

Les Dames d'Escoffier International

Quarterly

WINTER



2024



THE QUARTERLY'S ICONIC FINAL ISSUE CELEBRATES LDEI

KENTUCKY
CONFERENCE
ISSUE



L-R: Keynote speaker Dame Toni Tipton-Martin; 2023 President Jennifer Goldman with 2024 President Kathy Gold; and Birmingham Dames Christina Almanza and Dulce Rivera—both, first-time Conference attendees.



Les Dames d'Escoffier International Quarterly WINTER 2024

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FROM THE EDITOR

I'm Betting to Win!

There's an old saying that Kentucky is known for fast racehorses, great bourbon, and pretty ladies. That's true, but as history shows us, women in the Bluegrass State are also smart, strong, hardworking individuals. Consider the Kentucky Dames who hosted the Louisville Conference. They organized a superlative lineup of educational sessions, inspiring keynote presentations, and networking opportunities. The itinerary included visits to historic landmarks, thoroughbred farms, distilleries, and curated dining experiences at Dames' restaurants. The Council of Delegates meeting provided insight into the organization's governance and future direction.



In Kentucky's horse-centric culture, spirited thoroughbreds are as celebrated as Daniel Boone or bourbon whiskey. Speaking of spirits, 95 percent of the world's bourbon supply is produced in Kentucky. In 1954, prominent Kentucky distiller J.P. Van Winkle Jr. remarked, "Only two distillers make whiskey that's fit to drink... Mother Nature and Father Time." Nature's grains are converted into clear distillate then barrel-aged for at least two years to produce the celebrated elixir.

Kentucky's fine bourbon and thoroughbred horses owe their excellence, in part, to Mother Nature's other gift—water that percolates through a vast limestone substrate. The naturally filtered "limestone water," rich in calcium carbonate and other minerals, enhances the spirit's taste. Iron impurities that discolor bourbon are also eliminated. The soil and rolling pastures of the Inner Bluegrass region are fortified by a limestone base, which in turn, supports the bone health of the state's exceptional equine athletes.

Learn more about Kentucky and the 2023 Conference in this special *Quarterly*. A sincere, heartfelt thanks to all those who contributed to the issue, including Conference photographer Nick Vaccaro and Amy West, both from AEC Management Resources.

W.C. Fields once quipped, "Horse sense is the thing a horse has that keeps it from betting on people." Perhaps he's speaking to the natural instincts horses possess; perhaps not. Clearly, he never met Les Dames d'Escoffier! The sound stewardship and growth mindset of LDEI's Board of Directors is laying the groundwork for positive change that will guarantee the organization's continued success. I'm not a gambler, but I'll wager a bet that their winning strategies will yield an excellent return. And you should too! Everything is "coming up roses" for LDEI! —Susan Fuller Slack, Editor (Charleston)

Read about the *Quarterly's* transformation starting on page 56.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Embracing Positive Change

Dear Dames,

It is an honor to be writing my first President's Message in what is to be the last issue of the *Quarterly*!

As I mentioned in my January President's Letter, under the careful guidance of Second Vice President **Anita Lau** and our talented editors Dames **Susan Slack** and **Kendra Thatcher**, our publications will have an exciting new look. The first issues of *the feast* and *The Nibble* will hit your inboxes soon. I know you will be as thrilled by them as I am.

This is a year of many changes, and some of the initiatives the Board began working on last year are coming to fruition now. The Board of Directors, an intrepid group if ever there was one and which I am so proud to be working with, meets every month—and often twice each month—to tend to the business of LDEI. That, combined with the countless daily emails and phone calls that fly back and forth amongst us, is all to ensure that the chapters are successful, that we all are successful, in our undertakings.

We have lots of exciting events, webinars, and programs coming up. We are in the midst of awards season with the Legacy Awards and the Grande Dame Award; also, the first LDEI Auction is concurrently taking place. On the horizon, we have our re-imagined M.F.K. Fisher program, and the culminating event of our year, Conference in Phoenix, which will take place October 17-20. I hope to see you all there!

The Board is here to serve you as a resource. Your concerns are our concerns, and our superb Board—First VP **Stephanie Jaeger**, Second VP Anita Lau, Third VP **Kersten Rettig**, Treasurer **Barb Pires**, Secretary **Marilyn Freundlich**, Chapter Board Liaisons **Anastasia Nickerson**, **Belinda Smith-Sullivan**, and **Robin Plotkin**, Immediate Past President **Jennifer Goldman**, and our Executive Director Greg Jewell—are all here for you. I would love to hear your ideas and suggestions, and I can always be reached by email, text, and phone. Working together is the ultimate goal, and by doing so, we can achieve our greatest ambitions.

I've had the pleasure of meeting so many of you, my fellow Dames, over the 16 years that I have been a member of LDEI, counting among you dear friends and colleagues. For those I haven't met yet, I'll share a bit of my background.

I'm a proud member of the Philadelphia Chapter, drawn in by a lovely Dame who popped her head in the door of my cooking school studio kitchen as it was being built. I welcomed her in to look around, and we ended up chatting for hours. Knowing about this fabulous organization, I was thrilled to be invited to join. It was



a short one year of membership when I was asked to serve on the Philadelphia Board of Directors, where I held various positions over seven years, with President and Immediate Past President as my penultimate and final roles on the Philadelphia board. From there, I served on the International Board for two terms as a Chapter Board Liaison, and two years as Third VP. I took a brief hiatus and returned to the Board as Secretary, followed by First VP, and now, President. As I said during my speech this past October at our Conference in Louisville, that's 113,880 hours of dedication. And counting!

And dedicated I am to this incredible and unique organization of accomplished, compassionate, and dazzling women. There's not a day that goes by that I am not in awe at the heartfelt work being carried on in all the chapters, whether it's fund-raising for scholarships, support for other nonprofits, holding community food drives, or gathering for networking, socializing, and lifting each other up in good times and bad. It's a joy following chapter events and celebrating individual milestones on social media. I hope you are all following and sharing each other's successes, too!

I'm looking forward to this year with eagerness, an open mind, and an open heart. Together we are stronger.

Kathy

Kathy Gold
President, Les Dames d'Escoffier International

2024 LDEI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The mission of the LDEI Board is to support the development of new chapters and the success of the existing chapters through guidance, education, connectivity, and effective communication. The Board also fosters and encourages the career development and growth of its members through diverse programs and philanthropic initiatives.

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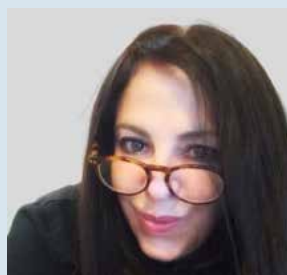
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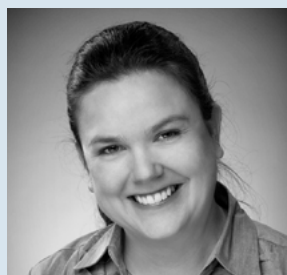
MEET THE 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Kathy Gold
(Philadelphia)
PRESIDENT

Twenty-five years ago, after more than two decades in International Investment Banking and Portfolio Management, Kathy left the corporate world for a soul-satisfying career in professional cooking. When local bankers refused a loan to an untested woman business owner, she paved her own way. In The Kitchen Cooking School, a combination cooking school, event space, and boutique, quickly became an award-winning business. Her classes were the area's top destination for serious chefs, corporate team building events, and those who just wanted to have fun in the kitchen, learn new skills, and meet new friends. The site of quite a few marriage proposals (!), the classes were featured on The Knot and

numerous bridal registries. Kathy even appeared on the reality show *Married at First Sight* when an episode was filmed at In The Kitchen. She twice appeared as a featured guest on National Public Radio's *Radio Times* with Marty Moss-Coane. Kathy starred in an episode of CNBC's *Escaping the Cube* which traced her career path from Wall Street to entrepreneur. A philanthropist at heart, Kathy hosted many fundraising events and classes pro-bono at In the Kitchen, and she spent many hours cooking behind the lines across the country to help feed those in need. Kathy's home chapter is Philadelphia. She has been a member for 16 years and has been on the LDEI Board for seven years.



