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**JAMES
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**EMERIL LAGASSE, WORLD-RENOWNED CHEF AND CULINARY ICON
NAMED 2013 JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION HUMANITARIAN OF THE YEAR**

New York, NY (February 5, 2013) – The James Beard Foundation announced today that **Emeril Lagasse**, a James Beard Foundation Award–winning chef renowned for his culinary contributions, contagious enthusiasm, and philanthropic achievements, has been named the recipient of the 2013 James Beard Foundation Humanitarian of the Year Award. This esteemed award is given to an individual or organization whose work in the realm of food has improved the lives of others and benefited society at large. Emeril Lagasse will be honored at this year’s James Beard Awards, the nation’s most prestigious recognition program honoring professionals in the food and beverage industries, on **Monday, May 6, 2013** at Lincoln Center’s Avery Fisher Hall in New York City.

“We are thrilled to announce that Emeril Lagasse has been selected as our 2013 Humanitarian of the Year,” said Susan Ungaro, president of the James Beard Foundation. “Since Emeril entered the culinary scene more than 20 years ago, he’s become one of America’s best-known chef personalities.” Ungaro added, “But what truly sets Emeril apart is his passionate advocacy for youth. Through his own foundation, Emeril makes an incredible impact in communities where his restaurants operate by supporting key educational initiatives and culinary arts programs that create opportunities for children in need.”

“I’m humbled and honored to receive the Humanitarian Award from the James Beard Foundation,” said Emeril Lagasse. “Over ten years ago, I founded the Emeril Lagasse Foundation with the hope of giving back by exposing young people to the culinary arts—especially those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Over the years we’ve stayed true to our core values of education, mentorship, passion, creativity, self-discipline. I’m incredibly proud of the work we’ve done, the lives we’ve touched, and I’m deeply grateful to my many friends who have contributed their support along the way. I look forward to continuing on this path for years to come.”

Philanthropy has long been an intrinsic part of Emeril’s culture and philosophy. In 2002, he founded the Emeril Lagasse Foundation, which supports nonprofit organizations and educational initiatives that create new opportunities for children, especially for those from disadvantaged circumstances. His work is focused within the communities where Emeril’s restaurants operate. The Emeril Lagasse Foundation tailors its efforts to each community; its work has ranged from creating an outdoor

classroom, gardens, and fresh foods cafeteria to a culinary learning center. The Emeril Lagasse Foundation has granted over \$5.3 million to children's education and culinary arts programs in New Orleans, Las Vegas, and the Gulf Coast. In March 2011, Emeril dedicated the Emeril Lagasse Foundation Culinary Arts Studio at the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts (NOCCA), which offers high school students a four-year culinary arts program with a first of its kind master-apprentice curriculum, developed in partnership with Emeril's alma mater Johnson & Wales University. Throughout the past ten years, the Emeril Lagasse Foundation has partnered with a range of influencers to host unique, charitable events including an educational cooking concert with Wynton Marsalis; a luncheon with Tim McGraw and Faith Hill; "Emeril's Grand Bam," a charity tennis exhibition match between Andre Agassi and Andy Roddick; and Carnivale du Vin, an annual gala which has been attended by world-renowned chefs like Mario Batali and Wolfgang Puck. The most recent addition is an outdoor festival celebration called Emeril's Boudin & Beer, which in its second year welcomed over 50 chefs and 3000 guests from across the country for a casual block party celebrating Louisiana's food heritage.

Emeril opened the iconic Emeril's Restaurant in 1990 and instantly drew ecstatic praise from the New Orleans locals and critics alike. Following the success of Emeril's Restaurant, Emeril went on to open 13 establishments, including NOLA in 1992, Emeril's New Orleans Fish House at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas in 1995; the reopening of the classic Emeril's Delmonico in New Orleans in 1998; Emeril's Orlando at Universal Studios and Delmonico Steakhouse in Las Vegas in 1999; Emeril's Tchoup Chop at Universal Studios in 2002; Table 10 at The Palazzo in Las Vegas in 2008; Emeril's Chop House, Burgers And More by Emeril and Emeril's Italian Table at the Sands Casino Resort Bethlehem in Pennsylvania in 2009; and e2 emeril's eatery in Charlotte, N.C. in 2012. Not limited to the restaurant business, Emeril is also an incredibly successful television personality. Anchored by *Essence of Emeril* and *Emeril Live!*, two hit series on the Food Network, Emeril is the food correspondent for *Good Morning America* and has appeared on everything from HBO's *Treme* to Bravo's *Top Chef*. Most recently, he launched *Emeril's Florida*, which airs on the Cooking Channel. In addition to his media schedule and restaurants, Emeril has his own cooking related product lines including Emerilware cookware, spices, and cutlery. He is also the author of 17 bestselling cookbooks, such as *Emeril's New New Orleans Cooking* (1993), *Louisiana Real and Rustic* (1996), *Every Day's a Party* (1999) and *Emeril's Kicked- Up Sandwiches* (2012). Emeril has received two previous awards from the James Beard Foundation: He was inducted into the Who's Who in 1989 and won the Best Chef: Southeast award in 1991. Additionally, Emeril was honored at the annual James Beard Foundation event Chefs & Champagne in 2011.

