

For Immediate Release

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James Beard Awards Broadcast Celebrates Honorees and Nominees, Shines a Spotlight on Industry Issues

NEW YORK, NY (September 25, 2020) – This evening the James Beard Foundation celebrated its 2020 honorees and nominees in a live virtual event broadcasted via [Twitter](#) from the host city of Chicago.

Foundation CEO Clare Reichenbach opened the show and joined the broadcast from the kitchen of the James Beard House, recognizing the accomplishments of all of the 137 nominees while also identifying the collective duty we have to support independent restaurants during this difficult time. “We are not broken,” she said. “The pandemic exposed the fragility of the restaurant industry as it was, but it has also opened the door to what it might become.”

The evening was emceed by Ji Suk Yi, a staple in local Chicago media and television for over 10 years. Ji played host to the broadcast from the show’s headquarters in Chicago and virtually to viewers around the country where this year’s presenters and program participants joined remotely.

Chef and TV personality Pati Jinich introduced the America’s Classics honorees and a video package offering an in-depth look at these community staples. This year’s Leadership Awards were recognized throughout the evening with pre-recorded videos highlighting industry changemakers from across the country.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented by drummer and best-selling author Questlove to Jessica B. Harris, author, editor, and translator of 18 books. Alice Waters, who accepted the Design Icon Award for her restaurant Chez Panisse, also presented the Humanitarian of the Year honor to nonprofit organization Zero Foodprint. Colleen Vincent, vice president of community at the James Beard Foundation, spoke with 2019 Leadership Award Winner Sean Sherman about leading change and diversity through food, and the recent announcement of the James Beard Foundation [Food and Beverage Investment Fund for Black and Indigenous Americans](#).

Nominees also offered words of inspiration and support to their colleagues throughout the industry, providing a glimpse of hope and positivity from across the country. They detailed the way in which they have given back to their communities in recent months and how they are motivated to build back better than before.

To close the evening, Gail Simmons moderated a roundtable discussion with chefs Kwame Onwuachi, Tanya Holland, Beverly Kim, and Johnny Clark on the state of the restaurant industry, touching on the role of independent restaurants in local communities, challenges faced in recent months, the economics of running an independent restaurant, racial and gender inequity, and more.

- Holland recognized: “As far as the role of community, I have people in my community who are just like ‘we have to keep you here, what can we do, what can we do more of?’ Because it’s so important, particularly in

Oakland, California to have a Black-owned restaurant and a Black-owned business. The day after the movement was our highest sales date ever even before COVID, and that just goes to show you how committed people were to showing how important we are.”

- Kim explained: “Even though we were barely breaking even during this pandemic, it felt really good to help our frontline workers and cook for the local hospital and give to the local senior citizen and Korean American community. And we’re continuing to think of ways we can give back to our community, especially during the protests; Black Lives Matter brought a lot of attention to using our platform to talk about these issues as well as inequities in gender. People look to restaurants, believe it or not, they see us as leaders in the community, for social justice, and change.”
- Onwuachi cited: “People think that when they come into restaurants and they see a busy restaurant they think it’s dollar signs. And a lot of that money isn’t going to onions, it’s going to rent and taxes. So that’s what needs to change. But we live in a capitalistic nation and we all signed up for this. We also need to look in ourselves as to why we’re in this industry and what we really want to achieve. Are we going to drink our water and mind our business or are we going to fight for something that we can actually change? And if we don’t have the answers for it, I think we need to be really careful of what we’re advocating for.”

Additional chefs and personalities who made appearances throughout the evening included Ann Kim, Tahira Habibi, and local Chicago chefs Erick Williams and Maya-Camille Broussard.

As previously reported, there will be no James Beard Awards given in 2021 in the Restaurant and Chef, Media (Book, Broadcast Media and Journalism Awards), Leadership Awards, and Restaurant Design categories. The Foundation will not be accepting recommendations or submissions for the upcoming year. As the Foundation moves forward, it will be conducting a comprehensive internal and external review of the Awards systems to address any systemic bias and align the Awards with the Foundation’s mission of promoting sustainability, equity, and diversity in the restaurant industry. The Foundation is taking stock of how the Awards are administered, communicated, and presented to assure the Awards are open and accessible to all. Updates regarding the Awards will be posted regularly to jamesbeard.org/awards and on the Foundation’s social channels (@beardfoundation on Twitter and Instagram using the hashtag #jbfa).