Stephanie Jaeger
(British Columbia)
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Canadian-born **Stephanie Jaeger** began her foray into the restaurant industry with one of Les Dames d'Escoffier BC's founding members, Janet McGuire. After working at local restaurants in Vancouver, Stephanie and her partner Scott opened the award-winning PearTree Restaurant in 1997 (which shut its doors in 2020). Throughout 20+ years, the PearTree maintained an intimate, high level of dining room service managed by Stephanie, receiving accolades that included Best New Restaurant, Best of the Suburbs, top three "Upscale" restaurants in Vancouver from *Vancouver Magazine*, multiple years on Canada's 100 Best Restaurants list, and a place in *1001 Restaurants You Must Experience Before You Die*. In 2018, Stephanie was inducted into the BC

Restaurant Hall of Fame and in 2020 was added to *Vancouver Magazine's* Premier Crew list for her experience in the "front-of-house." An active member of her community, Stephanie has contributed to raising thousands of dollars for hungry children and youth in Burnaby and received a Mayoral Local Hero award for her efforts. As a Past President of the LDEI BC Chapter, Stephanie continues to be an active member of her chapter. She has had the honor of serving on the LDEI Board as Chapter Board Liaison, Secretary, and Treasurer. This year, she looks forward to serving the organization again as the First Vice President.



Anita Lau
(LA/OC and San Diego)
SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

Anita Lau is an internationally published cookbook author of *Asian Greens* and the creator of *Diary of a Mad Hungry Woman*, a food blog focusing on restaurant dining both local and beyond. Anita has appeared on Gordon Ramsey's *Hell's Kitchen* as a guest judge, as well as episodes of the Cooking Channel's *Eat Street*. She was also an International Casting Producer on Netflix's *The Final Table*. Her culinary career started while at university in Australia, and upon graduation, she moved back to her birthplace, Hong Kong, and spent almost 10 years as editor for numerous lifestyles and entertainment magazines, while at the same time, writing about food. She started her blog in 2008 and won the (now

defunct) OC Weekly's Reader's Choice Award for Best Blog in 2014, and she was nominated three times under the Best Food Writer category at a local event, the Golden Foodie Awards. As a member of LDEI, Anita was president of the LA/OC Chapter for three years and served as the chapter's Immediate Past President for four years. She co-chaired LDEI's 2017 Conference in Newport Beach and was a member of the Global Culinary Initiative committee for two years. Anita currently serves as Second Vice President on the LDE International Board having already served a year (2022-2023/2023-2024). She is also Third Vice President on the San Diego Chapter Board.

2024 LDEI BOARD



Kersten Rettig
(Dallas)
THIRD VICE PRESIDENT

Kersten Rettig is a food writer and marketing and public relations professional with more than 30 years of experience working for food and hospitality companies including Rosewood Hotels & Resorts. Currently, Kersten owns Prêt Marketing and PR and writes about food and travel for two Dallas-based newspapers. Kersten became a member of Les Dames d'Escoffier in 2009 while working as global communications director for Rosewood. Her mentor was Rosewood founder and Grande Dame **Caroline Rose Hunt** who generously shared her wit and wisdom with Kersten and eventually sponsored her for membership. Kersten is a member of LDEI's Dallas Chapter and served as

scholarship recipient liaison, philanthropy chair, and president in 2019-2020. Throughout her career, Kersten has created marketing and PR programs for brands ranging from Taco Bell to ultra-luxury hospitality and retail, including serving as Chief Marketing Officer for Highland Park Village in Dallas. Her passion is food, travel, and telling stories about people and places. Kersten and her husband Clark live in Dallas and have three children. She also has a Cavachon named Henrietta. Kersten serves as a trustee for VNA Texas, a nonprofit provider of community-based healthcare including hospice care and Meals on Wheels delivery.



Marilyn Freundlich
(St. Louis)
SECRETARY

Always an entrepreneur at heart, **Marilyn Freundlich** has had the great fortune to experience and participate in entrepreneurship on three very different levels. In the late '90s, Marilyn was the first hire at Build-A-Bear Workshop and instrumental in developing a corporate culture that now spans 400 stores. After opening the first store in St. Louis, she implemented many key business initiatives and ultimately executed a multimillion-dollar corporate sales program. In the early 2000s, Marilyn and her husband utilized their retail backgrounds and opened POPtions! Popcorn. Playing a pivotal role in new product and brand development, marketing, and ad-

vertising, she cultivated and managed their corporate sales relationships as well as developing bridal and special events channels. After joining LDEI St. Louis in 2013, Marilyn served as Fundraising Committee Chair for four years, became President in 2019, and finished up her stint as Past President in 2022. After two years as a Chapter Board Liaison, Marilyn is currently serving as Secretary on LDEI's Board. Marilyn is also the owner of Inclusively Yours Ceremonies. As a Life Cycle Celebrant(R) and Universal Life Minister, she creates as well as officiates at personalized wedding ceremonies that reflect the love, hopes, and dreams of the wonderful couples she works with.



Barb Pires
(Atlanta)
TREASURER

Barb Pires has been involved in the food industry since she was 16 years old working in an Italian restaurant in Connecticut. During her career she has managed, owned, and/or operated restaurants and a catering company. She also managed an instrumentation and process-control company in Lakeland, Florida, during the time she was raising her young daughter. As Director of Sales at Atlanta's H&F Bread Company, she took the company from \$350,000 in yearly sales to over \$4 million in just over three years, distributing artisan breads and pastries to Atlanta restaurants. She was managing partner/executive pastry chef and creator of Me-trotainment Bakery, and a past owner and operator of Barlee's Catering and Chuck's Steak House in

Atlanta. Barb was director of operations at Piece of Cake and also at Henri's Bakery & Deli in Atlanta. Now semi-retired from Henri's, she continues to work part-time there as an accountant. Barb was a recipe tester for **Shirley Corriher's** cookbook, *BAKEWISE*, which won a James Beard Award. She has attended every LDEI Conference except one since she became a member in 2004. Honored to be a member of an organization with so many accomplished women, she has served as Secretary, Treasurer (three terms), Vice President, President, and Immediate Past President of the Atlanta Chapter and will be the incoming Treasurer for the Atlanta Chapter in 2024. Barb is excited for her term as LDEI Treasurer 2023-2024.



Robin Plotkin
(Dallas)
CHAPTER BOARD LIAISON

Robin Plotkin is the founder of Board Mama®, a charcuterie board, grazing table, and Barkuterie® board business based in Dallas, Texas. Board Mama is a natural combination of everything Robin loves about the food business and a culmination of the last 25 years of her experience in the industry. Since its inception, Board Mama has gained a reputation for curating exceptional boards for all occasions. Frequently profiled in the media, the company has seen significant growth since 2019 and is well known for its "How to Build a Better Charcuterie Board" virtual and in-person classes. Robin is a veteran PR strategist with extensive experience in the food and beverage industries. She is also an award-winning registered dietitian and nutrition communicator. For the last 20 years, Robin

has provided strategic council to a wide portfolio of food, beverage, foodservice, and health and wellness clients. She's also an expert media resource and has been featured in numerous digital and traditional media outlets. Robin has taught cooking to students of all ages for the last 25 years. Prior to her consultancy work, she worked for H-E-B/Central Market and the North Texas Food Bank and was a health/mom blogger for the Dallas Morning News. Robin is a former Immediate Past President, President, First Vice President, Philanthropy Chair, and Membership Chair of the Dallas Chapter and currently serves as a Chapter Board Liaison for Les Dames d'Escoffier International. Robin resides in Dallas, Texas, with her husband, son, and two rescue dogs and their 35-year-old tortoise, Franklin.



Anastasia Nickerson
(Boston)
CHAPTER BOARD LIAISON

Anastasia Nickerson’s journey with LDEI started in 2012 when she joined the Boston Chapter. She has held several board positions in her chapter and currently serves as the Immediate Past President. Anastasia grew up in Novosibirsk, former Soviet Union; her family relocated to the U.S. in 1993. Acclimating to life in America, the family started a small business making pickled and marinated vegetables from old family recipes that were slightly modified for the American palate. The product, Taste of Russia, was first sold at Vermont farmers markets and soon expanded to supermarkets in New York, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut. In addition to laboring hands, Anastasia served as recipe co-creator, sales person, and occasional delivery driver. In 2006, Anastasia left the family business to

work in Boston for Accardi Foods, an importer and specialty foods distributor. Her extensive sales experience and ability to connect with people helped her create a vast customer base in area restaurants, colleges, and country clubs. In 2017, she moved to Katsiroubas Produce and spent the next few years growing the specialty foods division within their regional distribution. During the pandemic, Anastasia pivoted to consulting and assisting small food producers in taking their products to market. Growing up, Anastasia watched her grandmother cook and became passionate about food and cooking from an early age. She hosts annual borscht and pelmeni-making parties for family and friends with hopes of preserving her grandmother’s cooking. She is currently working on an “eat for weight loss” project, so stay tuned.



