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**American Culinary Federation Announces USA's Chef of the Year,
Reilly Meehan, CEC, at National Convention in Orlando**

More than 1,200 chefs and students, the highest number of attendees in 10 years, experience industry-leading culinary event

St. Augustine, Fla., August 21, 2019—The American Culinary Federation (ACF), the premier association for chefs in North America, hosted suspenseful and action-packed competitions among the nation's top chefs during the four-day **ACF National Convention** at the World Center Marriott in Orlando, August 4–8, 2019. Competitions were conducted throughout six kitchens where chefs and students competed for esteemed national titles in front of live audiences.

Attendees also experienced presentations by more than 30 top culinary leaders and industry experts, including famed chef and TV personality [Marco Pierre White](#) who spoke on the importance of “Yes, Chef” and signed books, Food Network celebrity chef and “Ace of Cakes” [Duff Goldman](#) who took the main stage to share his grandmother's apple strudel recipe, James Beard award winner [Gale Gand](#) who gave insights into best lessons learned in her 40 years in the business, award-winning author [Edward Lee](#) who shared insights on the changing landscape of food in America, and ramen expert [Ivan Orkin](#) who taught the fundamentals of dashi and more.

An array of cutting-edge industry topics were explored through panel discussions and hands-on demonstrations, including cooking with cannabis, the flavors of Mexico, the benefits of waste reduction and plant-forward cuisine. This year's first-ever Women Leaders Symposium, “United in Food: Leaders of Today and Tomorrow,” featured panel discussions and keynotes from leading voices in the industry, including [Chef Einav Gefen from FairKitchens](#), on hot topics like the value of mentorship, mental wellness and women trailblazers in the culinary arts.

The ACF National Convention was the culminating event of ACF's robust calendar of programming for 2019, attended by more than 3,000 professional chefs across the country.

ACF also previewed details for the 2020 event. Next year's ACF National Convention will take place July 19-23, 2020 in Dallas. Regional and national competitions will be held at the Convention. Additional information will be available in the coming months on acfchefs.org.

American Culinary Federation Presents National Awards

The winners of ACF Regional Culinary Salons competed for the national title in their respective categories during the Convention and demonstrated their culinary skills, knowledge and commitment to the craft. The ACF national competition award winners are:

ACF Chef of the Year™, sponsored by Centerline Brackets

Reilly Meehan, CEC, Executive Sous Chef, The Bohemian Club, San Francisco California

ACF Pastry Chef of the Year, sponsored by KitchenAid Commercial

SSG Samantha Poe, Food Service Specialist, Army Executive Dining Facility at the Pentagon and Enlisted Aide to the Army Chief of Staff

ACF Chef Educator of the Year

Scott Steiner, CCE, AAC, faculty member Niagara County Community College, Sanborn, New York

ACF Student Chef of the Year

Hitomi Tomobe, student, Oakland Community College, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Hermann G. Rusch Award

John Folse, CEC, AAC, HOF, restaurant owner and television chef, New Orleans, Louisiana

ACF Student Team National Championship, sponsored by R.L. Schreiber

Oregon Coast Culinary Institute Student Team

Baron H. Galand Culinary Knowledge Bowl

Culinary Institute of Michigan at Baker College: Stanley Mersino, Rachelle Murphy, Kate Strauss and Camryn Potter; Coach: Amanda Miller

A full list of award recipients, along with pictures and videos are available at acfchefs.org/awards. Photos from the event can be found here: [ACF Flickr](#)

Photos and sessions from the Convention are available on the new Online Learning Center ([Conference On-Demand](#)) and interview opportunities with industry experts are available upon request.

For more information about ACF, visit www.acfchefs.org.

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 15,500 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.acfchefs.org. Find ACF on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and digital publications hub WeAreChefs.com.