Through its Open for Good campaign, the Foundation is working to help the independent restaurant industry survive the COVID-19 crisis and come back stronger, more equitable, and more resilient. Recently announced as part of Open for Good is the James Beard Foundation Food and Beverage Investment Fund for Black and Indigenous Americans, a new grant initiative to provide financial resources for food or beverage businesses that are majority-owned by Black or Indigenous individuals that will also be highlighted in the broadcast. The Foundation’s vision is an industry in which everyone has an equal opportunity to thrive. For information on the Foundation’s Open for Good campaign and the fund, please visit jamesbeard.org/aboutopenforgood.

The 2020 James Beard Awards Honorees

- The James Beard Leadership Awards
 - Phillip and Dorathy E. Barker, Co-Founders, Operation Spring Plant, Inc. (OSP)
 - Rosalinda Guillen, Executive Director, Community to Community Development (C2C)
 - Abiodun Henderson, Executive Director, The Come Up Project featuring Gangstas to Growers

- Mark and Kerry Marhefka, Owners, Abundant Seafood
 - Caleb Zigas, Executive Director, La Cocina
- Design Icon: Chez Panisse
- Design Award: 75 Seats and Under
Firms: Heliotrope Architects
Project: Rupee, Seattle
- Design Award: 76 Seats and Over
Firms: Klein Agency and ORA
Project: auburn, Los Angeles
- Design Award: Outstanding Design of Alternative Eating & Drinking Places
Firms: Lori Chemla
Project Carissa's the Bakery, East Hampton, NY
- Humanitarian of the Year: Zero Foodprint
- Lifetime Achievement: Jessica B. Harris
- America's Classics
 - Lassis Inn, Little Rock, AR
Owners: Elihue Washington Jr. and Maria Washington
 - Zehnder's of Frankenmuth, Frankenmuth, MI
Owners: Al Zehnder, Susan Zehnder, and Martha Zehnder Shelton
 - Puritan Backroom, Manchester, NH
Owners: Arthur Pappas, Chris Pappas, and Eric Zink
 - Oriental Mart, Seattle
Owners: Mila Apostol and Joy Apostol
 - El Taco de Mexico, Denver
Owner: Sasha Zanabria
 - Vera's Backyard Bar-B-Que, Brownsville, TX
Owner: Armando Vera

The 2020 James Beard Awards Restaurant and Chef Nominees

Best New Restaurant

A restaurant opened in the prior calendar year that already demonstrates excellence in cuisine and hospitality, and that is likely to make a significant impact in years to come.

- Automatic Seafood & Oysters, Birmingham, AL
- Demi, Minneapolis
- Eem, Portland, OR
- Fox & the Knife, Boston
- Gado Gado, Portland, OR
- Gianna, New Orleans
- Kalaya, Philadelphia
- Nightshade, Los Angeles
- Pasjoli, Santa Monica, CA
- Verjus, San Francisco

Outstanding Baker

A pastry chef or baker who demonstrates exceptional skill, integrity, and character in the preparation of desserts, pastries, or breads served in a retail bakery. Eligible candidates must have been working as a pastry chef or baker for the past five years.

- Graison Gill, Bellegarde Bakery, New Orleans
- Zachary Golper, Bien Cuit, NYC
- Maura Kilpatrick, Sofra Bakery, Cambridge, MA
- Lisa Ludwinski, Sister Pie, Detroit
- Avery Ruzicka, Manresa Bread, Los Gatos, CA

Outstanding Bar Program

A restaurant or bar that demonstrates exceptional care and skill in the selection, preparation, and serving of cocktails, spirits, and/or beer.

- Anvil Bar & Refuge, Houston
- Expatriate, Portland, OR
- Kimball House, Decatur, GA
- Lost Lake, Chicago
- Trick Dog, San Francisco

Outstanding Chef (Presented by All-Clad Metalcrafters)

A chef who sets high culinary standards and who has served as a positive example for other food professionals. Eligible candidates must have been working as a chef for the past five years.

- Corey Lee, Benu, San Francisco
- Donald Link, Herbsaint, New Orleans
- Missy Robbins, Lilia, NYC
- Ana Sortun, Oleana, Cambridge, MA
- Marc Vetri, Vetri Cucina, Philadelphia

Outstanding Hospitality (Presented by American Airlines)

A restaurant in operation for five or more years that demonstrates consistency and exceptional thoughtfulness in hospitality and service.

- Brigtsen's, New Orleans
- Canlis, Seattle
- Saison, San Francisco
- Swan Oyster Depot, San Francisco
- Zingerman's Roadhouse, Ann Arbor, MI

Outstanding Pastry Chef (Presented by Lavazza)

A pastry chef or baker who demonstrates exceptional skill, integrity, and character in the preparation of desserts, pastries, or breads served in a restaurant. Must have been working as a pastry chef or baker for the past five years.