Belinda Smith-Sullivan
(Charleston/North Carolina)
CHAPTER BOARD LIAISON

Belinda Smith-Sullivan, a member of LDEI since 2015, is a chef, cookbook author, food writer, spice blends entrepreneur, and a commercial-rated pilot and flight instructor. Belinda has authored three cookbooks, *Just Peachy*, *Let’s Brunch*, and *Southern Sugar*. She is the monthly contributing food columnist to *South Carolina Living Magazine*. When not researching and writing cookbooks or her monthly

column, she enjoys writing fiction—she has three novels in various stages of completion. Belinda is a member of the International Food, Wine and Travel Writers Association (IFWTWA), American Culinary Federation, (ACF), Southern Foodways Alliance (SFA) and The International Association of Culinary Professionals (IACP). She and her husband Dan live in Winston Salem, North Carolina.



Jennifer Goldman
(Cleveland)
IMMEDIATE LDEI PAST PRESIDENT

Board president Jennifer Goldman earned her degree from Johnson and Wales University and began her career as a pastry chef before co-founding Patrick Properties Hospitality Group (PPHG), a Charleston, South Carolina-based hospitality company. As chief operating officer, she built and led the teams in both the front and back of the house to produce and exclusively provide all food and beverage for as many as 600 events per year. She served as brand ambassador representing PPHG as well as the City of Charleston hosting events, festivals, fundraisers, international conferences, and national media companies such as The Food Network and The James Beard Foundation. During her tenure she

also created company internships for the College of Charleston’s Hospitality Department. Jennifer brought her tourism skills to San Antonio where she became a Certified Tourism Ambassador and consulted for the San Antonio Cocktail Conference as well as a boutique hotel group before returning to her roots in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where she resides and is an Associate for HelmsBriscoe. Jennifer is a member of the Cleveland Chapter and former President of the Charleston Chapter, a member of The James Beard Foundation and the Court of Master Sommeliers. She is a stem cell donor for Be The Match.



Greg Jewell
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greg Jewell is the CEO/Partner of AEC Management Resources, a Louisville, Kentucky-based association management firm. Greg’s company has been the management company for LDEI since November 2001, making LDEI one of AEC’s first clients. His company manages a dozen not-for-profit organizations and foundations, including Foodservice Consultants Society International, North American Thermal Analysis Society, Kentucky Society of Health System Pharmacists, and the Kentucky chapter of Meeting Professionals International. (Greg’s first job was staffing a mom & pop grocery and butcher shop.)



[LEADERSHIP IN ACTION]

By Ingrid Gangestad
(South Florida)

Chapter Leadership Forum:
Marketing your Chapter in the Community

Partnering, serving, and showing up were buzzwords at the Chapter Leadership Forum. Four Dames shared successes in marketing their chapters in the community.

NASHVILLE
“Community is a verb,” states the chapter president, **Cara Graham**. Several years ago, the chapter focused on three community initiatives. First, they joined the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee. This opened doors to be seen as a viable nonprofit. Foundation grants enabled the chapter to host workshops around desegregating the Nashville food scene. With heightened awareness of the chapter, more grant money and connections became available.

Secondly, they created community grants with partners including Slow Food of Middle Tennessee and Holland and Knight Law Firm. “When values and mission overlap, partnerships make sense,” says Cara. Third, members of Les Dames Nashville repeatedly provided disaster relief working with other organizations, including the Tennessee Local Food Summit, Second Harvest Food Bank, the Red Cross, and Gideon’s Army.

NEW ORLEANS
“Young members in a young chapter may have different ways of doing things,” says **Emily Vanlandingham**, Les Dames New Orleans communications vice president. The chapter prioritized becoming better professional friends during the pandemic leading to chapter changes. Revamping the website brought visibility to the chapter. Its mailing list grew to over 200 just by visitors opting in on the new website. A failed scholar-

ship was retooled to become the Leading from the Heart Award. The chapter sells tickets to events on social media, which funds two or three awards annually. “Sometimes we just wing it, and it works,” comments Emily.

PHOENIX
Judith Baigent-King shared the chapter’s success partnering with **Careers through Culinary Arts Program** (C-CAP). The Harvest Moon Feast is a hot-ticket item bringing together Dames, restaurateurs, student chefs, and musicians. Dames provide the workforce, while C-CAP, which is headed by Dame **Jill Smith**, brings in sponsorship and handles the accounting. Dame **Pamela Hamilton**, founder of *Edible Phoenix*, featured C-CAP, its students, and partners in its October issue. A *Harvest Moon Cookbook* has been released as a partnership between C-CAP, Edible Phoenix, and Les Dames Phoenix. “This event is a successful partnership raising the visibility of Les Dames,” relates Judith. Dames attending the 2024 LDEI Annual Conference can attend the Harvest Moon Feast as an add-on event to support the Phoenix Chapter.

CHICAGO
Chapter President **Liz Barrett** shares a few chapter initiatives that keep Dames visible. The chapter embraced online rolling membership to qualified women without a formal invitation. They have seen a great response from highly qualified new members who are ready to get involved. In the last few years, the chapter hosted a Culinary Bazaar by partnering with several sponsors. Liz says, “Sponsorship was secured before the event with a goal of raising \$20,000. We also



Top Left: Leadership Forum Panel, L-R: Cara Graham, Emily Vanlandingham, and Judith Baigent-King. Not pictured: Liz Barrett. Bottom Left: 2023 Board members: Bottom Left: 2023 Chapter Board Liaisons, L-R: Erin Byers Murray, Marilyn Freundlich, and Irene Moore. 2023 LDEI President Jennifer Goldman and Karen Dar Woon (BC).

donated to **Envision Unlimited** in exchange for using their space. The donation was part cash and part goods, in the form of chef jackets, chef clogs, and culinary textbooks. Win-win.” Les Dames Chicago and Green City Market of Chicago have worked together since the market’s founding in 1999. By serving as board members and volunteers, the chapter remains visible with local chefs and farmers who shop and sell at the market. Dames are excited about the

chapter’s new Sweet Home Chicago tour. Although the primary focus of the event is raising money, hosting a culinary tour will help position Les Dames Chicago as a catalyst and curator of some of Chicago’s most iconic experiences. “We’ll showcase our city’s food scene in new ways,” adds Liz. These examples show that community visibility can be achieved in multiple ways, but it all comes down to being part of the community.



A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE FROM THE KENTUCKY CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS

Dear Dames,

We want to express our deepest thank you to those who attended the 2023 LDEI Conference. The Conference Committees along with the entire Kentucky Chapter (LDKY) were excited to show off the Bluegrass State. Our chapter is young (7 years) and small (46 members), but we were up to the challenge. Thank you to all the Dame committee chairs: **Ann Currie**, Sullivan University; **Tammy Kaufman**, Sullivan University; **Gina Brown**, Founder and Executive Director of Let Us Learn, Inc.; **Penryn Craig**, Owner Craig's Creek Farm; **Caroline Knop**, Simply PR; **Kimberlie Thompson**, US Foods; and **Sherry Hurley**, Founder of Farm to Fork Catering. Also, thank you to **Stacy Yates**, Chief Marketing Officer for Louisville Tourism, and **Judy Hollis Jones**, President and CEO of Buzzard's Roost Spirits, LLC., for your support and guidance. Our sincere gratitude goes to you all.

We kicked off the weekend with Preconference Tours, Dine-Around-Dinners, Opening Reception, and the Trouble Bar Mixer. You showed up with electrifying energy ready to tackle the weekend! The success of Thursday took an army built of restaurateurs, farmers, educators, LDKY members, and industry professionals. Thank you to EVERYONE involved in the plethora of events that took place on Thursday.

We were ecstatic to have two phenomenal keynote speakers, Dr. Temple Grandin and Dame **Toni Tipton-Martin**. Dr. Grandin is an author, professor, and scientist with more accolades than we can count. Thank you to the Kentucky Beef Council and Tammy Kaufman of Sullivan University for the partnership allowing Dr. Grandin to share her wisdom with us. Toni Tipton-Martin is an author, historian, cofounder and former president of Southern Foodways Alliance and Foodways Texas. Thank you, Toni, for not only keynoting, but for talking with our LDEI members, attending Conference, and for making the Sunday Brunch something to remember! It was truly an honor to have such trailblazers on the speaking agenda.