The James Beard Foundation Awards are the nation's preeminent recognition program honoring professionals in the food and beverage industries. The Awards celebrate outstanding achievement in each of the following categories: Restaurants and Chefs, Books, Journalism, Restaurant Design and Graphics, Broadcast Media, and special achievement awards. The recipient of the Humanitarian of the Year Award is selected by the James Beard Foundation Awards Committee, which consists of the chairperson from each individual Awards program, members of the Foundation's Board of Trustees, and members at large.

On **Monday, March 18, 2013**, the Foundation will announce the final nominees for all Award categories during a press brunch at the historic Lowndes Grove Plantation in Charleston, South Carolina. Nominations will also be announced live via the Foundation's Twitter feed at twitter.com/beardfoundation.

On **Friday, May 3, 2013**, the **James Beard Foundation Book, Broadcast & Journalism Awards Dinner**, an exclusive event honoring the nation's top cookbook authors, culinary broadcast producers and hosts, and food journalists, will take place at Gotham Hall in New York City.

On **Monday, May 6, 2013**, the **James Beard Foundation Awards Ceremony and Gala Reception** will take place at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall in New York City. During the event, which is open to the public, awards for the Restaurant and Chef and Restaurant Design and Graphics categories will be handed out, along with special achievement awards including Humanitarian of the Year, Lifetime Achievement, Who's Who, and the America's Classics award honorees. A gala reception will immediately follow, featuring top culinary talents from across the country serving dishes that reflect this year's Awards theme, "Lights. Camera. Taste! Spotlight on Food & Film," a tribute to the role food plays in America's most iconic films. Tickets to the May 6 Awards ceremony and gala reception will go on sale on March 18, 2013, and can be purchased at jbfawards.com or through the Awards Box Office at 914.231.6180.

The 2013 James Beard Foundation Awards are presented with support by the following partners: Premier Sponsors: All-Clad Metalcrafters, Lenox Tableware and Gifts; Supporting Sponsors: Acqua Panna® Natural Spring Water, The Coca-Cola Company, Delta Air Lines, Lavazza, S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water, Southern Wine & Spirits of New York, Stella Artois®, Valrhona; Gala Reception Sponsors: Ecolab, Rums of Puerto Rico; and with additional support from BB&T Charleston Wine + Food Festival® and Chefwear. **Sponsors listed are current as of release date.*

About the James Beard Foundation

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation is dedicated to celebrating, nurturing, and preserving America's diverse culinary heritage and future. A cookbook author and teacher with an encyclopedic knowledge about food, James Beard, who died in 1985, was a champion of American cuisine. He helped educate and mentor generations of professional chefs and food enthusiasts, instilling in them the value of wholesome, healthful and delicious food. Today, the Beard Foundation continues in the same spirit by administering a number of diverse programs that include educational initiatives, food industry awards, scholarships to culinary schools, publications, chef advocacy training, thought-leader convening, and by maintaining the historic James Beard House in New York City's Greenwich Village as a "performance space" for visiting chefs. In September of 2012, the Foundation launched the Diplomatic Culinary Partnership with the U.S. Department of State's Office of Protocol and helped create the American Chef Corps as a way to champion American chefs abroad, promote American food products and foster an interest in American culinary culture and history through international programs and initiatives. For more information, please visit www.jamesbeard.org. Find insights on food at the James Beard Foundation's blog [Delights & Prejudices](#). Join the James Beard Foundation on [Facebook](#). Follow the James Beard Foundation on [Twitter](#).