



**February/ March 2019**  
**(Volume XIX, Issue 2 & 3)**

Greetings American Academy of Chefs Fellows!

Dear Fellows:

Batter up! 🍷 'Tis the season for us to get together for "Spring" training at our regional conferences, or as they are now known, our *ChefConnect* series. It is being billed as a "double header," and our first "game" took place in Atlantic City. The next one will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota--the Twin Cities. The Atlantic City conference was a "home run" and included great seminars, speakers, and a spectacular Academy Dinner. Special thanks to Chef Kimberly Brock-Brown, CEPC, CCA, AAC, our Southeast Regional Vice President, for facilitating a great conference with our acting Northeast Regional Vice President, Tom Macrina, CEC, CCA, AAC. Kim and Tom paid special tribute to Chef Christopher Neary, CEC, CCA, AAC who was most instrumental in the planning stages of this great conference. Chef Neary's family was touched and thrilled when President Stafford DeCambra, CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC presented the family with the Spirit of Aloha Award. The Academy will honor Chef Neary when he is inducted into the Academy Hall of Fame, posthumously, this year during our annual convention.

Our dinner at the Borgata Hotel Casino and Spa was "a hit out of the park" thanks to the efforts of Chef Tom Biglan, CEC, AAC. On arrival, we knew we were in for a "grand slam." The ambiance, service, and food were truly fantastic. Tables were aglow with candles, adorned with roses, and beautiful table settings were on display. Each course was served enthusiastically and accompanied by some very good wines. In fact, the first course included a unique pairing of Sake, and we ended the evening with a Tito's Lemon Drop Martini. Hats off to the staff at the Borgata and the South Jersey Chapter for all they did to make this evening incredibly memorable. The bus ride was not bad either!

Congratulations to Chef Jeff Bacon, CEC, CCA, AAC, Chef Addiemae Rolle-Farrington, CEC, HAAC, and Chef Ken Bucholtz, CEC, AAC, for receiving an Academy Service Pin for all they do to promote the Academy and the ACF. Congratulations also goes to Chef Kenneth Trout, CEC, CCA, AAC for receiving a presidential medallion for his service to the ACF.

Look for all of our 2019 inductees' names to be published in the **March/ April** issue of the National Culinary Review. They are also included in this edition of the *Connection*. We have six new Honorary Academy Fellows eligible for Induction this year. Their names will appear in **May/ June** issue of the NCR, but we have included them in this edition of the *Connection* as well. During the Atlantic City regional meetings, Rico and I were present the Coffee Breaks and Market Connects to review and discuss the Academy. We enjoyed speaking to many fellow and potential candidates. We reviewed the processes for induction and answered many questions. Although this newsletter is received by AAC Fellows, please share it with your colleagues and encourage them to ask questions, download an application, and begin the process of becoming a Fellow of the American Academy of Chefs. We (Rico, Katelynn, and I) are available for any questions and concerns about the application process. Our goal is to continue moving the Academy forward in an effort to not only be distinctive, but inclusive in every way. We would like to encourage each and every member of the American Culinary Federation to become a member of the Fellow of the Academy of Chefs.

Our annual Academy of Chefs Awards (or as I call it, the Academy Awards Without "Oscar") is coming up soon, and we have selected six very well deserving Fellows to receive the award this year. You can find their names listed in the April/May issue of the *Connection*. The Academy policies and procedures, as many of you know, were changed and voted on last July. Please note, Rico and I have made these respective changes. There are some additional items we will need to discuss at this year's Academy Board and Fellows Meeting as well. We will continue to work on our policies and procedures in an effort to ensure they match ACF policies. These changes will permit our governance to progress more smoothly and, as a result, we will not need to change things in the near future.

We would like to remind you to take a moment and thank our many sponsors. Our sponsor for the regional (wine glasses) and commemorative plates for the annual Induction Dinner is **LibbeyUSA**. They are very enthusiastic and have also agreed to sponsor the Student Chef of the Year competition. They will be providing souvenir wine glasses at the two Regional Academy Dinners and the commemorative plate at the Annual Dinner in Orlando. Remember Chefs, if it wasn't for the generous support of our sponsors, we would surely be required to pay much more than we currently do for our dinners and functions. Please give them a "Hello!" and a "Thank you!" when you visit them during this year's functions. I've had the pleasure of meeting the Libbey group, and they are pleased and honored to be a part of the AAC family.

