

James Beard Semifinalists Announced

The James Beard Foundation has announced the semifinalists for the 2017 Restaurant and Chef Awards ... and our community can celebrate some local names!

2017 JBF Lifetime Achievement Award: Nora Pouillon, Restaurant Nora, Washington, DC.

Best New Restaurant: Pineapple and Pearls, Washington, DC.

Outstanding Baker: Mark Furstenberg, Bread Furst, Washington, DC.

Outstanding Wine, Spirits, or Beer Professional: Sam Calagione, Dogfish Head Craft Brewery, Milton, Del.; and Diane Flynt, Foggy Ridge Cider, Dugspur, Va.

Best Chef: Mid-Atlantic: Amy

Brandwein, Centrolina, Washington, DC; and Tom Cunanan, Bad Saint, Washington, DC.

Television Program, In Studio or Fixed Location: Pati's Mexican Table, Host: Pati Jinich

Food Coverage in a General-Interest Publication: *The Washington Post* "Food" section, Joe Yonan and Bonnie Benwick

Home Cooking: "The Amazingly Simple Path to Incredible Homemade Bagels," Becky Krystal and Alex Baldinger, *The Washington Post*.

The James Beard Foundation's mission is to celebrate, nurture, and honor chefs and other leaders making America's food culture more delicious, diverse, and sustainable for everyone. The award gala will

be held at Chicago's Lyric Opera on Monday, May 1. Media award winners will be announced on April 25. A full list of the nominees can be found at: www.jamesbeard.org/blog/the-2017-james-beard-award-nominees.

Chopped Winner

Chef Ype Von Hengst, co-founder and executive chef of the Rockville-based Silver Diner chain, won the Food Network's "Chopped" competition on the program's February 14 episode. Von Hengst and three other competitors were required to prepare three courses — an appetizer, entrée and dessert — under severe time constraints, using baskets of mystery ingredients. In this episode, labeled Blue Plate Fare, the basket contained ingredients as disparate as marionberry jam, a BLT sandwich, string beans, and deep-fried deviled eggs. Von Hengst jumped into

action to create a panzanella salad and a disco fries puree, involving a mix of fried potatoes, cheese, and gravy. Yum or ugh, depending on your point of view!

But it was dessert that won the competition for Von Hengst. Using cheesecake, a cup of coffee with cream, variegated figs, and coconut arancini, he concocted a Philly-style ice cream with a side of fig beignets in a fast 30 minutes. This winning dessert was served at the Silver restaurant in Bethesda between February 21 and March 12, to the delight of local patrons.

Von Hengst said he would use his winnings to "pay it forward" by donating the \$10,000 check to the nonprofit humanitarian group Doctors Without Borders. The chef plans to match his Chopped prize, for a total donation of \$20,000. Definitely a win-win for everyone!

In Memorium

Chef Aaron Leonard McCloud, 38, passed away March 5 after a year-long battle with cancer. His wife Linda Szewczyk McCloud, whom he met at Cedar in 2012, shared this background with us because she wanted the FSM community to know "how wonderful he was."



of Massachusetts, McCloud went on to cooking at The Movable Feast in Ann Arbor, The Plaza Resort and Spa in Daytona, Fla., and Victoria and Albert's at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla. He later relocated to the Washington, DC area to open Aster as Chef de Cuisine, then the Vintage Restaurant

Group. After a season as Executive Chef at The Inn at Perry Cabin on Maryland's eastern shore, McCloud returned to DC to lead the kitchen at Cedar, where he met his wife Linda. He was inducted as an honorary member of the *Chaîne des Rôtisseurs*. And most recently, he was Executive Chef of Willow Creek Farm in Ashburn, Va. where he was enthusiastic in leading the expansion of an onsite working farm.

As a young boy, McCloud showed a great affinity for music, beginning violin instruction at the Suzuki Institute of Michigan at age three. During his early teens, McCloud became a member of the Michigan Youth Symphony at the University of Michigan and studied with the U of M violin department chair. McCloud's culinary journey began at the age of 16 at Ann Arbor, Michigan's Gandy Dancer restaurant, where he played violin tableside during Sunday brunches. Realizing he preferred the kitchen, he became Gandy's dishwasher and quickly moved to cooking on the line — finding his true calling.

After receiving a B.S. in hospitality from the University

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