- Lincoln Carson, Bon Temps, Los Angeles
- Juan Contreras, Atelier Crenn, San Francisco
- Margarita Manzke, République, Los Angeles
- Diane Moua, Spoon and Stable, Minneapolis
- Natasha Pickowicz, Flora Bar, NYC
- Miro Uskokovic, Gramercy Tavern, NYC

Outstanding Restaurant (Presented by S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water)

A restaurant that demonstrates consistent excellence in food, atmosphere, service, and operations. Eligible candidates must have been in business 10 or more consecutive years.

- FIG, Charleston, SC
- Frasca Food and Wine, Boulder, CO
- Jaleo, Washington, D.C.
- Pizzeria Bianco, Phoenix
- Quince, San Francisco

Outstanding Restaurateur

A restaurateur who demonstrates creativity in entrepreneurship and integrity in restaurant operations. Eligible candidates must have been in the restaurant business for at least 10 years and they must not have been nominated for a James Beard Foundation chef award in the past five years.

- Jamie Bissonette and Ken Oringer, JK Food Group, Boston (Little Donkey, Toro, Coppa)
- JoAnn Clevenger, Upperline Restaurant, New Orleans
- Alex Raij and Eder Montero, NYC (La Vara, Saint Julivert Fisherie, Txikito)
- Jason Wang, Xi'an Famous Foods, NYC

Outstanding Wine Program

A restaurant or bar that demonstrates excellence in wine service through a carefully considered wine list and a well-informed approach to helping customers choose and drink wine.

- Bacchanal, New Orleans
- Canard, Portland, OR
- COTE, NYC
- Miller Union, Atlanta
- Night + Market Sahn, Venice, CA
- Spiaggia, Chicago

Outstanding Wine, Beer or Spirits Producer

A beer, wine, or spirits producer who demonstrates consistency and exceptional skill in his or her craft.

- Scott Blackwell and Ann Marshall, High Wire Distilling Co., Charleston, SC
- Cathy Corison, Corison Winery, St. Helena, CA
- Drew Kulsveen, Willett Distillery, Bardstown, KY
- Todd Leopold and Scott Leopold, Leopold Bros., Denver
- Lance Winters, St. George Spirits, Alameda, CA

Rising Star Chef of the Year (Presented by S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water)

A chef age 30 or younger, born on or after January 1 in the year occurring thirty years prior to the award year in which such chef is to be considered for the award (e.g., January 1, 1976 for candidates to be considered in awards year 2006), who displays exceptional talent, character, and leadership ability, and who is likely to make a significant impact in years to come.

- Will Aghajanian and Liz Johnson, The Catbird Seat, Nashville
- Irene Li, Mei Mei, Boston

- Gaby Maeda, State Bird Provisions, San Francisco
- Ashleigh Shanti, Benne on Eagle, Asheville, NC
- Paola Velez, Kith/Kin, Washington, D.C.
- Jon Yao, Kato, Los Angeles

Best Chefs (Presented by Capital One)

Chefs who set high culinary standards and also demonstrate integrity and admirable leadership skills in their respective regions. A nominee may be from any kind of dining establishment but must have been working as a chef for at least five years, with the three most recent years spent in the region.

Best Chef: California

- Jeremy Fox, Birdie G's, Santa Monica, CA
- Brandon Jew, Mister Jiu's, San Francisco
- Mourad Lahlou, Mourad, San Francisco
- Joshua Skenes, Angler, San Francisco
- Pim Techamuanvivit, Kin Khao, San Francisco

Best Chef: Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH)

- Jason Hammel, Lula Cafe, Chicago
- Gene Kato, Momotaro, Chicago
- Noah Sandoval, Oriole, Chicago
- John Shields and Karen Urie Shields, Smyth, Chicago
- Erick Williams, Virtue, Chicago
- Lee Wolen, Boka, Chicago

Best Chef: Mid-Atlantic (D.C., DE, MD, NJ, PA, VA)

- Amy Brandwein, Centrolina, Washington, D.C.
- Nicholas Elmi, Laurel, Philadelphia
- Cristina Martinez, South Philly Barbacoa, Philadelphia
- Jon Sybert, Tail Up Goat, Washington, D.C.
- Cindy Wolf, Charleston, Baltimore

Best Chef: Midwest (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD, WI)

