

For Immediate Release

September 23, 2020

James Beard Foundation Announces 2020 Awards Broadcast Line-Up

NEW YORK, NY (September 23, 2020) – Today the James Beard Foundation announced the presenters and in-show programming for its annual Awards taking place on Friday, September 25. In lieu of the traditional in-person event, this year's event will be broadcast live via [Twitter](#) from the host city of Chicago and will celebrate previously announced honorees in categories such as America's Classics, Lifetime Achievement, Humanitarian of the Year, Design Icon, and Leadership Awards. The program will also celebrate this year's Restaurant and Chef nominees and be an evening of storytelling, focusing on the accomplishments of our nominees as well as the historic challenges that the food and beverage industry faces while discussing ways to work together to rebuild a stronger and more equitable future.

"This year's ceremony will be like none we've ever had, but we're looking forward to gathering virtually to applaud and recognize our honorees and Restaurant and Chef nominees," said Foundation CEO Clare Reichenbach. "We hope that people watching at home will take the chance to support their local independent restaurants that night, especially those of local nominees. Order take-out or delivery, tip well, and join us as we celebrate and join in conversation with industry leaders about issues facing the restaurant community today and the hope for the future."

The evening will be emceed by Ji Suk Yi, a staple in local Chicago media and television for over ten years. Currently a "NewsNation Now" digital anchor and producer, Ji was previously an anchor at WGN Radio, a contributing daily host on ABC7 Chicago's talk show "Windy City LIVE" for seven seasons, and the host of *Chicago Sun-Times* digital series "The Grid," which highlighted neighborhood history, culture and hidden gems. Ji will play host to the broadcast from the show's headquarters in Chicago and will virtually send the show around the country where this year's presenters and program participants will join remotely. These include culinary trailblazers, industry changemakers, James Beard Awards staff, nominees and winners, including Alice Waters, Pati Jinich, Questlove, Nicole Byer, Ann Kim, Tahira Habibi, local Chicago chefs Erick Williams and Maya-Camille Broussard and Foundation CEO, Clare Reichenbach. Gail Simmons will moderate a roundtable discussion with Kwame Onwuachi, Tanya Holland, Beverly Kim and Johnny Clark on rebuilding restaurants for the future. Colleen Vincent, Foundation vice president of community, will speak with 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.

Categories with previously announced honorees accepting Awards during the broadcast include:

- 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
- 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

Although the Foundation made the difficult decision not to give Awards in the remaining Restaurant & Chef categories this year, the evening will still recognize nominees and their accomplishments throughout the broadcast. 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 to all and that these judgments are made in a manner that promotes and preserves the Foundation's mission.

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/openforgood.

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).

The 2020 James Beard Awards 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 exclusive 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 partners: Premier Sponsors: All-Clad Metalcrafters, American Airlines, the official airline of the James Beard Foundation, Lavazza, S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water; Supporting Sponsors: National Restaurant Association®, Skuna Bay Salmon, Valrhona, White Claw® Hard Seltzer; Patron Sponsors: Ecolab, Front of the House®, Kendall College, with additional support from Château d'Esclans and VerTerra Dinnerware. Intersport is the Official Broadcast Partner of the 2020 James Beard Awards.

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.

In order to conduct the audit of the awards explained above and to account for the continued impact of the pandemic on the industry throughout this year, the Foundation will not be holding the regular James Beard Awards in 2021 either. Entries and recommendations will not be accepted for any James Beard Awards categories until Fall 2021. Please visit jamesbeard.org and sign up for our newsletters to stay tuned for important announcements regarding changes to the James Beard Awards.

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 [James Beard Awards](#), [unique dining experiences](#) at the James Beard House and around the country, [scholarships](#), hands-on learning, and a variety of [industry programs](#) that educate and empower leaders in our community, the Foundation has built a platform for chefs and asserted the power of gastronomy to drive behavior, culture, and policy change around food. To that end, the Foundation has also created signature impact-oriented initiatives that include our [Women's Leadership Programs](#) aimed at addressing the gender imbalance in the culinary industry; advocacy training through our [Chefs Boot Camp for Policy and Change](#); and the [James Beard Foundation Leadership Awards](#) that shine a spotlight on successful change makers. The organization is committed to giving chefs and their colleagues a voice and the tools they need to make the world more sustainable, equitable, and delicious for everyone. For more information, subscribe to the digital newsletter [Beard Bites](#) and follow @beardfoundation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

The James Beard Foundation is a national not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization based in New York City.

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