Breakout sessions were a high priority. The committee chairs worked tirelessly to ensure the educational segments were top-notch. There were over 25 speakers, panelists, and moderators throughout the nine sessions; each one was an expert in her field and provided ample amounts of wisdom throughout the weekend. Thank you to the committee and to all involved in these wonderful education sessions.

We can't talk Conference without discussing the fun! Flavors of Derby was a blast, and we have all the 3D photo booth videos to prove it! The chef tasting tables were delicious! We had the official Churchill Downs racetrack bugler,

Steve Buttleman; the owner of Big Day Hat Design, Veronica Stivers; Vice President/talk show host at ESPN Louisville and betting professional, Drew Deener; internationally acclaimed photographer, Dan Dry; and of course, the best band around—Hickory Vaught. The entire evening was filled with some of the Derby greats, and we couldn't be more humbled that they spent their Friday evening with us.

What about that brunch? We could not think of a better way to end than to celebrate at the Butcher Rose, an 18th century home that has been transformed into a modern social cub with each room designed and dedicated to a different female icon. Each room featured a different cocktail from Toni's new book along with tasty bites from Farm to Fork Catering. Toni and Trouble Bar's beverage manager, the late Felicia Corbett, gave a riveting demonstration from Toni's new book. It was the perfect end to the weekend.

LDKY would like to take a moment and congratulate the award winners from 2023. The six Legacy Award winners are Grace Aguilar, Meghan Sigurdson, Shari Shobe, Cassandra Loflin, Emma Cromedy, and Tara Meineke. Also, congratulations to Dame **Nina Mukerjee Furstenau**, the recipient of the Woman of Purpose Award. You all are inspiring in your own right and remind us why we love LDEI.

Last but certainly not least, a very big THANK YOU to LDEI President **Jennifer Goldman** and Executive Director Greg Jewell, Shannon Byrne, and Amy West. You answered our calls, emails, and texts around the clock.

We were asking all weekend "what has been your favorite part" and everyone had a different answer! That's exactly what we wanted to hear. We wanted the LDEI 2023 Conference to have something for everyone. We are giving a standing ovation to the host of volunteers and LDKY Dames who made the 2023 Conference a success!

We look forward to seeing you in Phoenix, Arizona!

Cheers,

Nicole Stipp & Kelley Miracle
2023 LDEI Conference Co-Chairs



LDEI 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

L-R, Front: Anita Lau, Stephanie Jaeger, Kathy Gold, Barb Pires, and Jennifer Goldman. L-R, Back: Marilyn Freundlich, Kersten Rettig, Belinda Smith-Sullivan, and Anastasia Nickerson. Board member Robin Plotkin is not pictured.



KENTUCKY CONFERENCE REGISTRATION DESK



LOUISVILLE DISTILLING WITH MATSON & GILMAN

BY NICHOLE BENDELE (SAN ANTONIO)

Kentucky Dames **Nicole Stipp** and **Sarah Bryant** led our downtown Louisville walking tour beginning at PROOF on Main, for breakfast and bourbon. It's located in the 21C Museum Hotel, founded by Laura Lee Brown and Steve Wilson, collectors of contemporary art. We enjoyed a breakfast of scrambled eggs, savory grits, biscuits, and sausage or bacon with a delicious No Spectators Cocktail! It was followed with a tasting of small batch Kentucky Artisan Distillery's Jefferson 2022, Limestone Branch Distillery's Yellowstone "Greg's Way" 2022, and Lux Row Distillery Rebel Cask Strength 2021 Bourbon. Dames learned that "all bourbons are whiskeys, but not all whiskeys are bourbons." Bourbons must be at least 51 percent corn and aged in new charred-oak barrels. The Dames gently sniffed their bourbons with mouths slightly ajar to pick up the aromatics before tasting.

Next, Dabney Clore of Evan Williams/Heaven Hills Distillery led us through a secret vault door—their speakeasy! Lead Bourbon Educator Austin Jones shared that Welshman Evan Williams founded Kentucky's first distillery in 1783. He led

us through a sensory tasting of five bourbons, with one being the clear, non-barreled High Wine, a.k.a. "White Dog"—smelling of grain only (basically moonshine). With each sample, he asked us to sniff our wrist (neutralizing our olfactory), sniff spice jars (cinnamon, allspice, brown sugar, dried figs, dried tobacco, anise, black pepper) and then re-sniff our wrists before sniffing our bourbon, allowing us to recognize the aromatics. As we finished our last sample, Dame **Kate Howell** from Wales gave the Welsh toast *iechyd da* ("good health")!

Along our walk downtown, we admired the beautiful, traditional metal façade and brick buildings. We learned about repurposed, historic buildings and posed with the Louisville Slugger factory's giant bat en route to Art Eatables, the maker of fine bourbon chocolates.

Vicky Fugitte of Michter's Fort Nelson Distillery shared their history next. Michter's Distillery, founded in Pennsylvania in 1753, was the first American distillery. Originally it was called Shenk's. It was there that General George Washington purchased cannon balls and then went next door to purchase spirits from Shenk's for his troops during the Revolutionary War. Vicky explained the steps in the bourbon-making process and shared Michter's process of using quality grains ground finely in the cage mill and toasting the oak barrels before charring them, which gives more caramelization. They enter their bourbon and rye into barrels at 103 proof instead of industry standard 125. Heat cycling is also used during barrel aging to enhance flavor and chill filters instead of carbon filtration to avoid stripping flavor and aromatics. We ended our walking tour with a cocktail at the industrial-chic Angel's Envy Distillery, who also offers tours and educational classes.

Dames enjoy breakfast and a bourbon tasting in the contemporary, art-filled dining room at Proof on Main. At Michter's Distillery, L-R: Nichole Bendele, Sarah Bryant, Nicole Stipp, Patricia Clough, Christina Almanza, Dulce Rivera, Amy Crowell, Kate Howell, and Darla Crask. Photos: Courtesy of Nichole Bendele.



1. A lifelike, painted horse replica of Mage, Kentucky Derby winner 149, stands in the museum. Mage's bridle and race-worn horseshoes are also on display. 2. A bronze statue of Derby winner Barbaro. Laid to rest beneath the statue, he is the first horse to be buried at Churchill Downs. 3. Dames enjoyed a picnic lunch at Barn8. The renovated stable-turned-restaurant features cozy, private dining spaces inside the original horse stalls. 4. Kentucky Dame Hope Cook was our guide for the day. 5. The green electric starting gate was introduced to the Kentucky Derby in 1940. This particular gate was used in 17 races. Each horse goes through a period of gate training before it can race. 6. We watched as several powerful, equine athletes went through their morning workouts. 7. The retired racing Thoroughbred makes a new friend. 8. Carriage museum. 9. Barn8's upstairs Hayloft features a Venetian chandelier and floor-to-ceiling, bourbon-barrel rick in the stairwell. Photos: Susan Slack.

HORSES, HOSPITALITY, AND CULINARY TRIUMPH

BY SUSAN FULLER SLACK (CHARLESTON)

A tour of Churchill Downs gave twenty-five Dames a first-hand look into the fascinating world of Thoroughbred horse racing. The racetrack is home to the Kentucky Derby, the most prestigious of several races held the first Saturday in May. The 1-1/4 mile event is restricted to 20 three-year-old racehorses. Largely dominated by colts, only three fillies have "beaten the boys" in the celebrated race. The popular Longines Kentucky Oaks, a stakes race for the fillies, is held at Churchill Downs one day before the Derby.

Our host, Kentucky Dame **Hope Cook**, guided us to the Kentucky Derby Museum where we were immersed in "the greatest two minutes in sports" through racing artifacts, memorabilia, equine artworks, and interactive exhibits. The museum holds more than 10,000 items and collections in its "vault."

The Derby was established by Meriwether Lewis Clark Jr. (1846-1899), who was the grandson of William Clark, co-commander of the historic Lewis and Clark Expedition. He was also the grandnephew of General George Rogers Clark, who founded Louisville. Clark Jr. modeled the legendary race after The Epsom Derby, an English Classic race co-founded in 1780 by the 12th Earl of Derby in Surrey, England. The Kentucky racetrack was built on family land leased from John and Henry Churchill, the maternal uncles of Clark Jr. The first race was held May 17, 1875.

We viewed an 18-minute film, *The Greatest Race*, in the Great Hall on a 360-degree panoramic screen. Perched on swiveling stools, we followed a foal's first steps on the path to racing greatness and the road a Thoroughbred travels to reach the starting gate and ultimately, the Winner's Circle. We saw the exhilarating finish of the 2023 race won by Mage, the fourth Derby winner produced by his female line.

