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**JAMES
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**CECILIA CHIANG, ICONIC CHEF, RESTAURATEUR AND CULINARY LEGEND
NAMED 2013 JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNER**

New York, NY (January 28, 2013) – The James Beard Foundation announced today that **Cecilia Chiang**, the highly acclaimed chef and restaurateur who's often said to have done for Chinese food what Julia Child did for French cuisine, has been named the recipient of the 2013 James Beard Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award. Each year, this award is bestowed upon someone whose lifetime body of work has had a positive and long-lasting impact on the way we eat, cook, and/or think about food in America. Cecilia Chiang will be honored at this year's James Beard Foundation 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.

"The Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes those who have truly revolutionized the way Americans think about food," said Susan Ungaro, president of the James Beard Foundation. "Introducing San Francisco—and America as a whole—to authentic Mandarin cuisine, Cecilia elevated Chinese cuisine far beyond the takeout box. She completely embodies the spirit of this award." Ungaro added, "Cecilia's brilliant vision paved the way for countless chefs who have followed in her footsteps. The James Beard Foundation is thrilled to honor her legacy this year, and will continue to celebrate and benefit from her magnificent achievements."

"Receiving the James Beard Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award is an incredible honor," said Cecilia Chiang. "James Beard was one of my closest personal friends, so this award holds a special place in my heart. I've been in this business since 1960. I opened the Mandarin with the goal of introducing the American people to real Chinese food, and I have overcome great odds to get to where I am today." Cecilia concluded, "I'm so excited to accept this award because it gives me the opportunity to celebrate my experiences; I'm proud of my accomplishments, but also of the struggles I've overcome. I want people to learn from my story."

Born near Shanghai and raised near Beijing, Cecilia Chiang stumbled into the restaurant business somewhat by accident and has since become a culinary icon. Having come to San Francisco to visit her recently widowed sister, Cecilia had no intention of staying in America. She agreed to help two friends negotiate the lease for a restaurant they were opening because she spoke

better English. After her friends backed out, Cecilia was saddled with the deal. Although she had never run a business, she stayed on to open the Mandarin in the city's Russian Hill neighborhood. Cecilia introduced a full-flavored Northern Chinese menu that initially included more than 200 dishes, then-novelties such as hot-and-sour soup, pot stickers, Peking duck, sizzling rice soup, and delicate shredded abalone with bean sprouts. The restaurant's lavish interior, sophisticated décor, and complex flavors from the Szechwan and Hunan provinces were completely new to San Francisco. Although the Mandarin was initially unsuccessful—Cecilia faced discrimination as a female business owner and had trouble communicating with Cantonese suppliers in Chinatown—the restaurant slowly built a following. In 1968, the Mandarin moved to Ghirardelli Square and became the new hot spot, attracting a star-studded crowd with regulars such as Wolfgang Puck, Jackie Onassis, and James Beard, who became one of Cecilia's closest personal friends over unconventional dishes like pig's feet and pork kidneys. In the 1970s, Cecilia held authentic Mandarin cooking classes attended by iconic American figures, from Julia Child, Alice Waters, and Danny Kay to Chuck Williams (of Williams-Sonoma), James Beard, and Marion Cunningham.

Cecilia's rich life history has been chronicled by two memoirs: *The Mandarin Way* (Little Brown, 1974), which details her culinary success, and *The Seventh Daughter* (Ten Speed Press, 2007), which recounts her 1,000-mile trek across China to flee Japanese occupation. She retired in 1991, but remains actively involved in charitable initiatives, like raising funds for the Chinese American International School (CAIS), the nation's first Mandarin immersion grammar school, where she founded a merit-based scholarship program. Additionally, Cecilia has stayed closely linked to the industry, consulting for acclaimed San Francisco Restaurants Betelnut and Shanghai 1930. Her son, Philip, followed in her footsteps, co-founding the national chain P.F. Chang's Chinese Bistro.

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. During the Gala Reception immediately following, top culinary talents from across the country will serve 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 6th 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](#).

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