

For Immediate Release

THE JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES LEGACY NETWORK PROGRAM

The James Beard Foundation Connects Emerging Industry Advisors and Advisees to Advance Equitable Leadership in Industry

NEW YORK, NY (September 16, 2021): Today the James Beard Foundation launched the Legacy Network program by announcing its first round of participating advisors and advisees. Founded in partnership with Woodford Reserve®, the Legacy Network trains emerging leaders across the culinary industry and connects them with future generations of excellence. By developing and cultivating talent among these influential professionals and their peers, Legacy advances the equitable, culturally relevant leadership required to strengthen the industry.

Each protégé, under the guidance of Legacy advisors, becomes part of a powerful network that centers the professional growth of talent from historically under-resourced communities. The Legacy Network ensures their career paths are diverse, equitable, and sustainable, prioritizing Black American and Indigenous heritage persons for this first cohort.

“Legacy was developed as a response to calls for peer to peer networks and career support for emerging BIPOC leaders in our community,” says Colleen Vincent, Vice President of Community at the James Beard Foundation. “This program is part of our continued commitment towards a more sustainable and equitable industry.”

The advisors trained for three weeks in May 2021 and were first introduced to the advisees in June 2021. They will engage regularly on the advisees’ goals and benchmarks over the next several months.

The 2021 Advisors are:

Dr. Cynthia Greenlee: Dr. Cynthia R. Greenlee is a North Carolina–based independent historian, writer, and editor. She holds a doctorate in history from Duke University and a master’s degree in journalism from the University of North Carolina. Dr. Greenlee is the winner of a 2020 James Beard Foundation Media Award in foodways writing. She is a senior editor at *The Counter*, a nonprofit newsroom dedicated to covering the business, politics, and culture of food.

Elena Terry: Elena Terry is a member of the Hocak Nation of Wisconsin and the Ho-Chunk Nation. She is a wild-game specialist, butcher, and is the executive chef and founder of Wild Bearies, an Indigenous education nonprofit. Raised in a traditional family and a member of her medicine lodge, she works toward building a stronger community through the healing power of ancestral foods. She is also one of the Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance’s lead mentors for the Food and Culinary Program.

Jackie Summers: Jackie Summers is an acclaimed author, seasoned public speaker, and serial entrepreneur. Summers is the founder of JackFromBrooklyn Inc. and the creator of the award-winning Sorel Liqueur. Originally from New York, he was ranked among the world’s “100 Most Influential Bar Industry Figures” by *Drinks International* (2019, 2020), named to the *Imbibe*

75 (2021), The 50 Most Influential People in Brooklyn Food (*Brooklyn Magazine*, 2015) and named the 2019 award winner for Best Food Essay by the Association for Food Journalists.

Krista Scruggs: Krista Scruggs is the founding farmer and winemaker of ZAFAs Wines, based in Isle La Motte, Vermont. Dedicated to regenerative farming and using hybrid grapes, Krista and her team manage and farm vineyards in Vermont and New Hampshire. She has been featured on *Wine Enthusiast's* 40 Under 40 Tastemakers of 2018 list and the 2019 *Imbibe* 75. ZAFAs Wines has intentionally maintained a minimum of 85 percent-woman staff and strives to provide opportunity and equity to those in the beverage industry.

Leticia Skai Young-Mohan: With more than a decade of experience in hospitality, entertainment, and tourism, Leticia Skai Young is driven by culture, commerce, and cuisine. As a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications and the Culinary Entrepreneurship program of the French Culinary Institute, Leticia brings a unique blend of acumen and entrepreneurial-driven creativity to the hospitality industry. Leticia created and launched the LoLo's Seafood Shack brand, the first restaurant concept of her newly formed Island Time Hospitality Group.

Neftalí Durán: Neftalí Durán is a community cook, advocate, educator, and organizer, working toward an equitable food system and building a network of Indigenous food leaders. He is the co-founder of the I-Collective, an Indigenous collective that promotes a healthy food system which values people, traditional knowledge, and the planet over profit, as well as the Holyoke Collective.

Tara Gomez: Tara's passion for wine began during her youth, when her parents used to take her wine tasting throughout the Central Coast. Tara graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Enology from California State University Fresno. She worked for wineries such as Fess Parker and J. Lohr, and at the same time started her first label, Kalawashaq' Wine Cellars, named for the village where her Chumash ancestors once lived. In 2010, her Chumash Tribe purchased Camp 4 Vineyard and she started Kitá Wines, a small premium winery in the Santa Ynez Valley where she is currently the winemaker. She is the first recognized Native American winemaker in the U.S.

