

# JBF LEADERSHIP AWARDS

## James Beard Foundation Announces Leadership Award Recipients

***Hyatt co-hosting awards ceremony, taking place for the first time in Chicago; Leadership Awards recognize five visionaries for their work in creating a better food world***

NEW YORK, NY— *“If we really believe in food, we must do something about it, for our voices should be raised above the rest.”* — James Beard in a letter to Helen Evans Brown dated May 5, 1958.

Sixty years to the date James Beard penned those prescient words, the [James Beard Foundation](#) (JBF) and co-host Hyatt will celebrate the honorees of the eighth annual [James Beard Foundation Leadership Awards](#).

Today the nation’s preeminent culinary nonprofit announced that the **2018 JBF Leadership Awards** recipients are **Dara Cooper, Ferd Hoefner, Doug Rauch, Shirley Sherrod, and Ramon Torres**, whose work will be honored at an invitation-only ceremony and dinner on Saturday, May 5, 2018 at Hyatt’s corporate headquarters, 150 North Riverside Plaza, Chicago, IL. Master sommelier and restaurateur Alpina Singh will serve as the master of ceremonies, and Hyatt’s executive chef Martin Pfefferkorn will specially curate the evening’s menu.

“We are delighted to celebrate these visionaries working tirelessly to create a healthier, more equitable, and more sustainable food world, as part of the James Beard Awards weekend,” said Clare Reichenbach, chief executive officer, James Beard Foundation. “How apropos that these awards speak so brilliantly to the ‘RISE’ theme of this year’s gala, honoring the collective spirit of our community and the power of food.”

“Hyatt is thrilled to be co-hosting this year’s JBF Leadership Awards and to help honor these dedicated thought leaders in the food industry,” said Colleen Kareti, Hyatt vice president, Americas Operations for Hyatt. “These awards not only recognize today’s top culinary excellence, but they are perfectly aligned with Hyatt’s global food and beverage

### For Immediate Release

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philosophy: Food. Thoughtfully Sourced. Carefully Served. – an industry-leading effort to provide food and beverages that are good for our people, our planet, and our communities. It is with great pleasure that we celebrate those that are committed to furthering this movement.”

Traditionally held in New York City in the fall, this year will mark the first time that the JBF Leadership Awards are taking place in Chicago. “Since we began the Leadership Awards eight years ago, we’ve wanted to integrate them more fully into the larger James Beard Awards festivities,” added Mitchell Davis, executive vice president of the James Beard Foundation. “The opportunity to highlight the honorees’ extraordinary achievements in often unseen areas of the food chain, and to do so in front of the biggest and most important gathering of our industry, is a goal we are happy to be able to finally achieve.”

In addition to the event on Saturday, May 5, the JBF Leadership Awards honorees will participate in a public panel on leadership and food-system change, co-hosted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. The panel will take place on Sunday, May 6 from 4:00-5:30pm at the council’s conference center headquarters, 130 East Randolph Street (all attendees must enter through the entrance at 180 N. Stetson Ave). (Seats will be able to be reserved at <https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/events>.) Honorees will also have a moment on stage during the James Beard Awards on Monday, May 7, at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

### **2018 James Beard Foundation Leadership Award Recipients**

#### **Dara Cooper**

*Co-Founder, [National Black Food & Justice Alliance](#)*

For dedicating her life to racial equity and justice in the food system and increasing capacity and visibility of Black-led narratives and work.

#### **Ferd Hoefner**

*Senior Strategic Advisor, [National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition](#)*

For being actively engaged in federal farm and food advocacy for over 40 years and tirelessly making sure the voices of family farmers and the sustainable agriculture movement are heard on Capitol Hill.

#### **Doug Rauch**

*President/Founder, [Daily Table](#)*

For his innovative work in fighting food insecurity through Daily Table and corporate leadership as the former president of Trader Joe’s Company.

#### **Shirley Sherrod**

*Executive Director, [Southwest Georgia Project](#)*

For defending farmers and farmer equity as well as building farmer coops in the south.

## **Ramon Torres**

*President, [Familias Unidas por la Justicia](#)*

For leadership and organizing efforts in the formation of an independent indigenous farm worker labor union that won an historic collective bargaining agreement for farmworkers dramatically improving the lives of thousands of farmworkers and their families in Washington State.

The JBF Leadership Awards recognize specific outstanding initiatives as well as bodies of work and lifetime achievement. Excellence of work, innovation of approach, and scale of impact within a community or the nation were among the criteria used to choose this year's honorees, selected by ballots submitted by past recipients. The Leadership Awards are part of the [James Beard Foundation's Impact Programs](#), which works to establish a more sustainable food system through education, advocacy, and thought leadership.

The 42 previous JBF Leadership Award recipients are: Will Allen, Greg Asbed and Lucas Benitez, Dan Barber, Fedele Bauccio, Wendell Berry, Mark Bittman, John Boyd, Jr., Ben Burkett, Don Bustos, Dr. Jason Clay, Eliot Coleman, Debra Eschmeyer, Sheri Flies, Joan Dye Gusow, Hal Hamilton, Cynthia Hayes, Saru Jayaraman, Sam Kass, Jan Kees Vis, Navina Khanna, Fred Kirschenmann, Anna Lappé, Joan Lo and Jose Oliva, Congressman Jim McGovern, Dr. Kathleen Merrigan, Marion Nestle, First Lady Michelle Obama, Raj Patel, Congresswoman Chellie Pingree, Michael Pollan, Janet Poppendieck, Ricardo Salvador, Gus Schumacher, Olivier de Schutter, Bryant Terry, Karen Washington, Alice Waters, Craig Watson, Tensie Whelan, and Malik Yakini.

The 2018 JBF Leadership Awards are co-hosted by Hyatt, with founding support from the GRACE Communications Foundation, and additional support from the Blended Burger Project™ and the Mushroom Council (list as of release date).

## **About the James Beard Foundation**

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation celebrates, nurtures, and honors chefs and other leaders making America's food culture more delicious, diverse, and sustainable for everyone. A cookbook author and teacher with an encyclopedic knowledge about food, the late James Beard 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 JBF continues in the same spirit by administering a number of diverse programs that include educational initiatives, food industry awards, scholarships for culinary students, publications, chef advocacy training, and thought-leader convening. The Foundation also maintains the historic James Beard House in New York City's Greenwich Village as a "performance space" for visiting chefs. For more information, please visit [jamesbeard.org](http://jamesbeard.org). Get food news, recipes, and more at the James Beard Foundation's [blog](#), or subscribe to the free digital newsletter [Beard Bites](#). Follow @beardfoundation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#), and Snapchat. Watch the James Beard House Kitchen Cam, James Beard Awards, and more on the Foundation's [Livestream](#) channel. Find more JBF-related video on the Foundation's [YouTube](#) channels.