- Steven Brown, Tilia, Minneapolis
- Michael Corvino, Corvino Supper Club & Tasting Room, Kansas City, MO
- Michael Gallina, Vicia, St. Louis
- Jamie Malone, Grand Café, Minneapolis
- Christina Nguyen, Hai Hai, Minneapolis

Best Chef: Mountain (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY)

- Carrie Baird, Bar Dough, Denver
- Jen Castle and Blake Spalding, Hell's Backbone Grill & Farm, Boulder, UT
- Jeff Drew, Snake River Grill, Jackson, WY
- Caroline Glover, Annette, Aurora, CO
- Dana Rodriguez, Super Mega Bien, Denver
- Kelly Whitaker, The Wolf's Tailor, Denver

Best Chef: New York State

- Sean Gray, Momofuku Ko, NYC
- Brooks Headley, Superiority Burger, NYC
- Junghyun Park, Atomix, NYC
- Daniela Soto-Innes, ATLA, NYC
- Alex Stupak, Empellón, NYC

Best Chef: Northeast (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)

- Vien Dobui, CÔNG TỬ BỐ T, Portland, ME
- Tiffani Faison, Orfano, Boston
- Ben Jackson, Drifters Wife, Portland, ME
- Krista Kern Desjarlais, The Purple House, North Yarmouth, ME
- Greg Mitchell and Chad Conley, Palace Diner, Biddeford, ME
- Cassie Piuma, Sarma, Somerville, MA

Best Chef: Northwest & Pacific (AK, HI, OR, WA)

- Peter Cho, Han Oak, Portland, OR
- Gregory Gourdet, Departure, Portland, OR
- Chris Kajioka and Anthony Rush, Senia, Honolulu
- Katy Millard, Coquine, Portland, OR
- Kristen Murray, MÀURICE, Portland, OR
- Rachel Yang and Seif Chirchi, Joule, Seattle

Best Chef: South (AL, AR, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, FL, LA, MS)

- Jose Enrique, Jose Enrique, San Juan, PR
- Michael Gulotta, Maypop, New Orleans
- Mason Hereford, Turkey and the Wolf, New Orleans
- Isaac Toups, Toups' Meastery, New Orleans

Best Chef: Southeast (GA, KY, NC, SC, TN, WV)

- Katie Button, Cúrate, Asheville, NC
- Cassidee Dabney, The Barn at Blackberry Farm, Walland, TN
- Cheetie Kumar, Garland, Raleigh, NC
- Andy Ticer and Michael Hudman, Andrew Michael Italian Kitchen, Memphis
- Julia Sullivan, Henrietta Red, Nashville

Best Chef: Southwest (AZ, NM, NV, OK)

- Dan Krohmer, Other Mama, Las Vegas
- Jonathan Perno, Campo at Los Poblanos Historic Inn & Organic Farm, Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, NM
- Chrysa Robertson, Rancho Pinot, Scottsdale, AZ
- Silvana Salcido Esparza, Barrio Café Gran Reserva, Phoenix
- Jeff Smedstad, Elote Cafe, Sedona, AZ
- James Trees, Esther's Kitchen, Las Vegas

Best Chef: Texas

- Kevin Fink, Emmer & Rye, Austin
- Michael Fojtasek, Olamaie, Austin
- Anita Jaisinghani, Pondicheri, Houston
- Steve McHugh, Cured, San Antonio
- Trong Nguyen, Crawfish & Noodles, Houston

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Established in 1990, the James Beard Awards recognize culinary professionals for excellence and achievement in their fields and further the Foundation’s mission to celebrate, nurture, and honor chefs and other leaders making America’s food culture more delicious, diverse, and sustainable for everyone. The first James Beard Awards were given in 1991. The James Beard Awards are governed by the volunteer Awards Committee. Each Awards program (Restaurants and Chefs, Books, Journalism, Design, Broadcast Media, and Leadership) has its own subcommittee made up of industry professionals who volunteer their time to oversee the policies, procedures, and selection of judges for their respective Awards programs.

About the James Beard Foundation

The James Beard Foundation promotes Good Food For Good™. For more than 30 years, the James Beard Foundation has highlighted the centrality of food culture in our daily lives. Through the variety of industry programs that educate and empower leaders in our community, the Foundation has asserted the power of food to drive behavior, culture, and policy change. The organization is committed to giving chefs a voice and the tools they need to make the world more sustainable, equitable, and delicious for everyone. 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](#), and [TikTok](#). The James Beard Foundation is a national not-for-profit 501©(3) organization based in New York City.

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