An exhibit of flamboyant Derby hats was on display, as well as a replica of the hot pink-lime hat that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II wore at the 133rd Kentucky Derby in 2007. A lifelong horsewoman and pioneering breeder, she boarded several royal mares in the Bluegrass Region and visited Kentucky five times seeking to invigorate her British racing operations.

A symbol of Americana, the "Run for the Roses" has deep-rooted traditions. The winning horse is draped with a hand-stitched, 40-pound blanket of 500+ patriotic-red Freedom Roses, so named to honor 9/11 victims and members of the armed forces. Classic Derby foods include burgoo stew, Benedictine cheese spread, country ham, bourbon balls, and decadent Derby Pie®. The Mint Julep (fresh spearmint, Old Forester Kentucky bourbon, and simple syrup) is the official Derby drink. At the 2020 Derby, The Diane Crumb Blackberry Julep honored the race's first female jockey in 1970.

The museum experience includes the Stable, home to Mighty Aristides (Ari), an engaging two-year-old, miniature rescue horse and also, a visiting Thoroughbred. Thanks to Meaningful Menagerie Animal Therapy and the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation for saving them from possible neglect, abuse, and slaughter. Ari's name



pays homage to the first Derby winner, Aristides, ridden by 19-year-old African American jockey Oliver Lewis and trained by former slave Ansel Williamson, a legendary American horseman. Black jockeys won 15 of the first 28 races. The museum hosts a permanent exhibit, Black Heritage in Racing.

On a walking tour of Churchill Downs, we learned that the racetrack is blended river sand, clay, and silt. Continuously graded, the surface helps cushion the horses when they run. Race-viewing sites range from the exclusivity of The Mansion (with a Chanel makeup artist in the ladies room) and The Turf Club (a celebrity hangout), to grandstand seats and "walk around passes" (no seating). Dame **Virginia Willis** has been a featured chef at The Mansion.

General admission allows entrance to the infield for a more casual day of picnicking and unbridled fun. During WWI, the infield was planted with potatoes; in 1918, a 1,000-bushel harvest was auctioned off and the proceeds were donated to the Red Cross.

A Thoroughbred's Derby journey begins on the backside of Churchill Downs where up to 1,400 horses live and train with the support of hundreds of trainers, grooms, exercise riders, and other barn staff. Backside equine workers and their families are cared for too; the grounds include housing, a school, food market, pharmacy, church, support groups, and a summer camp for the kids. You might see a small pony, donkey, or goat wandering around the stalls; these "barn buddies" provide companionship and emotional support for skittish racehorses.

HERMITAGE FARM

Leaving Churchill Downs, we traveled to Hermitage Farm, a premier, 700-acre, horse-breeding operation. It is also a compassionate abode for retired racehorses basking in the glow of their sunset years. More than 110 stakes winners have been bred at the farm, including Kentucky Derby winner Dark Star (1953)—the only horse to defeat celebrated, hall-of-fame racehorse Native Dancer. Queen Elizabeth II was a guest at Hermitage Farm in May 1986.

The farm was purchased in 1935 by the late Warner L. Jones, a chairman of Churchill Downs Inc. The famous racetrack was built on land owned by his fourth great grandfather, State Senator Samuel Churchill (1779-1863). Samuel's grandson was Meriwether Lewis Clark Jr. The current owners, Laura Lee Brown and spouse Steve Wilson, founded the 21c Museum Hotels.

Riding in a tractor-pulled hay wagon, we passed mares, foals, and yearlings grazing in scenic pastures. At the Sports Horse Center (Stud Barn), we admired the award-filled trophy room, tack room, and gallery of antique, horse-drawn carriages; one appeared in the movie *Gone with the Wind*. Hermitage Farm is host to The Kentucky Classic, a premier carriage driving competition. A highlight of the visit was meeting several sociable, retired racehorses and Lipizzans from the driving team.

Horses, agriculture, and bourbon are signature industries of Hermitage Farm. Our final stop was Barn8 Farm Restaurant & Bourbon Bar for a box lunch and bourbon tasting. The farm-to-fork restaurant includes a garden, orchard, and greenhouse where ingredients are procured. Reinvigorated after lunch, we walked to the Barn8 Farm Store nearby for a shopping spree before returning to the hotel.



LOUISVILLE HANDCRAFTED

BY HOLLY CHUTE (ATLANTA)



It was a perfect day for our Louisville Handcrafted tour, which started with a visit to the historic Butcher Rose House in an area called the Butchertown District. Built in the 1790s, it has been updated to a modern B&B with six unique bedrooms, each one with its own private bathroom. It is also now the First Ladies Social House with different memberships available. It can be used as a coworking space or a place to meet friends, as well as a destination for intimate weddings and bridal parties. After touring the house, we were invited into the spacious kitchen for coffee and delicious treats.

Our next stop was Hadley Pottery, which has quite a long and storied history. It was started in 1940 by award-winning painter Mary Alice Hadley. She began her career renting space from potter John B. Taylor who was down the street from Hadley's existing building—a birthday present for Mary Alice from her husband George in the early '40s. Her original art and hand-painted wall murals are still on display in the building. During World War II, the company produced dinnerware, which they do to this day, as well as a wide selection of whimsical, hand-painted pottery. The soft, plastic clay, sourced in Indiana, is from clay veins that form in ancient coal seams. It arrives by the truckload and is offloaded into a massive receptacle at the basement level. Each level of the building is used for the various stages of production; hand painting takes place on the top level. There is a store on site where these unique pieces of pottery are available for purchase. There are many standard patterns, seasonal pieces, and new designs.

Our next destination was Harvey's Cheese, owned by Australian chef Brent Mills and his wife Dame **Ashley Urjill-Mills**. Harvey's is named for their young son. We had an informative discussion by certified cheese professional, Jess McLendon, that included a wine and cheese tasting. Then, we were treated to a delicious fusion lunch prepared by Chef Mills. The menu was: Roasted Beet Salad with Coffee Vinaigrette, Tête de Moine, Grapefruit, and Marcona Almonds; Benedictine, which is a local cucumber dip, and Pimento Cheese; Tasmanian Scallop and Curry Pie with potato, coconut milk, and lime leaf; and Tomato Koshihikari (Japanese rice) Risotto, with confit cherry tomatoes, soft sheep's cheese, pickled eggplant, and buttermilk croutons. Dessert was saved for our final stop. Fortunately, we were able to walk—a boost to digestion.

Gilberto Gelato is owned by Justin and **Kristin Gilbert**, who met as graduate students in art history at Vanderbilt; both studied abroad in Italy during college. After living and working in London, the couple moved their family to Italy for three years to study the art of making authentic gelato. Returning to the United States, they opened their quaint shop in 2006, offering a wide range of vibrant choices from classic Pistachio to inspired flavors like Bourbon Ball and Mint Julep. All of their gelato is artisanal; the bases made-from-scratch with only the finest ingredients. We sampled as many flavors as we liked before settling on a cup. Gilberto Gelato also offers events and classes in the shop.



The Dames visit the Butcher Rose House. Tasmanian Scallop and Curry Pie. Certified cheese professional Jess McLendon at Harvey's Cheese. Dames and guests enjoy lunch at Harvey's Cheese. Tomato Koshihikari Risotto. Justin and Kristin Gilbert, the owners of Gilberto Gelato.

THERE'S MORE THAN FRIED CHICKEN IN KENTUCKY

BY STACEY BALLIS (CHICAGO)



On the Thursday preconference, 20 Dames were privileged to take a little trip to meet the extraordinary **Ouita Michel** and visit both her new cooking studio and her flagship restaurant, Holly Hill Inn. The legendary chef is a restaurateur, culinary educator, cookbook author, and a multiple James Beard Award finalist for Best Chef Southeast.

Ouita welcomed us to her cooking studio where she and her team teach classes and hold events. We were treated to pre-brunch snacks of her famous scones and country ham biscuits, which were appreciated after our long drive from Louisville. Ouita shared with the group how the challenges of the past few years have inspired her to expand her reach beyond the restaurants. Her studio space was born out of the need to pivot some of her energies and expand the opportunity to engage with her customers and guests. She is working on a television program, which is an exciting and fun new challenge for this dynamic woman.

During a quick "shoppportunity," many of the Dames bought cookbooks that Ouita signed, as well as housemade confectations, artisanal ingredients, aprons, and even Christmas tree ornaments. Then we reboarded the buses to head to Holly Hill Inn. Surrounded by a gorgeous wooded property, the historic inn has been lovingly restored and maintained.

