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## UL System RFL Scholars Embark on Transformative Trip to Paris

*Eighteen Black college students to be joined by LA state lawmakers and corporate partners for study abroad experience.*

Baton Rouge, LA – March 30, 2023 – The first cohort of [Reginald F. Lewis Scholars](#) are heading to Paris, France on the program's inaugural study abroad trip. The Scholars will build cultural competency while exploring the 'City of Lights' and gain invaluable experiences preparing them for life after graduation. For many of the [Scholars](#), this opportunity is their first time outside the United States. For some, this will be their first time on an airplane.

The weeklong trip includes notable highlights such as a tour of the Palace of Versailles, lunch at the Eiffel Tower, and the culmination of a faculty-led research and international exchange program. Scholars have worked throughout the past two semesters on a joint research project and will present their shared work at the Pôle Universitaire Léonard de Vinci this week. Scholars will also attend lectures at the historic Sorbonne University surrounding the foundations of democracy.

In 2021, the University of Louisiana System established the Reginald F. Lewis Scholars program to improve the collegiate experience and success of Black males. The curated educational experience focuses on three areas: academic, social, and service. Each of the nine University of Louisiana System member institutions select two students each year to join the program based on need, leadership and merit.

*RFL Scholars Trip to Paris Cont'd...*

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“The Scholars are poised to become the next leaders of our great state and beyond. Their success knows no bounds,” UL System President and CEO Dr. Jim Henderson said. “We are so proud of our Scholars and so appreciate those who are sowing into their success—campus facilitators, corporate partners, state lawmakers, nonprofit organizations, and individual donors.”

Reginald F. Lewis was one of the wealthiest Black men in the 1980s, and the first American to close an overseas billion-dollar leveraged buy-out deal. His endeavors were focused on diversity, equity and inclusion which spirited his book, ‘Why Should White Guys Have All the Fun?’ Lewis died in January 1993 at just 50 years old, but his legacy continues through future generations including the Scholars in the program bearing his name.

“His model and his life set a stage for so many others who come from less fortunate situations to know they can achieve whatever they desire and wherever their minds take them,” said former UL System Board Chairman James Carter, Esq.

The RFL Scholars program is primarily funded through corporate sponsorships aimed at closing the opportunity and achievement gaps among historically underserved populations. In order to continue connecting these young men with opportunities, [donations and sponsorships](#) are critical.

The widow of Reginald F. Lewis, Loida Nicolas Lewis, recognizes the current and potential impact of the Scholars program. “As we talk about bridging the gap between those who are educated and those who are not, we must remember that America is for everyone - so I encourage all to give to this program, because it will create such a wave that when we start, others will follow,” Mrs. Lewis said.

**Media Interview Opportunities are Available Upon Request** with Reginald F. Lewis Scholars, UL System President Dr. Jim Henderson, Louisiana State Elected Officials and James Carter, Esq.

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Additional information upon request

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