Speaking of Orlando and, to be specific, the Marriott World Center, this wonderful site will be hosting our annual Induction Dinner, 9-hole Golf Tournament, and the Fellows Meeting. Please note, our Spouses Lunch is being held at the Isleworth Country Club. We have set aside a very nice room for all of our meetings and, again this year, we will be staying on site which has worked out very well for our Academy Fellows and their spouses. We promise, this year, that we will have plenty of room for the induction and business meetings. Our golf dates are still being determined, and we look forward to enjoying our time at the Hawks Landing Course at the Marriott. So far as Academy Elections are concerned, Chef Frank Leake, CCC, CCE, AAC our Nominations and Elections Chair, has reviewed the candidates for the ballot. Chef Americo DiFronzo, CEC, CCA, AAC is running unopposed, and we have three very qualified candidates for Vice Chair. Ballots will be sent to each Fellow in good standing on **May 1, 2019** and must be returned with a postmark dated no later than **May 31, 2019**.

I also had the pleasure of attending the first few days of the Certified Master Chefs Exam held at Schoolcraft College in Livonia, Michigan. First, let me congratulate the candidates for their dedication and drive to take on this quest. Then, we must thank all the CMCs who volunteered their time to evaluate the exam (just wondering why they are not all AAC Fellows, but we will save that conversation for another day). Last, but not least, I'd like to recognize and thank the Michigan Chefs de Cuisine, the largest chapter in the ACF, whose members volunteered to pick up everyone at the airport, drove folks to and from their hotels, and assisted in making the event a major success in a variety of meaningful ways. In other news, I am pleased to report the Syracuse New York Chapter has invited me to speak at their annual gala dinner being held on **March 25, 2019**. I'm looking forward to an exciting evening with friends and colleagues and trust it will be a wonderful event.

In closing, I would like to thank each and every one of our Fellows for their generous donations which continue to arrive daily at the office. These funds support our Student Teams, our Scholarship programs, and grants for certification and continuing education—worthwhile initiatives indeed. Please remember, these are tax-deductible donations. So, until next month, enjoy your time with friends, family, and colleagues. Rico, Katelynn and I look forward to serving you now and in the days ahead. Spring is almost here and will bring with it a fresh new "season." Let us continue to work together as enthusiastic "team players," always striving to do our best, while we eagerly listen for those familiar and rousing words—"Play ball!"

Mark

*Mark Wright, CEC®, AAC®  
Chair, American Academy of Chefs*

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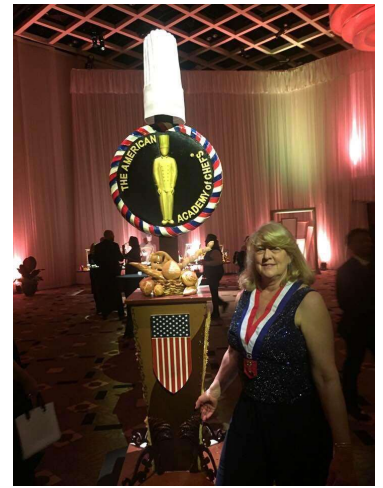
## **Highlights from *ChefConnect: Atlantic City***

### ***American Academy of Chefs Dinner & Reception***

Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa

Executive Chef Thomas Biglan, CEC, AAC, and his culinary team provided an amazing menu for the Academy guests at the Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Those in attendance enjoyed an unforgettable evening of flavor that inspired the senses.

Special thanks to Michel Bouit, Elizabeth Bergin and the Staff of the Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa!



[Click here to view images from the Academy dinner in Atlantic City!](#)

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## Save the date for the 2019 Regional ChefConnect Conference!

*ChefConnect: Minneapolis*  
**Sunday, March 31–Tuesday, April 2, 2019**  
The Minneapolis Marriott City Center  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

### ***American Academy of Chefs Dinner & Reception***

**Monday, April 1, 2019**  
Crowne Plaza Northstar Hotel  
6:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Chris Dwyer CEC, CCA, AAC, the Director of Food and Beverage at the Crowne Plaza Northstar Hotel and his staff and management could not be more thrilled to host the 2019 AAC Dinner. Chris was inducted into the Academy in 2005 and has always hoped to host a dinner of this magnitude. With some help from a few of his near and dear Chef friends, who are also Fellows of the Academy, this will be a fantastic event and he hopes you will join them.

The location is in walking distance from the Minneapolis Marriott City Center.

[ACF Event Registration:](#)



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## Save the date for the 2019 National Conference!

*ACF National Convention : Orlando*  
**Saturday, August 3–Thursday, August 8, 2019**  
The Orlando World Center Marriott in Orlando, Florida

## **American Academy of Chefs Dinner & Reception**

Sunday, August 4, 2019  
The Orlando World Center Marriott  
6:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Gather to welcome new inductees and congratulate AAC Fellows receiving awards at this year's AAC Reception and Dinner.

