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American Culinary Federation Announces 2023 National Award Winners and Inducts the New 2023-2025 Board of Directors

National award winners were celebrated following two days of competitions during the ACF National Convention in New Orleans in July

JACKSONVILLE, FLA. – July 27, 2023 – The best chefs in the nation were awarded the highest honors by the American Culinary Federation (ACF) at the 2023 ACF National Convention in New Orleans, LA, on Wednesday, July 19.

The honor of an ACF award proves skill, knowledge and professionalism in the culinary industry and furthers recognition for an individual as a qualified chef. These awards represent the highest honors ACF can bestow.

Nine awards were presented to individual competitors, student teams, educators, and chapters during the President's Gala, the capstone evening of the event. High resolution photographs of winners are available upon request.

- **USA's Chef of the Year Winner** – Tony Le, CEC
- **Pastry Chef of the Year** – Rebecca Freeman, CEPC
- **Chef Educator of the Year** – Michael J. Stamets, CEC
- **L.J. Minor Chef Professionalism Award** – Fernando Mojica, CEC
- **Student Chef of the Year** – Caitlin R. Drzyzga
- **Student Pastry Chef of the Year** – Kambree C. Thomas
- **Student Team Competition Winners** – Culinary Institute of New York at Monroe College
- **Hermann G. Rusch Chef's Achievement Award** – John R. DiSessa, CEC, AAC
- **L. Edwin Brown Leadership Award** – Kent L. Andersen, CEC, CCA, AAC
- **Chapter of the Year Award Winner** – ACF Atlanta Chefs Association
- **Knowledge Bowl Winner** – Guilford Technical Community College

The ACF National Convention also recognized Chef Rene J. Marquis, CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC as ACF National President for a two-year term.



The new ACF board of directors was inducted and introduced to the ACF membership:

- ACF National President
Rene J. Marquis, CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC
- Immediate Past President
Kimberly Brock Brown, CEPC, CCA, AAC
- ACF National Secretary
Jeff Bacon, CEC, CCA, AAC
- ACF National Treasurer
Kyle Richardson, CEC, CCE, AAC
- Central Region Vice-President
Rajeev Patgaonkar, CEC, AAC
- Northeast Region Vice-President
Ray McCue, CEC, AAC
- Southeast Region Vice-President
Bryan Frick, CEC, AAC
- Western Region Vice-President
Greg Matchett, CEC, AAC

Hundreds of professional chefs attend ACF's National Conventions each year for professional development opportunities and to enhance their culinary skills. The ACF National Convention features keynote speakers, cutting-edge demonstrations, a tradeshow, networking, awards ceremony, and live culinary competitions. The 2024 ACF National Convention is being held July 14–17, 2024, at the Phoenix Convention Center in Phoenix, Arizona.

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About the American Culinary Federation

The American Culinary Federation, Inc. (ACF), established in 1929, is the standard of excellence for chefs in North America. With more than 12,000 members spanning more than 170 chapters nationwide, ACF is the leading culinary association offering educational resources, training, apprenticeship, and programmatic accreditation. In addition, ACF operates the most comprehensive certification program for chefs in the United States, with the Certified Executive Chef®, Certified Sous Chef®, Certified Executive Pastry Chef® and Certified Culinary Educator®



designations accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies. The American Culinary Federation Education Foundation is home to ACF Culinary Team USA, the official representative for the United States in major international culinary competitions, and to Chef & Child, founded in 1989 to promote proper nutrition in children and to combat childhood obesity. For more information, visit www.achchefs.org. Find ACF on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and digital publications hub WeAreChefs.com.