Kelly Conwell Wins Competition and is Named 2009 Student Chef of the Year for the American Culinary Federation’s Central Region

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla., February 24, 2009—Kelly Conwell, of Kansas City, Kan., received the American Culinary Federation, Inc., (ACF) Central Region Student Chef of the Year Award at the Vice President’s Gala last night at the close of the 2009 ACF Central Regional Conference held at the Renaissance Schaumburg Hotel & Convention Center, Schaumburg, Ill., February 21-23.

Sponsored by Custom Culinary, Inc., the ACF Central Region Student Chef of the Year Award recognizes an up-and-coming student who demonstrates a high level of professionalism, culinary skills and a passion for the culinary arts. Conwell competed against three other Central Region student-chef-of-the-year candidates before being declared the winner. Students prepared four portions of a protein savory dish, or four portions of a pastry dish, depending on their area of studies. A panel of judges chose the winner. As this year’s Central Region recipient, Conwell will compete for the national title against the winners from the three other ACF regions at the 2009 ACF National Convention in Orlando, Fla., July 11-14.

It was in the fourth grade that Conwell decided her future was in the culinary industry. For her first job, she worked at a local country club bussing tables. She went on to work as a hostess, a waitress and a dishwasher, and prepping food. A culinary-arts student at Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, Kan., Conwell will graduate in May. She is a member of ACF Greater Kansas City Chefs Association, and has gained competition experience as a member of the Johnson County Community College student hot-food team for two years. She plans to spend a year traveling abroad to learn new skills, and after a few years in the kitchen, she hopes to become an ACF-certified judge.

Just 30 miles from Chicago’s big-city attractions and world-class dining options, Schaumburg, Ill., was the location of the 2009 ACF Central Regional Conference hosted by ACF Chicago Chefs of Cuisine, Inc. Bringing more than 400 chefs, cooks and foodservice professionals to the city, the conference provided attendees with numerous opportunities to advance their professional development and enhance their

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culinary skills through informative business seminars, forums and cooking demonstrations featuring the latest trends and techniques. In addition, the conference offered participants the opportunity to compete in several cooking competitions.

Sponsors of the 2009 ACF Central Regional Conference and ACF national award sponsors are: American Lamb Board; Barber Foods; Barry Callebaut; Beef Information Center; Bon Chef, Inc.; Bunge Oils; Butterball Farms, Inc.; Canada Cutlery Inc.; Carbon’s Golden Malted; Cargill Salt; Central Region State Beef Councils; The Cheesecake Factory Bakery Inc.; Clabber Girl Corporation; Consumer Packing Company; Custom Culinary, Inc.; Enviro-Solutions; Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers; GFF, Inc./Girard’s Dressings; Gordon Food Service; Illinois Crown Beef; Kendall College School of Culinary Arts; Labriola; Le Cordon Bleu Schools North America; Mexican Hass Avocado Importers Association; Michigan Sea Grant/Great Lakes Whitefish; Mind’s Eye Resource Management, LLC; National Honey Board; The National Pork Board and America’s Pork Producers; Nestlé Professional; NewChef Fashion Inc.; Nueske’s Applewood Smoked Meats; Pearson Education; QUALISOY in partnership with the Soyfoods Council; R.L. Schreiber, Inc.; Reinhart FoodService; Ronnoco Coffee Company; Rubbermaid Commercial Products; Splenda®; Sysco-Chicago; Tyson Food Service; Unilever Foodsolutions; US Foodservice; Vita-Mix; and the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board.

The American Culinary Federation, Inc., established in 1929, is the premier professional organization for culinarians in North America. With more than 22,000 members spanning 230 chapters nationwide, ACF is the culinary leader in offering educational resources, training, apprenticeship and accreditation. In addition, ACF operates the most comprehensive certification program for chefs in the United States. ACF is home to ACF Culinary Team USA, the official representative for the United States in major international culinary competitions. For more information, visit www.acfchefs.org.

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