More details to come!



[ACF Event Registration:](#)

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### **In the Spotlight**



The St. Louis Chapter held their annual Academy Dinner on **March 11, 2019** at the Algonquin Country Club. Chef Bryan Bernstein was the host. Each year the St. Louis Chapter holds an Academy Dinner with proceeds going to the education of our student chefs. Thank you, members of the St. Louis Chapter, for being so hospitable and gracious to me during my time as Chair. Thanks also goes to Chef Chris Desens, Chef John Bogacki, and Central region Vice President Chef Brian Hardy, who have made both Rico and I feel most welcome.

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### **Presenting Nominees for AAC Office 2019-2021**

Here are our candidates for the AAC elected offices of Chair and Vice-Chair, for the term 2019-2021. For in-depth details view the AAC policies and procedures or [click here](#) .

#### **Nominee for Academy Chair**

**Americo "Rico" DiFronzo, CEC, CCA, AAC**

Chef Americo DiFronzo is running unopposed for the position of American Academy of Chefs Chair.

#### **Nominees for Academy Vice Chair**

**Chef Joe G. Aiello, CEC, AAC**

[2019 Vice Chair Nominee Chef Aiello, CEC, AAC : Biography](#)

**Chef Wilfred Beriau, CEC, CCE, AAC**

[2019 Vice Chair Nominee Wilfred Beriau, CEC, CCE, AAC : Biography](#)

**Chef Rajeev Patagaonkar, CEC, AAC**

[2019 Vice Chair Nominee Chef Rajeev, CEC, AAC : Biography](#)

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## 2019 Hall of Fame

"The Culinary Hall of Fame was unanimously accepted by the Academy members. Its concept is to honor those men and women who, because of their outstanding attributes, have won the respect and love of their professional guild. Therefore, they are so honored by their peers as a positive reflection to all those in this profession who seek achievement!"  
—Hermann G. Rusch

The Hall of Fame portfolios and applications have been sent to the voting members of the committee, who were impressed by the Fellows seeking Hall of Fame status, as well as the time and effort put forth by their sponsors. The commitment shown by the candidates in regards to their respective applications and portfolios was certainly noteworthy.

More details to come upon return of the Ballots due by **March 25, 2019** .

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## 2019 Celebrated Chef:

The American Academy of Chefs Culinary Hall of Fame™ Committee has created a new category of induction. This category recognizes individuals for their outstanding achievements in the culinary industry by inducting them into the American Academy of Chefs Culinary Hall of Fame™ as Celebrated Chefs.

We are proud to announce Chef Gale Gand as our 2019 Celebrated Chef.



[2019 Celebrated Chef: Chef Gale Gand Biography.](#)

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## American Academy of Chefs Inductees for 2019

The honor society of ACF, the American Academy of Chefs (AAC) represents the highest standards of professionalism in the organization, society and industry. The Academy's primary mission is to promote the education of all culinarians by mentoring culinarians, awarding scholarships to students seeking a future in the culinary industry, and by providing grants to professional working chefs looking to further their career.

We are proud to present our tentative fellows for Academy induction for the year of 2019:

**CENTRAL REGION**

**Jeremy Abbey, CEC, CEPC, CCE, CCA**

ACF Michigan Chefs De Cuisine Association

*Sponsored by: Chris Dwyer, CEC, CCE, AAC; John Schopp, CEC, CEPC, CCE, CCA, AAC*

**Johnny Curet, CEC**

ACF Texas Chefs Association

*Sponsored by : Bill Sy, CEC, AAC, HOF; Ben Fonbuena Jr, CEC, CCE, AAC*

**Kurt Kwiatkowski, CEC, CCA**

ACF Michigan Chefs De Cuisine Association

*Sponsored by: Eric Ernest, CEC, CCA, AAC; Mark Spelman, CEC, AAC, HGT*

**Gary Lyons, CEC**

ACF Fox Valley Chapter

*Sponsored by: Albert Exenberger, CEC, CCE, AAC; Jeffrey S. Igel, CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC*

**John Miller, CEC, CCA**

ACF Michigan Chefs De Cuisine Association

*Sponsored by: Kevin Brennen, CEC, AAC; Brian F. Lorge, CCTP, HAAC*

**NORTHEAST REGION**

**Kerry Beadle, CEC, CCA**

ACF Syracuse New York Chapter

*Sponsored by: Thomas Kiernan, CEC, CCA, AAC; William Tillinghast, MBA, CEC, AAC*

