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Les Dames d'Escoffier International Honors Exceptional Work in the Media with the 2023 M.F.K. Fisher Prize Winners

New York, NY – September 11, 2023 – Les Dames d'Escoffier International (LDEI), an international nonprofit organization of women leaders who work together to achieve excellence in the fields of food, beverage, and hospitality, is pleased to announce the winners of the 17th annual Les Dames d'Escoffier International M.F.K. Fisher Prize, which awards creative works by women, in any media format, that broaden understanding of the intersection of food and culture. This year's award recipients are accomplished creators whose submissions were published in 2022.

Kiki Aranita, First Prize

Submission: Here's The Difference Between Hawai'i's Local Food and Hawaiian Food, Plus How Spam Fits Into All of It

Publication: *Food & Wine*, November 16, 2022

Kiki Aranita's piece was written, published, submitted to, and chosen by M.F.K. Fisher Prize judges as the winning entry before wildfires decimated parts of Maui. Aranita's composition on the history of Hawaii's local food includes an important look at Hawaii's sometimes difficult history. Her winning piece is more salient now.

"These fires were set generations ago, over a century ago, when Hawai'i's land became sugarcane plantation land," Ms. Aranita explained. "With the plantations now a recent memory, we have to deal with a multitude of consequences that were never intended for this most remote island chain. Something that has torn at me is that I would not exist if it weren't for the sugarcane plantations. My ancestors came and worked on Kaua'i's plantations, along with displaced and impoverished people from all over the world, seeking better opportunities than whatever was available in whatever home country they left behind. I am a consequence of this painful history."

Aranita is a columnist for San Pellegrino's *Fine Dining Lovers* and a frequent contributor to

Food & Wine. She was nominated for a James Beard Foundation Media Award in 2022. She has written for *USA Today*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, and the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, and has created content for companies such as the Mushroom Council, Vitamix Commercial, and the Norwegian Seafood Council.

Rachel Levin, Second Prize

Submission: The Hunt

Publication: *Bon Appétit*, September 19, 2022

Rachel Levin's winning submission is an insightful look at sustainable hunting, detailing her personal, transformative experience. She is a San Francisco journalist who has written for *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Eater*, *Bon Appétit*, and elsewhere.

Her essay about grapefruit spoons was selected for the 2022 edition of *Best American Food Writing*. She is the author of *Look Big: And Other Tips for Surviving Animal Encounters of All Kinds* (Ten Speed) and co-author of two cookbooks: *Eat Something: A Wise Sons Cookbook for Jews Who Like Food* and *Steamed: A Cathartic Cookbook for Getting Dinner and Your Feelings on the Table*. Her first children's book, *Who Ate What?*, was recently published by Phaidon.

Cynthia Greenlee, Third Prize

Submission: Reinventing the Peach, the Pimento, and Regional Identity

Publication: *Issues in Science and Technology*, Summer 2022

Dr. Cynthia Greenlee's winning submission is the story of how a small network of forward thinkers used biotechnology, entrepreneurial moxie, government-supported experimentation, and powerful storytelling to transform their state into an agent of innovation.

Dr. Greenlee is a North Carolina-based historian and award-winning writer who chronicles the foodways of the U.S. South and, specifically, its African-American residents and culinary creatives. She is the winner of a James Beard Award, and her work has been selected for various recent editions of *Best American Food Writing* and *Best American Science and Nature Writing*. Her writing has been published *The Atlantic*, *Elle*, *Essence*, *The Nation*, *The New York Times*, *Oxford American*, *Smithsonian* magazine, *Vox*, and *YES* magazine.. She is co-editor of *The Echoing Ida Collection* (Feminist Press), an anthology of Black women and people writing about reproductive and social justice.

The judges for the 2023 M.F.K. Fisher Prize were:

Moni Basu, director of the MFA in Narrative Nonfiction at the University of Georgia and an award-winning journalist; Sara Moulton, chef, cookbook author, and television personality; and Andrea Weigl, food writer, author, and television producer.

About LDEI

LDEI is an organization of women leaders who create a supportive culture in their communities to achieve excellence in the fields of food, beverage, and hospitality. Founded in 1976, the organization currently has 2,600 members in 44 chapters in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France, and Italy that provide leadership, educational opportunities, and philanthropy.

LDEI chapters raised and donated more than \$525,000 to community nonprofits and philanthropic organizations in 2022. For more information, visit www.ldei.org and follow LDEI on Instagram and Facebook and Les Dames d'Escoffier Int'l on LinkedIn.

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