Borden's sale keeps tradition, funds lectures

UL sells historic downtown landmark — with a catch

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The historic red and white building on the corner of Louisiana and Johnson Street, serves up more than just ice cream. For University of Louisiana at Lafayette students, when the UL Lafayette Foundation recently sold the property and ice cream parlor it owned for more than 25 years, the money went toward funding the Fleur Levy Lecture Series.

The Fleur Levy Lecture Series was established in memory of Fleur Levy, who left most of her estate to UL Lafayette, of which Borden's was a part. Therefore, when the UL Lafayette Foundation sold the ice cream parlor and property to advertisers and local entrepreneurs, Rod LeBouef, it knew the money would benefit the speaker series.

This speaker series, which the Ragin' Cajun department coordinates, features Nobel laureates and distinguished alumni in a U.S. Lafayette audience. It occurs annually, and sometimes biannually. Past speakers have included George Rodrigue, UL Lafayette alumnus and famous painter known for his “Blue Dog” portraits, and Isaac Asimov, Jewish writer and Nobel Laureate.

LeBouef, president of “The Movember” has also spoken at the series.

The Fleur Levy Lecture Series and UL Lafayette are directly connected with Borden’s. Therefore, when the UL Foundation sold the shop, it put a stipulation into the contract.

"UL (Lafayette Foundation) wouldn’t sell it to us unless I promised to keep it Borden’s for the next five years," LeBouef said. "But I’m planning on keeping it Borden’s for maybe 30 years!"

LeBouef, owner of Red LeBouef’s Health and Racquet Club, bought Borden’s, because he said he enjoys owning small businesses. The former snow boat, member of the U.S. Navy, McAnarney and vitamin seller said he wants to keep the tradition of ice cream and pop as a staple in Cajun country.

"It’s a unique little building for Lafayette," Rod LeBouef said. "It’s architecture is certainly different, and it’s never changed in 70 years."

Katherine LeBouef also said she is happy her father bought the building and said she stands in favor of her Borden’s extended family. LeBouef commented her workload has grown immensely though.

"You have to work really hard," LeBouef advised UL Lafayette students, who wish to run their own businesses. "You have to be here. You have to stand outside, clean parking lots and put out flaps. It can be done!"

Although the UL Lafayette Foundation may have sold Borden’s with the stipulation to keep it that way for five years, Katherine LeBouef agrees with her father. She said she wants to keep it the ice cream parlor for as long as she can. After running out of ice cream one Sunday and having to close shop three hours earlier than expected, LeBouef said she thinks Lafayette residents and UL Lafayette students feel the same way. She added the success of Borden’s is all because of them.

"It’s the community’s way of saying thank you. Thank you for keeping it alive."

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