**Paul Brown, CEC, CCA**

ACF Nation's Capital Chefs Association

*Sponsored by: David Bearl CCC, CCE, AAC; Robert Milam, CEC, AAC*

**Maria Iacovitti, CEPC**

ACF of Greater Buffalo New York

*Sponsored by: Jacqueline Bamrick, CEC, AAC; Scott E. Steiner CCE, AAC*

**Ray McCue, CEC**

ACF Rhode Island Chapter

*Sponsored by: Linda Musch CEC, AAC; George O'Palenick CEC, CCE, AAC, HGT, HOF*

**John Selick, CEC, CCA**

ACF Cleveland Chapter, INC

*Sponsored by: Scott Ryan, CEC, AAC; Barry Young, CEC, CEC, AAC, MBA*

**Robert Walljasper, CEC, CCE**

ACF Big Apple Chapter

*Sponsored by: Gerard M. Molloy CEPC, AAC; Gaspard Caloz, AAC*

**SOUTHEAST REGION**

**Robert Brantly, CEC**

ACF Myrtle Beach Chapter

*Sponsored by: Robert Stegall-Smith CEC, AAC; Stafford DeCambra, CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC*

**Paul Brennen, CEC, CCA, EdD**

ACF Middle Tennessee Chapter

*Sponsored by: Gary Rawson CEC, AAC; Michael R. Osborne CEC, AAC*

**Richard Crisanti, CEC, CCA**

ACF Caxambas Chapter of Southwest Florida

*Sponsored by: Ralph C. Feraco CEC, AAC; Mark. H Brown, CEC, CCA, AAC*

**Richard Kugelmann, CEC, CCA**

ACF Chefs of Charlotte INC.

*Sponsored by: Danny Trantham, CEC, CCA, AAC, MBA; Keith E. Gardiner CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC*

**Robert Marilla, CEC**

ACF Chefs of Charlotte INC.

*Sponsored by: Rene J. Marquis, CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC; Jay Christmas CEC, AAC*

**Andreas Proisl, CEPC**

ACF Central Florida Chapter

*Sponsored by: Roger Newell, CEC, CCE CCA, AAC; Nora Galdiano, CEC, AAC*

**Ben Simpkins, CEC, CCA**

ACF Palm Beach County Chefs Association

*Sponsored by: Rich Hoffman CEC, CCA, AAC; Theodore Kowalski, CEC, AAC*

**WESTERN REGION**

**James Churches, CEC, CCA**

ACF Michigan Chefs De Cuisine Association

*Sponsored by: Brandon W. Parry, CEC, AAC; Robert W. Phillips CEC, CCA, AAC*

**Alexandra Higgins, CEC**

ACF Chefs De Cuisine Association of California

*Sponsored by: Bert Cutino, CEC, AAC, HBOT, HOF; Eloise Fernandez, Ph.D, CEC, CCE, AAC*

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**Honorary American Academy of Chefs Inductees for 2019**

**John Burson**

*Sponsored by: Harold Small, HBOT, HAAC, JD*

**John Johnstone, CMC**

*Sponsored by: Burt Cutino, CEC, AAC, HBOT, HOF*

**Scott R. Paul**

*Sponsored by: Chris Donato, CEC, AAC*

**Mary Peterson**

*Sponsored by: Francine Greff, HAAC; Carol Kaiser*

**Craig Youdale**

*Sponsored by: Staffored DeCambra, CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC; Chef Mark Wright, CEC, AAC*

**James T. Young, CCC**

*Sponsored by: Denise Graffeo, CEC, AAC, HOF; Anthony Graffeo, CEC, AAC, HOF*

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**Tax-Deductible Donations**

[Donate Now](#)

Donations made to the American Academy of Chefs (AAC), the ACF Culinary Team USA, and Scholarship and Memorial Funds are tax deductible, as these entities are part of the American Culinary Federation Education Foundation (ACFEF), a 501(c)3 organization.

Donations, as many as you choose to make in any given year, are welcome at any time. On behalf of the entire Academy family, we thank you again for your generous support. Donations may be made by check mailed directly to the Academy Office, online, or via credit card. Please contact the Academy Administrator at [academy@acfchefs.net](mailto:academy@acfchefs.net) if you have any questions.

**THANK YOU to all of our 2019 Donors!**

Through the Academy Connection e-newsletter, the American Academy of Chefs provides members with news and information on products and services offered by the AAC, its partners and American Culinary Federation.

If you do not wish to receive the e-newsletter, please [SafeUnsubscribe](#)



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