

JBF LEADERSHIP AWARDS

James Beard Foundation Celebrated Leadership Awards Honorees at First-Ever Ceremony in Chicago

~ *Five visionaries recognized for creating a more healthful, sustainable, and just food world* ~

CHICAGO, IL (May 6, 2018) – The James Beard Foundation (JBF) Awards weekend kicked off last night at an invitation-only [JBF Leadership Awards](#) ceremony at Hyatt’s corporate headquarters in Chicago. Five outstanding honorees were recognized for their work in creating a more healthful, sustainable, and just food world.

The five women and men who have made it their mission to implement lasting change, to provide access to nutritious food, and to amplify the voices that are too often ignored are **Dara Cooper**, *Co-Founder*, [National Black Food & Justice Alliance](#), an activist for racial equity and food system justice; **Ferd Hoefner**, *Senior Strategic Advisor*, [National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition](#), a champion and advisor for the sustainable agriculture movement; **Doug Rauch**, *President/Founder*, [Daily Table](#), a social entrepreneur and innovator fighting food insecurity; **Shirley Sherrod**, *Executive Director*, [Southwest Georgia Project](#), a defender of farmers and coops in the south; and **Ramon Torres**, *President*, [Familias Unidas por la Justicia](#), an organizer who advocates for the rights of thousands of farm workers in Washington State.

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The evening was emceed by renowned sommelier and restaurateur **Alpana Singh**, who joined JBF CEO **Clare Reichenbach**, JBF EVP **Mitchell Davis**, JBF Board Chair **Frederic M. Seegal**, and presenters **Sheelah Muhammad**, **Kathleen Merrigan**, **José Alvarez**, **Leila Evans**, and **Jose Oliva** in last night’s celebration. The newest class of leaders was selected by an esteemed jury and their peers—previous JBF Leadership Award honorees—through a process overseen by a dedicated committee chaired by Anne McBride, and with the participation of Sam Kass, Danielle Nierenberg, and Ricardo Salvador.

“It’s the first time since their founding in 2011 that we are holding the JBF Leadership Awards during the James Beard Foundation Awards weekend,” explained Reichenbach. “We wanted to harness the power and profile of the full Awards and its theme, RISE, to shine an even brighter light on the work the Leadership honorees do. Using food as a vehicle to better their communities and the world beyond, these leaders embody the theme of RISE, which celebrates the collective spirit of our community and the power of food.”

The 2018 JBF Leadership Awards were co-hosted by Hyatt, with founding support from the GRACE Communications Foundation, and additional support from the Blended Burger Project™ and the Mushroom Council. Product donation provided by: Australis Barramundi, Niman Ranch, and Sea2Table; and wines courtesy of Argyle Winery, MacRostie Winery & Vineyards, and Wither Hills New Zealand Wines. The menu for the evening was specially curated by Hyatt’s Director of Culinary Martin Pfefferkorn.

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In addition to last night's awards program, the JBF Leadership Awards honorees will participate in a public panel on leadership and food-system change, [The Power of the Plate](#), co-hosted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, today, May 6 from 4:00-5:30pm at the council's conference center headquarters. Honorees will also have a highlighted moment on-stage during the James Beard Awards on tomorrow, May 7, at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

The Leadership Awards are part of the [James Beard Foundation's Impact Programs](#), which work to establish a more sustainable food system through education, advocacy, and thought leadership. For more information, visit jamesbeard.org/leadershipawards and follow @beardfoundation and #jbfa on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

About the James Beard Foundation

The James Beard Foundation's mission is to celebrate, nurture, and honor chefs and other leaders making America's food culture more delicious, diverse, and sustainable for everyone. For more than 30 years the Foundation has accomplished this mission through programs that highlight food's central role in our lives. In addition to hosting guest-chef dinners throughout the year at the historic James Beard House in New York City, the Foundation administers the James Beard Awards; grants scholarships for culinary students; produces national events that include our Taste America tour; and creates educational programs for the culinary community and food lovers. The Foundation addresses the growing challenges facing our food system through its Impact Programs, which include the Leadership Awards; Chefs Boot Camp for Policy and Change; Issue Summits; and Culinary Labs. Industry issues, such as gender imbalance and diversity in culinary leadership, are addressed through our Industry Programs. For more information, please visit jamesbeard.org and follow @beardfoundation on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#).

About Hyatt Hotels Corporation

Hyatt Hotels Corporation, headquartered in Chicago, is a leading global hospitality company with a portfolio of 14 premier brands. As of December 31, 2017, the Company's portfolio included more than 700 properties in more than 50 countries across six continents. The Company's purpose to care for people so they can be their best informs its business decisions and growth strategy and is intended to attract and retain top colleagues, build relationships with guests and create value for shareholders. The Company's subsidiaries develop, own, operate, manage, franchise, license or provide services to hotels, resorts, branded residences, vacation ownership properties, and fitness and spa locations, including under the **Park Hyatt®**, **Miraval®**, **Grand Hyatt®**, **Hyatt Regency®**, **Hyatt®**, **Andaz®**, **Hyatt Centric®**, **The Unbound Collection by Hyatt®**, **Hyatt Place®**, **Hyatt House®**, **Hyatt Ziva™**, **Hyatt Zilara™**, **Hyatt Residence Club®** and **exhale®** brand names. For more information about Hyatt Hotels Corporation, please visit www.hyatt.com. Follow Hyatt on Facebook (@hyatt), Instagram (@hyatt), and Twitter (@HyattTweets). Follow President & CEO Mark Haplamazian on Twitter (@MarkHoplamazian).

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