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## ***Presidential Award-winning Professor To Lead Katrina Rebuilding Efforts***

*An engineer and educator, Dr. Calvin Mackie brings rare qualifications to top position within Governor Blanco's Louisiana Recovery Authority*

**NEW ORLEANS, LA: October 25, 2005** – Dr. Calvin Mackie, Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Tulane University, has been appointed to the twenty-three member board of directors overseeing Governor Blanco's Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA), the guiding agency to lead the state's rebuilding efforts following Hurricane Katrina. The authority will focus on key state issues such as housing, jobs, transportation, health care, education, infrastructure, economic and workforce development, family services, and the environment. The board is scheduled to roll out a locally-driven, state-wide recovery plan in less than 100 days, and has already met with lawmakers in Washington, DC to discuss their agenda and goals, according to the LRA website.

Dr. Mackie's appointment was announced at a morning press conference held on October 17. In her speech, Governor Blanco outlined the board's mission and qualifications of its members. "I have selected some of the best minds from – or with connections to – Louisiana. They represent the spectrum of Louisiana. They are respected leaders, men and women dedicated to making a new and better Louisiana. They have distinguished themselves as leaders in varied fields. Each has a record of distinction and integrity," Blanco said.

An engineer and educator, Dr. Mackie is uniquely qualified to help lead the state's rebuilding efforts. He is an Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Tulane University where he specializes in fluid dynamics, the study of liquids and how they behave under certain conditions. An outspoken advocate for creating higher education standards among impoverished communities, Dr. Mackie received the 2003 Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring. He is a product of New Orleans' notoriously troubled public school systems, criticized for being underfunded, understaffed, and highly segregated. Despite scoring a combined 850 on his SATs, Dr. Mackie gained conditional acceptance to Morehouse College and ultimately graduated with undergraduate degrees in Mathematics from Morehouse and Mechanical Engineering from Georgia Tech. He continued his educational pursuits and completed the ultra-competitive Mechanical Engineering masters and PhD programs at Georgia Tech.

A lifelong New Orleans resident, Dr. Mackie is familiar with the extreme weather conditions affecting the Louisiana coast. In 2004, Dr. Mackie, his wife, and two young sons evacuated the city as Category Five Hurricane Ivan threatened to pummel the state. He wrote about this experience in his memoir *A View from the Roof: Lessons for Life & Business*, published by Acanthus Publishing in January 2005. Describing the devastation that would affect the city if a Category Three or stronger should touch down, Mackie wrote the following: "The city would see storm surges of 15 to 25 feet. The storm would push water up the mouth of the Mississippi River into Lake Pontchartrain, causing massive flooding in the crescent bowl area that is New Orleans. All models predict such a scenario would place New Orleans under 20 feet of water lasting at least four to six months and causing between 10,000 and 50,000 deaths."

Dr. Mackie was out of town when Hurricane Katrina hit last August, but heeding his own warning, he had a contingency plan already in place to have his home

secured and family evacuated to family members in Mississippi before the mandatory evacuation orders were announced.

## **ABOUT CALVIN MACKIE**

Dr. Calvin Mackie is an Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Tulane University and the recipient of the 2003 Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring. He is co-founder and President of Channel Zer0, an educational and motivational consulting firm located in Louisiana. He is a member of the National Speakers Association and has been active on the professional speaker circuit for over ten years, delivering presentations to high schools, colleges, corporations, and nonprofit institutions across the country.

For more information on Dr. Calvin Mackie, please visit [www.calvinmackie.com](http://www.calvinmackie.com) or call Mike Black at 508-847-3227.

For more information on the Louisiana Recovery Authority, please visit [www.lra.louisiana.gov](http://www.lra.louisiana.gov)

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