

Denis Poljak inducted into Shreveport's Centenary Hall of Fame, joins brother there

BY LIZ SWAINE | Staff writer
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2025 Alumni of the Year Denis Poljak receiving his plaque from Dr. Christopher Holoman, Centenary College President.

By Ivy B French/Ivy B Photography

As part of their 200th birthday commemoration, Centenary College of Shreveport chose a former student who traveled to them from halfway around the world as their Alumni of the Year.

Denis Poljak —2025 Alumni of the Year—is the Partner and Managing Director of Poljak Group Wealth Management at Steward Partners, a company he founded with his younger brother Davor. Centenary chose Davor as Alumni of the Year in 2024.

Alumni of the Year is considered the school's highest honor and one that recognizes significant achievement. In winning, Denis joins a list that includes judges, doctors, newspaper publishers, oil & gas business owners and other notables, including one of the Poljaks' mentors, former businesswoman and state senator Virginia Shehee.

Davor said the Shreveport college has meant a lot to his brother, and in return, Denis has been a steadfast supporter and ambassador for Centenary for over 30 years.

"His deep care for Centenary is rooted in his gratitude for their exceptional academics and it drives his passion for giving back to the institution and his community," said Davor, who is co-founder of Poljak Group.

This is not a first for the Poljak brothers. The tennis-playing duo are also members of the Centenary Athletic Hall of Fame.

It was tennis that initially led the Poljaks to Centenary.

The brothers were born in socialist Yugoslavia, but because of their father's job, they were able to travel Europe extensively. They were competitive tennis players who dreamed of being tennis pros and later, mechanical engineers.

But in 1992, war broke out in Bosnia, a part of the Yugoslav Republic.

The brothers who were in the United States on Centenary College tennis scholarships, no longer had a country to call home.

They were unable to contact their parents and were getting no news on the war other than snippets on TV. "There was a period of about six months, we had no idea if they were alive or dead and we were on our own," Denis said.

"I think those things shaped us," Denis said in a 2024 interview with The Shreveport Bossier City Advocate. "It wasn't easy because we came here with absolutely nothing. Denis said, 'Davor, we have each other. Let's make our mom and dad proud.' We realized we needed to grow up here, take care of ourselves and determine our own destiny."
Denis Poljak



Denis and brother Davor Poljak at the Alumni of the Year event at Centenary College, Oct. 23, 2025.

Ivy B French/Ivy B Photography



Denis Poljak speaks during an interview with The Shreveport-Bossier City Advocate in Shreveport, La., Tuesday, Aug. 13, 2024.

By JILL PICKETT | Staff photographer

Along the way, they have worked to help others, too. Denis was instrumental in establishing scholarships at Centenary College, including the Coach Jimmy Harrison Memorial Endowed Scholarship and the Poljak Family Endowment fund designated for the support of tennis program operations there.

“I left an amazing life behind in the former Yugoslavia, but I carried with me the strong family values and experience that hard work and perseverance make all things possible,” said Denis.

“This year has been exciting—it’s nice to be acknowledged by Forbes and AdvisorHub for reaching new heights in my career achievements and by Centenary for community giving. I hope that others may be inspired to continue to reach for their dreams and to support the community they love in their own way.”

Earlier this year, Poljak was named one of Forbes’ 2025 Best-in-State Wealth Advisors for the sixth time and was also selected to AdvisorHub Magazine’s “Advisors to Watch (Under \$1B)” for the second straight year in 2025.