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Feature Story Example

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Saints and Pelicans Owner speaks at UL Women's Leadership Conference

Gayle Benson speaks on how she became a powerful woman in the dominating male sports and entertainment world.



Gayle Benson- Owner of New Orleans Saints and Pelicans with players.
Credit- Town and Country Magazine

Preceding her husband as the owner of the New Orleans Saints and Pelicans, Gayle Benson has learned how to take control in the world of sports and entertainment. Benson is an experienced businesswoman who has shown great success in management, interior design, and real estate but was faced with the challenge of broadening her expertise after her husband's death. Benson, at this time, became the first woman to be the majority shareholder of an NFL and NBA team.

Gayle Marie LaJaunie-Benson was born and raised in Louisiana. She began her career professional career in interior design and opened her own business- Gayle Bird Interiors. Since then, she has become a partial owner of Dixie Brewing Co. and contributed to philanthropic efforts such as Second Harvest and cancer care and research. Louisiana has been the center of investments for Benson's career, including increases in tourism's economic sector by advocating for the Superbowl and similar tournaments to be held in the crescent city.

Benson's connection to UL began by allowing students to apply for the Saints and Pelicans scholarships and internships. This allows for students to gain experience in sports, tourism, and entertainment before graduation.

The speaker will be joined by Teresa Weatherspoon, an assistant coach with the Pelicans. The session is titled "Team Building and Breaking Barriers," which will display team building and leadership tactics that have led them to success.

Weatherspoon expressed, "My experience in New York, California, and Louisiana has led me to believe there are principles of leadership and team-work that, when combined, allow for triumph even when we are faced with new challenges such as a global pandemic."

The combination of Benson's business skills and Weatherspoon's experience playing in professional sports helped develop the presentation and define essential strategies for operations during unexpected circumstances. Women locally and nationally now have the opportunity to gain a unique inside look into the lives and careers of two powerful and dominating female leaders in our community.

Registration for the conference can be found by visiting diversity.louisiana.edu. Fees vary based on days and student discounts.