We were led to a private dining room. An elegant three-course brunch followed, paired with Woodford Reserve bourbons and some bourbon education. The hungry Dames were delighted with dishes such as parfait of bourbon-braised apples, yogurt, granola, and peanut caramel; Hokkaido scallops with soft-scrambled eggs; and Eggs Benedict with house-made English muffins, pimento cheese, and country ham—a Southern riff on the classic dish.

The white cheddar grits were especially popular; many Dames were excited to try and replicate them at home. Served with fresh, crusty sourdough from Ouita's bakery, they were delivered with care by her charming and attentive servers. The meal finished with a trio of pie options: classic chess with macerated berries; sour cream enhanced apple with salted caramel; and decadent, chocolate bourbon pecan.

After brunch, Ouita took a few of us on a walk around the gardens where, despite the rapidly waning season, there were still some fresh and unusual ingredients to inspire her cooking. She also shared a beautiful, temporary art installation created around a fallen branch from one of the stately black walnut trees near the inn. Instead of simply clearing the branch away, she and her team recognized the beauty in how it had fallen and encircled it with a low border of branch chunks and woven switches, creating what she called "the nest." Weather and time will eventually reclaim the piece; for the moment, it is a glorious representation of Ouita herself and the warm and welcoming world she has created. Ouita's cookbook *Just a Few Miles South* offers a taste of her food. If your travels bring you to the Bluegrass State, make time to visit this very special place. www.hollyhillinn.com



Chef Ouita Michel. Eggs Benedict with pimento cheese and shaved country ham. Candied Apple Parfait. Ouita Michel and Chicago Dame Julie Ratowitz stand inside "the nest." Sour Cream Apple Pie with salted caramel. A trio of Woodford Reserve bourbons. Photos: Stacey Ballis.



Dames tour Farmington Historic Plantation, Front L: Jill Means (Des Moines), Gena Berry (Atlanta). Middle L: Sheila Crye (Washington, D.C.), Karen Dar Woon (British Columbia). Back L: Belinda Smith-Sullivan (North Carolina/Charleston), and Suzanne Corbett (St. Louis). Kentucky Fried Chicken has roots in the Sullivan University's famed culinary program. Colonel Sanders often visited the campus. A bountiful lunch was prepared by Sullivan University culinary students. Lunch included Rocher des Violettes wine—a certified, organically grown Chenin Blanc from 50-plus-year-old vines in the Montlouis-sur-Loire region of France's central Loire Valley. Breakfast at The Bakery. Photos: Karen Dar Woon and Sheila Crye.

SULLIVAN UNIVERSITY AND FARMINGTON HISTORIC PLANTATION TOUR

By KAREN DAR WOON (BRITISH COLUMBIA)

The day began bright, sunny and early! Our group was greeted at the hotel by chefs Gracie Cook and **Tammy Kaufman** of Sullivan University. It was a short drive to The Bakery, the University's fully equipped retail bakery that opened recently. Chef **Ann Currie** and her internship students had set up a fresh and sumptuous breakfast. (Thank you Dame Tammy for the gluten-free banana bread!)

After breakfast we headed to Farmington Historic Plantation, home of the John Speed family hemp plantation. We started the tour with an audio/video presentation that shared the Speed family's history. Joshua Speed, who managed the Farmington estate after the death of his father John, was a lifelong friend of Abraham Lincoln and a self-proclaimed abolitionist. Dozens of enslaved people operated the farm and hemp operations. The restoration and interpretive team have made efforts to deepen our understanding of the impacts of slavery on generations of African Americans. There is significant material in the Farmington presentation to highlight the role of enslaved people in building the tremendous agricultural wealth in Louisville.

The Federalist-style main house at Farmington has been restored and is decorated with furnishings of the period. It was almost as if the Speed family still lived there. Unfortunately, by the time the historical society acquired the property, none of the buildings occupied by the slaves remained. As the property of enslaved people was seen as “having no value,” very few items remain to enliven the stories. Personal letters of the Speed family shed additional insight into life at the plantation.

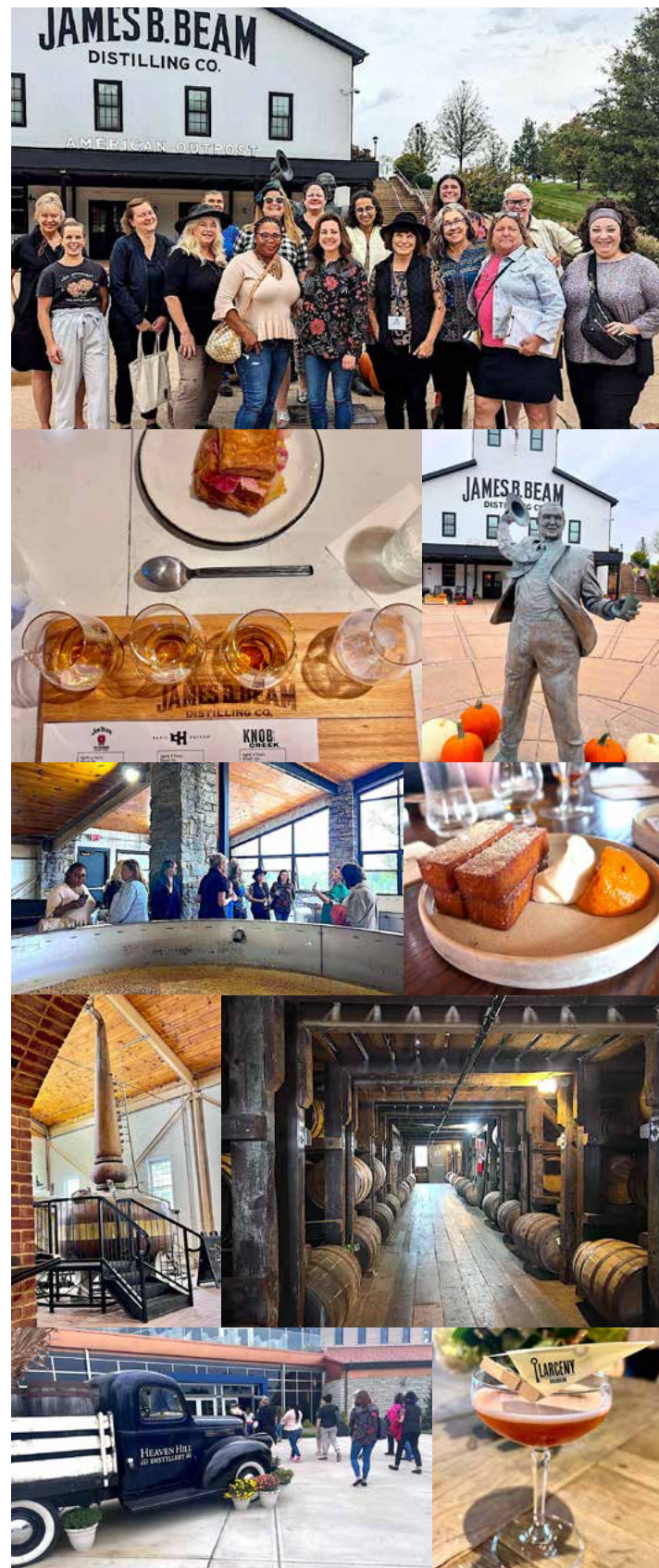
After our tour of the brick residence, we were invited to make a hemp “feather” ornament. Having our hands directly on the product, which had historically been produced at the Farmington estate was a wonderful way to connect with the history.

Louisville's Speed Art Museum was founded by Hattie Bishop Speed in 1925 as a memorial to her late husband James Breckinridge Speed. A prominent businessman and philanthropist, James was the nephew of Joshua Speed.

We walked a short distance to Sullivan University Campus. We toured the Culinary Arts program facilities; basic and advanced kitchen labs, and an extensive international kitchen lab. The students in the Advanced International program prepared our fabulous lunch. Fun fact: Sullivan University kitchens were the test kitchens for Kentucky Fried Chicken from 1976 through 1986. Chefs and franchisees attended classes to learn how to best operate their businesses.

Kentucky Dame **Julie DeFriend** shared several wines that paired beautifully with the Southeast Asian flavours of our lunch. As our group was small, we were treated to an intimate conversation about the wines, and about the beverage industry in the region.

Many thanks to the Dames who put this tour together: Tammy Kaufman, Ann Currie, Julie DeFriend; to the staff and students of Sullivan University; and the staff and volunteers of Farmington/Historic Homes Foundation.



