

# News

## Dr. Renne Commemorates 50th Anniversary of Civil Rights Bill with USDOT Secretary Anthony Foxx and Mayor Mitch Landrieu

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The Secretary of the US Department of Transportation Anthony Foxx and New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu led a roundtable to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil Rights Bill. The event was co-sponsored by the Plessy & Ferguson Foundation.

“Participating in this roundtable was truly a humbling and inspiring experience,” UNOTI Director Dr. John Renne noted. “Transportation is a fascinating lens to discuss civil rights. Former Mayor and HUD Secretary Moon Landrieu stated at the roundtable that transportation projects always have unintended consequences but the more locals are involved in the decision-making the more likely the outcomes will promote equality.”

The event was held at Gallier Hall in downtown New Orleans and included key leaders from across the city, including Freedom Rider Dodie Smith-Simmons, the decedents of the Plessy and Ferguson families, RTA CEO Justine Augustine, Xavier President Norman Francis, Sewerage and Water Board President Pro-Tem Ray Manning, Deputy Mayor Cedric Grant and other civic leaders.

“Transportation in America still has a long way to go in promoting equality,” Dr. Renne said. “We still do a poor job in connecting affordable housing to jobs, shopping and services. We are a car dependent nation, which has disparate impacts to African Americans in many communities. While solving these problems can sometimes be controversial, we owe gratitude to the generations before us that sacrificed so much to enable us to move towards a more inclusive society where we can have an open debate across race, gender and culture.”

Dr. Kate Lowe, an Assistant Professor in Transportation Studies and Planning and Urban Studies has been actively engaged in studying transportation equity at the Institute. Also, Dr. Renne was the Principle Investigator for a national study funded by the Federal Transit Administration examining evacuation planning efforts for carless and vulnerable populations.