The 2021 Advisees are:

Danielle Holmes: Danielle Holmes began her culinary education at the Spotsylvania Career and Technical Center. She then attended Johnson and Wales University, receiving her bachelor's degree in Culinary Arts & Food Service Management. While pursuing her education, she worked in multiple country clubs and restaurants such as Williamsburg Inn (Williamsburg, VA) and The Ocean Room at Kiawah Island (Kiawah Island, SC). She also staged at Kitchen Cray (Washington, D.C.), Epic (Columbus, GA) and Vintage Restaurant (Orange, VA). Through those opportunities, she gained experience at multiple stations at restaurants such as fry, sauté, and garde manger. Danielle is currently furthering her culinary experience at Rose's Luxury in Washington, D.C.

Dawn Sloan: Despite a later career shift to the culinary industry, Dawn Sloan's short tenure has already been shaped by many kitchen experiences around the world. She worked at San Francisco's La Folie briefly (during the period it received its first Michelin star). Dawn has worked in France, Turkey, Ireland, Italy, and Spain. Dawn elected to leave fine dining after going blind during service. She's since undergone multiple eye surgeries and opened a food truck featuring Soul Food and Tex Mex fusion.

Geoffrey Kie: Geoffrey Kie grew up on the reservation in the Pueblo of Laguna. As a kid, he watched cooking shows on the local PBS station. They inspired him to look through his cabinets, experiment with flavor combinations, and watch his grandmothers make traditional breads and blue corn dishes. While attending Northern Arizona University, Geoffrey worked at Beaver Street Brewery. With many new culinary skills in hand, Geoff and his wife decided to run a burger stand on their reservation feast day, where people gather and celebrate with traditional dances, selling art and food. Geoff went on to a graduate program in Communication/Documentary Studies, finishing with distinction. He continues to use his skills to elevate programs and people to share their stories of Indigenous foodways.

James Linabary: After 5 years in the culinary industry, James Linabary has been truly fortunate to have worked in some incredible places, from fast food, to casual, to bespoke fine dining. He began at a steakhouse in Oklahoma City, and now leads a pastry team at one of Nashville's larger restaurants. James has also worked at award-winning restaurants like Nonesuch and Vast, and had a multi-year stint working directly for the NBA's Oklahoma City Thunder.

Jared Thomas: Jared Thomas is 24 years old and a junior cook at City Beet Kitchens in New York City. He started his cooking journey through Project Renewal, completing a three-month program followed by a three-month internship. Impressed by his hard work, City Beet eventually offered Thomas a job where he began to learn new techniques in the kitchen. He loves to motivate his team, and is excited to grow as a chef and expand his talent. He wants to show others that they can reach their goals.

Lucille Contreras: Lucille Contreras is a rancher that wants to teach folks about the healthy food of the Lipan Apache and other Native groups in Texas. Although she is more active in the supplier end of the industry, she is interested in developing a menu and demonstration kitchen to teach and host groups who can come, learn, and then return to their communities. At the Texas Tribal Buffalo Project, she and her team supply healthy Bison meat, and are launching an online website to be able to provide meat both wholesale and retail (including attending farmers markets in various communities).

Nya Marshall: Nya Marshall is an entrepreneur, commercial real estate developer, environmental activist, and content producer on a mission to live sustainably and inspire others to do the same. Originally from Detroit, Nya earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan and her MBA from Wayne State University. Nya opened IVY Kitchen + Cocktails, a chic eatery in the city's East English Village neighborhood, in 2020. IVY Kitchen + Cocktails supports the local economy with its sustainable, closed-loop business model in partnership with Detroit Dirt that eliminates all food waste and greatly reduces the business's carbon footprint. Nya's commitment to sustainability goes beyond her restaurant, however. She holds a builder's license and founded DIOMO, a development company. She also co-founded Culture of Carbon which consults with corporations in the metro area and beyond on sustainable business models. Nya co-hosts the "Love, Sex, Business" podcast and the "Culture of Carbon podcast." She sits on Detroit's Food Policy Board and is a member of the Michigan Restaurant Lodging Association (MRLA) and the Independent Restaurant Coalition (IRC).

To learn more about the Legacy Network program and other James Beard Foundation programs, visit <https://www.jamesbeard.org/legacy-network>.

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.

About Woodford Reserve

Woodford Reserve, the world's top-selling super-premium American whiskey, has supported culinary leaders and programs for many years. It was among the first spirits brands to pair food with bourbon tastings, similar to the wine industry. Woodford Reserve, "Presenting Sponsor of the Kentucky Derby," is crafted at the historic Woodford Reserve Distillery, tucked in the heart of thoroughbred country in Versailles, Kentucky. A National Historic Landmark, the Woodford Reserve Distillery represents craftsmanship with a balance of historic heritage and modern practices. Woodford Reserve is a product of the Brown-Forman Corporation, a premier producer and marketer of fine quality beverage alcohol brands including Jack Daniel's, Finlandia, Korbel, Tequila Herradura, Old Forester, Sonoma-Cutrer and Chambord. Please enjoy your bourbon responsibly. To learn more about Woodford Reserve, visit us www.woodfordreserve.com or check us out on Facebook at www.facebook.com/woodfordreserve.

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Media Contact

Magrino PR

JamesBeard@magrinopr.com