

Public health alumni clean up at Tulane Alumni Awards Gala

|
Dee Boling dboling@tulane.edu

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Pictured from left to right, top then bottom: Paul R. Eisenberg, Clifford Gevirtz, Chelsea Balch Cipriano, Gabrielle Perry, David Gaus, and Celia Scott Weatherhead.

For a moment there, the Tulane Alumni Awards Gala seemed like the *School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine* awards. Over the course of the gala awards dinner, eleven awards were bestowed and six of the honorees had ties to SPHTM.

The first award was no surprise since it was the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine Outstanding Alumni Award, which went to Paul R. Eisenberg (MPHTM '80). Eisenberg, who also holds earned his BS from Tulane in psychology and a medical

degree from New York Medical College, has over 30 years of experience in drug development across therapeutic areas in both academic and industry settings. His research with companies like Eli Lilly and Amgen has contributed to the development of novel antithrombotic therapies. He has 80 peer-reviewed publications of original research, as well as 40 contributions to reviews and books.

The next award was presented by the Tulane Medical Alumni Association for their Outstanding Alumni Award, and the selected honoree was a 1981 MD/MPH. Clifford Gevirtz (MD/MPH HSM '81) has served as chief of service at both Metropolitan Hospital in New York and the Bronx VA Hospital, and is currently medical director of Somnia, Inc., a peri-operative practice management organization. He also served as chair of the Veteran's Integrated Service Network #3 Pain Management Committee, has published more than 60 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, and has served on 12 medical missions in low- and middle-income countries.

SPHTM's roll kept coming with the Robert V. Tessaro Young Alumni Volunteer Award, which went to Chelsea Balch Cipriano (IHD MPH '11). Cipriano, who also holds a bachelor's degree from Tulane in Latin American Studies, most recently served as executive director for government affairs at the New York Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, where she led health policy advocacy and health-related legislative and budget negotiations at city, state, and federal levels. She also worked tirelessly throughout the COVID-19 and MPox response as deputy public information officer and in the city's Vaccine Command Center. Cipriano was recognized for her dedication to Tulane as a student and as an alumna.

The fourth award of the night also went to an SPHTM alumna. The Graduate of the Last Decade (GOLD) Professional Achievement Award went to Gabrielle Perry (MPH EPID '19). Perry is the founder and executive director of the Thurman Perry Foundation, a nonprofit that provides direct resources to women impacted by incarceration nationally, with a special emphasis on Black women and women of color in Louisiana. Perry was herself arrested for theft at age 21 after her father's death left her struggling to cover expenses for herself and her ill mother. She was able to plead down to a misdemeanor charge after paying restitution and court fees, but challenges lay ahead through almost a year of homelessness. Since then, Perry graduated from Southeastern Louisiana University and Tulane SPHTM and has used her firsthand experiences of the biases surrounding women impacted by incarceration to spark a vibrant commitment to criminal justice reform and advocacy.

Later, David Gaus (MD/MPHTM '92) was recognized with the International Award for Exceptional Achievement. In 1996, along with his mentor Professor Emeritus of Tropical Medicine Dr. Barnett Cline, Gaus started the non-governmental organization Andean Health and Development to provide self-sustaining, comprehensive health care to the rural poor in Ecuador. Since then the organization has opened two hospitals and a clinic with a third hospital under development. Gaus credits his Tulane education in medicine, tropical medicine, and public health for setting him on his career path.

The final award of the evening recognized an alumna not from SPHTM but with close, personal ties to the school. Celia Scott Weatherhead, a 1965 Newcomb alumna, was honored with the Dermot McGlinchey Lifetime Achievement Award. Weatherhead is the president and trustee of the Weatherhead Foundation and the Albert J. Weatherhead III Foundation. Along with her late husband, she has given generously, endowing a number of chairs, including the Weatherhead Presidential Chair in Health Equity, held by SPHTM Dean Thomas LaVeist, and the Margaret W. and Eamon M. Kelly Distinguished Chair in International Development, held by Associate Dean for Global Health Richard Oberhelman. Celia Weatherhead also serves as an active member of the Public Health Dean's Advisory Council and is a great friend to the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.