves on the board of Tulane Medical Center.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Lagarde's leadership and HCA Healthcare's support and response effort helped patients, caregivers, physicians, administrators, and the Tulane University Hospital and Clinic recover from the heartbreaking flooding and devastation. Following Hurricane Katrina, Lagarde was appointed as co-chair of the Bring New Orleans Back commission by the mayor. Lagarde's leadership and perseverance in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and its impact on healthcare, specifically saving countless patient and employee lives, was featured in an eight-part series in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* in 2006. Additionally, he appeared on national broadcast networks such as ABC News, NBC News, Fox News, C-Span, as well as the *New York Times* and *US News & World Report* discussing the recovery and rebuilding of New Orleans.

Throughout his remarkable career, Lagarde has never wavered in his compassion and dedication to patient care.

Lagarde told Kansas City business magazine *Ingram's* that "one of the most meaningful parts of my day is hearing from our patients—it's a remarkable and humbling experience to learn from them and know how we've impacted their lives."

Lagarde will be honored at the virtual Tulane Alumni Association Awards Gala on April 21.