

2021 James Beard Awards

Presented by 

For Immediate Release

2021 James Beard Awards: Stories of Resilience and Leadership

Hosted by Chef Kwame Onwuachi in Chicago, the 2021 Broadcast Celebrated Those Who Have Made a Significant Impact on the Restaurant Industry During the COVID-19 Crisis

Chicago, IL (September 27, 2021): This evening, the 2021 James Beard Awards: Stories of Resilience and Leadership celebrated and honored the independent restaurant industry on the rooftop of the Harris Theater in the Awards' host city of Chicago and at additional satellite events around the country. The broadcast was hosted by James Beard Award winner Kwame Onwuachi. The event shared inspiring stories from community members nationwide, highlighting accounts of passion, unity, innovation, and leadership under extreme hardships during the pandemic. Those featured are representative of so many who played and continue to play a part in supporting their communities and the industry. The broadcast aired on Twitter ([@beardfoundation](https://twitter.com/beardfoundation)) and can be [viewed here](#).

Onwuachi was joined in Chicago by Clare Reichenbach, CEO of the James Beard Foundation, chef Monti Carlo of Food Network's *Help my Yelp*, five James Beard House Fellows, James Beard Award-winning chef/owner Edward Lee of 610 Magnolia, and Mayor of Chicago Lori Lightfoot. Additional presenters included Tanya Holland, JBF Awards Committee Chair and board member, in Oakland, CA; Jamila Robinson, food editor at *Philadelphia Inquirer* in Philadelphia, and Stephen Satterfield, food writer, producer, and host of 2021 Netflix docu-series *High on the Hog: How American Cuisine Transformed America*.

Cities across the country hosted simultaneous intimate satellite events to tune in to the broadcast, including:

- **Houston** at Lucille's with Dawn Burrell, Chris Williams, and local host Houston First Corporation
- **Oakland** at Town Fare by Tanya Holland at the Oakland Museum of California, featuring Reem Assil of Reem's California and Dominica Rice-Cisneros of Bombera, and hosted by Awards Committee Chair and board member Tanya Holland
- **Philadelphia** at SOUTH Restaurant & Jazz Kitchen with Ben Bynum, Stephanie Willis, local host Visit Philadelphia, and Jamila Robinson, food editor at *Philadelphia Inquirer* and JBF Journalism Awards Committee Chair
- **Washington, D.C.** at Moon Rabbit with Kevin Tien

Guests enjoyed special musical guest performances live from Chicago, Houston, and Philadelphia including Chicago blues royalty and Chicago's own Wayne Baker Brooks and his band, brought to us by Choose Chicago; [Demola the Violinist](#) joined by the Houston Ballet II,

ballerina Lauren Anderson, and a host of multi-cultural performers, presented by Houston First Corporation; and acclaimed vocalist [Laurin Talese](#), brought to us by Visit Philadelphia.

The event showcased five special video features, in addition to a 12-part digital series featured on the Foundation's Instagram, [@beardfoundation](#).

Stories of Resilience featured included:

- **[Bakers Against Racism](#)**: unofficially the world's largest bake sale, Bakers Against Racism has raised over \$2 million dollars for social justice causes worldwide.
- **[Independent Restaurant Coalition \(IRC\)](#)**: the IRC was created as a voice and resource for the independent restaurant and bar community nationwide.
- **[Pimento Jamaican Kitchen / Pimento Relief Services](#)**: Pimento Relief Services (PRS) was created in response to the needs of Black community leaders—PRS is a hub that is actively rebuilding and reimagining a world where a Black economy flourishes, reparations and healing are a community priority, and Black individuals are protected and represented in our political system.
- **[Regarding Her](#)**: Regarding Her is a nonprofit devoted to the advancement and empowerment of women restaurateurs, striving to create opportunities for connection and success by way of programs that support, unite, and uplift female food and beverage entrepreneurs in Los Angeles and beyond.
- **[Restaurant Workers' Community Foundation \(RWCF\)](#)**: Restaurant Workers' Community Foundation is an advocacy and action nonprofit created by and for restaurant workers.

The 12-part digital series featured: **Boston Black Hospitality Coalition, Chef Hui, The Lee Initiative, Michael Fojtasek, Off Their Plate, Power of 10, PProduce!, Restaurants Organizing, Advocating, and Rebuilding (ROAR), Saffron de Twah, SF New Deal, Tennessee Action for Hospitality, and Todos Ponen.**

The 2021 James Beard Awards: Stories of Resilience and Leadership are presented by Capital One, the official credit card and banking partner of the James Beard Foundation. Through this first-of-its-kind partnership, Capital One cardholders enjoy unique access to James Beard Foundation programming. The James Beard Awards are proudly hosted by Choose Chicago and the Illinois Restaurant Association and presented in association with Chicago O'Hare and Midway International Airports, as well as the following sponsors: Premier Sponsors: American Airlines, the official airline of the James Beard Foundation, Deloitte, S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water, Stella Artois; Supporting Sponsors: All-Clad Metalcrafters, Marriott Bonvoy®, National Restaurant Association®, Skuna Bay Salmon, White Claw® Hard Seltzer; Patron Sponsors: Ecolab, Kendall College at National Louis University, Lavazza, PeopleVine, Rocket Mortgage, Valrhona, and Windstar Cruises, the official cruise line of the James Beard Foundation, with additional support from Château d'Esclans, The Spire Collection, and VerTerra Dinnerware. Intersport is the Official Broadcast Partner of the 2021 James Beard Awards.

The James Beard Foundation previously announced that it would not be handing out awards in 2021 while the program underwent an audit review and renewal of policies and procedures, ensuring a more transparent, accessible, and equitable process for the future James Beard Awards. The audit results can be found [here](#). The first post-audit James Beard Awards will take place on June 13, 2022.

Through the James Beard Foundation's [Open for Good](#) campaign, the organization is working to provide critical resources to help the independent restaurant industry survive the COVID-19 crisis and come back stronger, more equitable, and more resilient. For information on the Foundation's Open for Good campaign, please visit jamesbeard.org/aboutopenforgood.

News about the Awards will be regularly updated and posted to jamesbeard.org/awards and on the Foundation's social channels ([@beardfoundation](#) on Twitter and Instagram using the hashtag #jbfa).

About the James Beard Foundation

The James Beard Foundation celebrates and supports the people behind America's food culture, while pushing for new standards in the restaurant industry to create a future where all have the opportunity to thrive. Established over 30 years ago, the Foundation has highlighted the centrality of food culture in our daily lives and is committed to supporting a resilient and flourishing industry that honors its diverse communities. By amplifying new voices, celebrating those leading the way, and supporting those on the path to do so, the Foundation is working to create a more equitable and sustainable future—what we call Good Food for Good™. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the James Beard Foundation launched the Open for Good campaign to ensure that independent restaurants not only survive, but that the industry is able to rebuild stronger than before. For more information, subscribe to the digital newsletter [Beard Bites](#) and follow [@beardfoundation](#) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), and [Clubhouse](#). The James Beard Foundation is a national not-for-profit 501c(3) organization based in New York City.

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