Dames visit the James B. Beam American Outpost. Flaky biscuits with country ham were served during a bourbon tasting. Statue of James Beam, founder of the James B. Beam Distilling Co. Dames visit the fermentation room at Willett Distillery. Bar at Willett: Panisse (chickpea flour fritters) with Romesco and whipped ricotta. A hand-hammered, copper pot still. Willett's four-story rickhouse. Dames enter the Heaven Hill Bourbon Experience, a state-of-the-art, interactive, educational space. Larceny is a small-batch, Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey made with wheat instead of rye as the secondary grain. Photos: Lauren Voigt.

MEET BOURBON'S HOMETOWN: BARDSTOWN

By LAUREN VOIGT (MINNESOTA)



Embarking on a spirited journey from Louisville to Bardstown, this preconference tour led by Kentucky Dame **Gail Crawford** explored the heart of Kentucky's Bourbon Country including the iconic distilleries Jim Beam, Willett, and Heaven Hill.

Arriving at Jim Beam's Kitchen Table restaurant we were greeted by Nashville Dame **Erin Kette** for a true taste of Kentucky hospitality. Our intimate breakfast was hosted before Kitchen Table was open to the public and offered a front-row seat to the distillery's charm.

A flaky biscuit sandwich with ham cured on-site was perfectly paired with a side of rich bourbon history and a taste of three of the distillery's most iconic brands. To cap off our experience, bartender Hayley prepared a decadent breakfast cocktail with housemade coffee liqueur boba, salted caramel syrup, Basil Hayden Dark Rye, coffee and cream.

Our next stop was at Willett and hosted by Janelle Kulsveen, wife to seventh generation master distiller, Drew Kulsveen. Willett is one of the oldest distilleries in the area that remains family-owned and operated.

Here, we learned more about bourbon's deep roots dating back to when Bardstown settlers recognized the region's limestone-filtered water as ideal for bourbon production. We enjoyed a full tour from grain-to-glass, learning about the stages of production from fermentation of the grains, to distillation and aging in rickhouses. A rickhouse is a warehouse used to age whiskey, and the term comes from the wooden “ricks” that hold the barrels in place.

After a tour and tasting we had a multicourse lunch at their onsite restaurant, the acclaimed Bar at Willett. An open floor plan allows a view of their expert culinary team at work, crafting internationally inspired dishes with a local flare.

Satiated, we enjoyed stretching our legs on Bardstown's Main Street for a bit before heading to our third and final tour stop.

At Heaven Hill's Bourbon Experience museum we enjoyed learning more about the history of collaboration in the bourbon industry with Kentucky Dame **Jean Michalak**. We watched a short historical documentary, which emphasized the region's penchant for collaboration.

The documentary centered on the Heaven Hill Distillery fire of 1996, one of the most devastating incidents in the bourbon industry, yet it also showcased the spirit of collaboration. When the fire occurred, several neighboring distilleries and businesses stepped up to offer equipment and expertise. Heaven Hill's recovery and the support they received from their peers have since become a part of bourbon lore, reinforcing the industry's bonds and commitment to quality.

A central theme throughout the tour was Bardstown's history of collaboration in the bourbon industry and how they have fostered a resilient and thriving whiskey ecosystem, a testament to the enduring power of cooperation in the face of economic challenges and changing times.

During Prohibition, when the production and sale of alcoholic beverages were illegal, many Bardstown distilleries, including Willett, banded together to survive by producing medicinal whiskey, ensuring their survival until the repeal of the 18th Amendment.

In the 19th century, the famed Kentucky Bourbon Trail was born as a collaborative marketing effort, bringing together distilleries like Jim Beam, Heaven Hill, and Willett to promote bourbon tourism.

This immersive experience offered a taste of the rich history and craftsmanship behind bourbon.

OPENING
RECEPTION
DAMES
WELCOME
FIRST-TIME
ATTENDEES

During the Opening Reception, Dames gathered to greet longtime friends and form new friendships as they mingled with 38 first-time attendees. Everyone appreciated the trio of lovely wines served by The Wine Group and the spirited Kentucky Oaks Lily provided by Tito's Handmade Vodka. Spiritless served Jalisco 55 Paloma mocktails, featuring their distilled non-alcoholic spirits. There was also a display and tasting of Maker's Mark Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey from Beam Suntory, Inc. Kerrygold (Ornua) added the perfect pairing—an assortment of rich, buttery cheeses with crackers, chutney, fruits, and nuts. Following the reception, everyone attended several unique, curated dining experiences throughout the city. Arranged by the Kentucky Chapter, the dinners showcased some of Louisville's finest restaurants and chefs.



"My first time attending an international Conference was such an amazing experience! Being surrounded by bold, brilliant, and BEAUTIFUL women, all of whom have a heart for philanthropy and hospitality, was life changing. From the thoughtfully selected speakers, the timely educational sessions, and the curated experiences, it was certainly a weekend to remember! I connected with so many inspiring women and have been blessed to continue those conversations postconference and bring nuggets of wisdom to our Charleston Chapter. I'm so excited to join fellow Dames in Puebla as a raffle winner! Cheers to the Kentucky Dames! Thanks for such an unforgettable experience."

Rhonda Mitchell, Drizzled Pear (Charleston)

"Although I have been a Dame since 2012, I have been unable to attend the LDEI Annual Conference as for some reason, I had conflicts in scheduling each year. The Louisville Kentucky Conference was extraordinary because not only was it my first international Conference, it was also leading up to the start of my term as President of LDNY, and as such it was especially valuable. The sessions on leadership and legal issues were probably the most important to me as incoming president, as I saw both the bedrock values of the LDEI mission and the myriad of ways that individual chapters creatively bring them to life in ways that are relevant to their communities. The Conference was impressive, and the speakers were important and fascinating. I was in awe of the fabulous hospitality of the extraordinary Kentucky Dames. The Conference was impeccably organized and so much fun!"

Barbara Sibley, La Palapa (New York)

*"It was such a treat for **Kate Howell** and me to be invited to represent the London Chapter at the Louisville Conference. I was excited to visit a part of the U.S. I hadn't been to before, to spend time with some of the Dames I hosted during Edible Cork and Edible London earlier in the year and to meet lots of new Dames. The keynote speakers were both inspiring and a joy to listen to and all the impromptu conversations in between sessions (and in the Buzzard's Roost...) have led to some real friendships. Sharing ideas with so many amazing women was an absolute pleasure—so much to think about and bring back to London. And getting all dressed up to go the Derby evening at the Speed Art Museum was excellent fun!"*

Catherine Sloman, Kitchen Confidence/Bread Ahead (London)

"What a life-affirming experience! I left Conference inspired, energised, and with a renewed sense of purpose to support and encourage more women in our industry, and most of all, I left with a huge smile on my face. What brilliant women we have in LDEI, and it is a joy to be part of it. I gained so much professionally and personally from the Conference experience—hearing from inspirational speakers, a packed programme with a huge dash of Southern hospitality and maybe just a little drop of bourbon here and there! Thank you from one inspired London Dame."

Kate Howell, Borough Market (London)

"I was so impressed with the hospitality at the LDEI Conference. Although I wasn't surprised given that we are all professionals in the culinary, beverage, hospitality, and "care-giving" industries. Years ago, I was a professional event planner and had been contracted to organize and run a big conference in Louisville. It was so nice to be back and "not be in charge." The Kentucky Chapter, the event organizers, the sponsors, and all hands on deck really pulled off a quality program in my opinion. It was interesting to sit in the business meeting and get a glimpse of the inner workings and logistics. No organization is perfect, but I feel like LDEI is a top-notch organization of integrity and transparency. As a first-timer, I left feeling like it was time and money well spent. I connected with some great Dames and look forward to that connection and camaraderie at future events and Conferences."

René Sackett, S.O.L. Food (St. Louis)

TEMPLE GRANDIN, PhD: A DIFFERENT WAY OF THINKING

By HELEN MITTERNIGHT (CHARLESTON)

With all of the smart people at NASA, no one noticed the raccoon! It wasn't until Temple Grandin pointed out the critter wandering down the base of the launching pad, where it was free to chew essential wiring, that the potential danger to astronauts was removed. The way Temple herself is wired is the reason she saw the raccoon, and in the keynote speech at the LDEI Kentucky Conference, she pointed out the importance of valuing those who think differently.



Temple Grandin has autism and is a professor of animal science at Colorado State University and the subject of an HBO movie starring Claire Danes. She didn't talk until she was three years old, but grew to become an author of books and more than 60 scientific papers, and a speaker on both autism and animal behavior. Her book on autism is credited with explaining what the world looks and feels like to someone with the disorder, an unprecedented "inside narrative" of autism.

