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NEWS RELEASE

## University of South Florida Names New Mental Health Research Center After State Senator and Rubenstein Law attorney Darryl Rouson

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TAMPA, Fla., July 10, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- The University of South Florida (USF) recently announced that its Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute will be renamed the **Senator Darryl E. Rouson Center for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Research**, honoring Florida State Senator and Rubenstein Law attorney Darryl Rouson.



The announcement took place on June 25 in a ceremony at USF Health Downtown, where Governor Ron DeSantis signed Senate Bill 1620: Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorders. The governor, joined by state leaders, revealed that the research center within USF's College of Behavioral and Community Sciences will bear Senator Rouson's name **University of South Florida - Newsroom**.

"Florida is leading the nation in delivering meaningful solutions to tackle these complex issues and help improve people's lives," said Gov. DeSantis. "As the nation's largest behavioral health services research institute, the Rouson Center will continue its cutting-edge research to help transform the lives of people struggling with addiction and mental health."

Senator Rouson, an attorney at Rubenstein Law, and a longtime champion of mental health policy who has openly shared his own history of overcoming addiction and homelessness, expressed gratitude for the honor. "This legislation is a direct result of the hard work of the commission. It will ensure that Florida continues to be a leader in how we treat people living with mental illness," he said during the event.

The center is authorized by SB 1620, drawing upon recommendations from Florida's Commission on Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder. Its mission will include:

- Conducting rigorous research into the link between substance abuse and mental health
- Developing evidence-based treatments to improve outcomes
- Reducing societal impacts of substance use and behavioral health conditions

- Supporting workforce development through training and education

"The University of South Florida is where you come for solutions, where you come for action, where you come for impact," said Mike Griffin, Vice Chair of the USF Board of Trustees. A formal board resolution to finalize the naming is forthcoming.

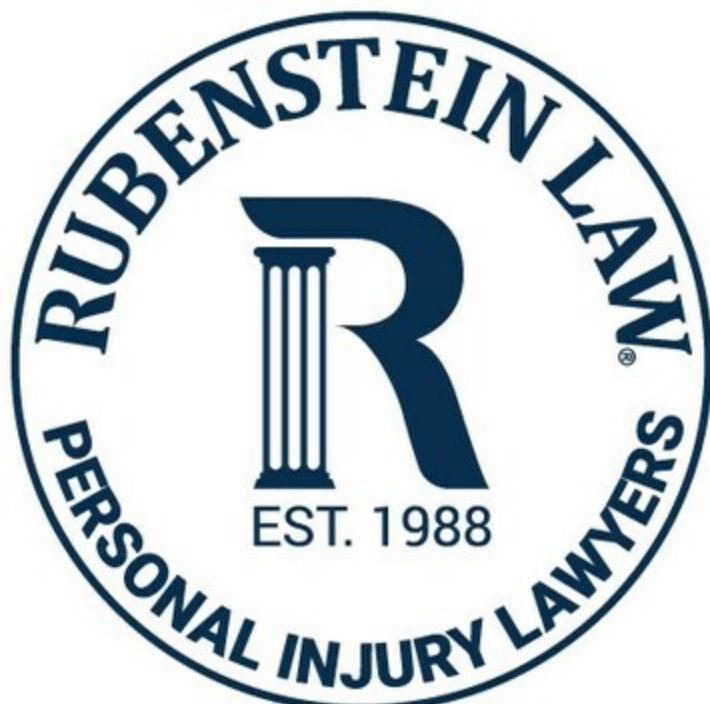
This recognition reflects Senator Rouson's dedication since joining the Florida Legislature in 2008, serving Tampa Bay and advocating across party lines. His leadership as chair of the state's mental health commission and sponsor of key legislative reforms, such as the "Tristin Murphy Act", demonstrates his ongoing impact on policy and community well-being.

## About Senator Darryl Rouson

Senator Rouson, a Rubenstein Law attorney, has been a pillar in Florida's legislative landscape since 2008. Representing Hillsborough and Pinellas counties, he has led efforts in mental health reform, including pivotal roles on the Commission on Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder. Formerly unhoused and in recovery, he now stands as a testament to resilience and reform.

## About USF's Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute

As the nation's largest behavioral health services research institute, the Louis de la Parte Institute is committed to advancing science-driven solutions for mental illness and substance abuse. The creation of the Senator Darryl E. Rouson Center reinforces the institution's leadership in shaping Florida's behavioral health landscape.



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