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JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

*HONORING FIVE VISIONARIES FOR THEIR WORK
IN CREATING A BETTER FOOD WORLD*

NEW YORK, NY (May 7, 2020) – The James Beard Foundation announced today the recipients of the 2020 Leadership Awards (presented in association with Deloitte), a program which spotlights the important and complex realms of sustainability, food justice, and public health. This year’s honorees are: **Phillip and Dorathy E. Barker**, Co-Founders, Operations Spring Plant, Inc.; **Rosalinda Guillen**, Executive Director, Community to Community Development (C2C); **Abiodun Henderson**, Executive Director and Founder, The Come Up Project; **Mark and Kerry Marhefka**, Owners, Abundant Seafood; and **Caleb Zigas**, Executive Director, La Cocina. The Leadership Award honorees were revealed during a livestream ceremony in which all 2020 James Beard Foundation Awards nominees were announced.

The Leadership Awards are especially poignant during this difficult time for the restaurant industry. These honors raise awareness of timely food issues by celebrating the visionaries responsible for creating a healthier, safer, and more equitable and sustainable food system. The Leadership Awards recognize specific outstanding initiatives as well as bodies of work and lifetime achievement. Excellence of work, innovation in approach, and scale of impact within a community or the nation are among the criteria used to select the recipients. Honorees are chosen by a volunteer committee of experts and the cohort of past Leadership Award recipients. The Foundation will award each 2020 honoree a \$10,000 cash prize to continue their impactful and important work.

“Deloitte is proud to support the James Beard Foundation Leadership Awards, and honor visionaries that empower their communities,” said Tom Marriott, Marketing Excellence Leader, Deloitte LLP. “With an eye toward inclusion and sustainability, Deloitte is dedicated to supporting a continued impact on the food industry.”

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.

2020 James Beard Award Leadership Award Recipients

- **Phillip and Dorathy E. Barker**, *Co-Founders*, [Operation Spring Plant, Inc.](#) (OSP)

Phillip and Dorathy E. Barker co-founded Operation Spring Plant, Inc. (OSP), a grass-roots non-profit organization based in Oxford, North Carolina, alongside Reverend Z.D. Harris, Dr. Benjamin Chavis and Reverend Leon White to save the state's only two remaining black dairy farmers in 1987. Their passionate work in establishing OSP as a resource for African-American, limited resource farmers and concerned urban citizens has led its local community in the fight against unjust and discriminatory business practices in the foodservice industry. The mission of Operation Spring Plant is to provide technical and financial assistance to limited resource, minority family farmers who need to engage in timely seasonal planting activities, and who need marketing outlets for the sale of their crops to maintain their livelihood. Together, Phillip and Dorathy also own and operate Olusanya Farm raising greens, beef cattle, and producing compost in Oxford, NC.

- **Rosalinda Guillen**, *Executive Director*, [Community to Community Development](#) (C2C)

Rosalinda Guillen is a widely recognized farm worker, rural justice leader and serves as the Executive Director of Community to Community Development (C2C), a women-led organization dedicated to food sovereignty and immigrant rights. The oldest of eight, she was born in Texas and spent her first decade in Coahuila, Mexico. Her family emigrated to LaConner, Washington in 1960 and she began working as a farmworker in the fields in Skagit County at the age of 10 . Guillen has worked within the labor movement with Caesar Chavez's United Farm Workers of America and has represented farmworkers in ongoing dialogues of immigration issues, labor rights, trade agreements, and strengthening the food sovereignty movement. As Executive Director of C2C, Rosalinda is dedicated to building a broader base of support for rural communities and sustainable agriculture policies that ensure equity and healthy communities for farmworkers.

- **Abiodun Henderson**, *Executive Director*, *The Come Up Project featuring Gangstas to Growers*

Abiodun Henderson is the Executive Director and Founder of The Come Up Project which features Gangstas to Growers, an agribusiness training program focused on empowering formerly incarcerated young adults through agriculture, employment, and entrepreneurship. Abiodun led the organization's core programming to develop its first product, Sweet Sol, a hot sauce that's produced by trainees in partnership with SWAG Co-op, a Southwest Atlanta farmers' organization dedicated to sustainable urban food systems. By providing a living wage stipend to participants, the program is also designed to allow individuals with past criminal records, who are largely barred from jobs that would pay a livable wage, to amass seed money for their business ventures. In addition to her tireless work with The Come Up Project, she has also been a community organizer in Westside, Atlanta for over seven years and under her leadership as garden

coordinator, the Westview Community Garden is now community owned after being bulldozed in 2015. Abiodun also helped create and manage the Westview Empowerment STEAM Camp from 2013-2015 and is a board member of the Georgia Cooperative Development Center.

- **Mark and Kerry Marhefka**, *Owners*, [Abundant Seafood](#)

Mark and Kerry Marhefka are the owners and operators of Abundant Seafood, a seafood purveyor providing sustainably sourced fish to restaurants in the Carolinas and Georgia. The son of a commercial fisherman, Mark Marhefka began fishing for a living the day after he graduated from high school in 1979. Prior to joining Mark to run Abundant Seafood, Kerry was a fishery biologist for the Federal Government working primarily on establishing marine protected areas (MPAs) off the southeast US coast. Both Mark and Kerry have long resumes of working closely with the scientists and the government to improve the health of the resource and the viability of the industry. Mark began as an advisor to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council in the 90s, serving as chairman of both the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Snapper Grouper and Marine Protected Areas Advisory Panels as well as having participated in many stock assessments and other resource management bodies. Kerry now serves on the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel as well the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's System Management Plan Working Group. She has worked with the North Atlantic Marine Alliance and the Business Alliance for Protection of the Atlantic Coast to fight drilling off the South Carolina Coast.

- **Caleb Zigas**, *Executive Director*, [La Cocina](#)

Caleb Zigas is the Executive Director of La Cocina, a nonprofit working to solve problems of equity in business ownership for women, immigrants and people of color. He began volunteering for La Cocina in 2005, the same week that the organization opened, both a personal testament to the power of volunteerism as well as an appreciation for the hard work of grassroots organizations in the Bay Area to make La Cocina a possibility. At La Cocina, Caleb has grown with the organization and has been the Executive Director since 2010. In his time with the organization, he has been named a Yoshiyama Young Entrepreneur, recognized by Inc. Magazine as one of "5 Community Organizers Making a Difference" and was nominated for the Basque Culinary Center World Prize. Caleb built the original infrastructure for La Cocina's award-winning incubator program, launched the San Francisco Street Food Festival, advocated for policy change in mobile food vending opportunities in the Bay and has been a part of more than 30 brick and mortar openings. And, while he loves the food component, ultimately this job is about people, about opportunity and about equity, and that's what drives the work.

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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