Temple's unique way of looking at the world led her to invent a better and more humane way to lead cattle to the stunning that precedes slaughter. The Center Track Conveyor Restrainer, a "hug machine" that eliminates shadows and other things like noises that frighten cows, results in less stress and injury to the cattle. The hug machine became an industry standard and is used by suppliers to McDonald's and Wendy's.

"People said I was stupid," Temple said, recalling the fact that school was a miserable experience since she couldn't process information the way the other students did. "How would I graduate from high school today? I can't do abstract math like algebra."

Anyone listening to Temple speak at the keynote would never call her stupid, but people who can't conform to the standard way information is delivered, often are dismissed, she noted. She argued that even in the restaurant and hospitality industry, there should be room for the people who think differently, and people should be looked at for their possibilities and not their diagnoses. Autism, she explained, covers a spectrum that ranges from geniuses to those who are unable to dress themselves.

Temple said that there are three types of thinkers as well as some who combine different traits. The visualizers, such as Temple, see the world in pictures. Spatial visualizers see the world in patterns and make wonderful engineers, chemists, mathematicians, or musicians. And the verbalizers make great writers, marketers, and politicians.

"In the world, and in restaurants, you need people who think in all kinds of ways. You need the people who can build and fix things," she said, adding that many times those people are the ones dismissed. "I'm worried that the people we need to build things are in the basement playing video games and labeled stupid."

There are things that restaurants and schools can do to make those who process the world differently more comfortable. "Get rid of LED lights that flicker, and don't burden us with long written instructions," Temple advised. "Maybe in a restaurant they don't get a list of verbal commands, but maybe a visual checklist will work for them."

The most important thing is to recognize the benefits of different thinkers rather than stigmatizing them. They might be the ones to see the elephant—or the raccoon—in the room.

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croyston@globalgourmands.com



THE LEGACY AWARDS LUNCHEON

BY TERESA FARNEY (COLORADO)

The co-chairs of the 2023 Legacy Awards committee were Charleston Dames **Belinda Smith-Sullivan** and **Helen Mitternacht**. According to Belinda, “This year we had a record 37 submissions—all from very qualified candidates—for the six Legacy experiences. It was a very difficult decision, but the Legacy Committee members collaborated to identify and bring us these exceptional women.” Dame Helen remarked, “It was humbling to see how these awards can really transform the Legacy winners’ lives.”

During the program, the six award winners were seated on the stage in a talk-show format. Helen conducted thoughtful interviews with the winners to learn what the awards meant to them.

Afterwards, Chicago Dame **Julie Chernoff**, incoming chair, summed up the winners’ remarks saying the following:

- “It gave me a sense of purpose.”
- “I felt seen. I felt understood.”
- “Every job is important.”
- “Stop thinking small.”
- “I was pushed to think.”
- “We are building a legacy.”

“We’ve just heard pearls of wisdom from these six amazing women and they are the future of our industry. The future of Les Dames.” Julie added, “It gives me such hope. I am in awe of them and that’s why I’m standing up here—again!—because I wholeheartedly believe in the LDEI Legacy Awards.”

Julie was inspired to join the Legacy Award committee at a previous Legacy Awards Luncheon. She offered to organize and host a Legacy Awards experience with the Chicago Chapter.

“Next thing I knew, I was on the committee,” she said. “And then I was Legacy Awards Chair in 2020.” She gave an invitation to the luncheon attendees to join the committee as her co-chair for 2024 saying, “In LDEI, we lift each other up. I’ll do the heavy lifting this year, but this is an experience to be shared, and as we all know, it takes a village.”

Her invitation was welcomed with open arms from members. “I must be more persuasive than I realize,” she said in an interview later. “By the time I sat down after my brief speech closing out the Legacy Luncheon, I had a text from **Beth Pav** (who declined earlier) saying, ‘She had reconsidered and was willing to co-chair this year and stay on to co-chair with the next volunteer in 2025.’”

After the luncheon, Julie was approached by 10 people who have now newly joined the committee’s ranks, and four chapters that were interested in hosting a 2024 Legacy Experience. “I always say, ‘Don’t ask, don’t get!’” she concluded.

Photo 1, L-R: Legacy Co-Chair Helen Mitternacht; 2023 winners Emma Cromedy, Shari Shob, Grace Aguilar, Cassandra Loftlin, Tara Meineke, Megan Sigurdson; and Legacy Co-Chair Belinda Smith-Sullivan. Read about the 2024 Legacy Experience hosts in the April issue of LDEI’s new publication, the feast. Photo 2, L-R: On behalf of YETI, Dame LeignAnn Bakunas presents a check to Woman of Purpose winner Dame Nina Furstenau—a day prior to the award dinner. —S. Slack



MAHALO NUI LOA— A HEARTFELT THANK YOU FROM HAWAI’I

BY CLARE BOBO (HAWAII)



The Hawai’i Dames are overwhelmed with gratitude for the response from Dames and their chapters from all over the country. Chapters from Washington, D.C., Nashville, San Diego, New York, Boston, Seattle, Chicago, Dallas, and Birmingham all sent donations to our Maui Relief Fund. Many other chapters held fundraisers and countless individual Dames sent donations to us—too many to list! The beautiful part of this is that many of these donations came in within days of the disaster in Lahaina.

We felt so blessed, so *seen*. We live out here in the middle of the Pacific. We are accustomed to taking care of our own, supporting each other, being self-sufficient. So to have Dames respond so immediately was unexpected and incredibly comforting.

We have used these donations to send big checks to three women-led restaurants that were destroyed in the Lahaina fire. Many of them lost their homes, as well as their businesses, and set up GoFundMe accounts to support their staff members. They also found ways to continue cooking for their community in spite of their own devastating losses. We also donated a substantial amount to Dame **Lee Anderson’s** Sugar Beach Events. Chef Lee opened up her kitchen immediately to feed Lahaina victims and first responders as well as distribute toiletries, clothing, groceries and so much more. Sugar Beach is near Lahaina but untouched by the fires. However, Lee has lost over \$1 million in revenue with cancelled weddings and events. She continued to pay her staff while they volunteered to feed the many in need. She is such a blessing to her Maui community. We also donated a large amount to the Maui Farm Bureau, a 501(c)(3), to support farmers that donated crops, lost their biggest customers, and sustained fire damage.

The recovery for Maui will be long. We are committed to continuing our support for our Maui neighbors and have created a Ho’omau Maui Gift Box. *Ho’omau* means to persevere, to continue, to be constant and steady. Our gift boxes contain seven products from Maui makers who have suffered with the reduction of tourism. It features women-led businesses, and this gift box supports our Maui Relief Fund in two ways. We purchased the products from these businesses, and proceeds from the gift box sales will go back into our Maui Relief Fund. This will enable us to create future gift boxes and send funds to women-led businesses that are in great need. Please consider sending aloha to your loved ones by purchasing our Ho’omau Maui gift boxes. Here’s the link: www.ldeihawaii.org/hoomau-maui-gift-box/

Mahalo nui loa to all our Dames for your support and aloha. And please come visit Maui! While Lahaina has been destroyed, it is a small area on this beautiful island. There are many wonderful areas and beaches that rely on tourism to support Maui families. Just come gently. People are in recovery so be gentle and patient, and don’t ask personal questions. They need time and they need our aloha as they heal. Mahalo with all our hearts for your support and aloha. This makes us all so proud to be members of this organization.



THE FLAVORS OF DERBY



By JULIE CHERNOFF (CHICAGO)

Friday evening of the Louisville Conference found the Dames loading onto tour buses on our way to the weekend's signature event, Flavors of Derby, at the Speed Art Museum on the University of Louisville campus. In keeping with the Derby theme, many Dames sported plumed, netted, and bedazzled chapeaus and fascinators to accent their party wear. And the Dames, as always, came to party!

And what a fête! We arrived to beautiful cocktails and a full bar sponsored by the Brown-Forman beverage line, a Kentucky institution for more than 150 years. For those who wanted to focus on fine bourbon, Woodford Reserve was there for the tasting, and we sampled some local Kentucky nibbles as we assembled in the spectacular, light-filled entrance hall to the museum.

This truly memorable, only-in-Louisville experience was kicked off with the traditional Call to Post by Steve Buttleman, official bugler of Churchill Downs, The Kentucky Derby, and Keeneland. He stood on the grand staircase and sounded the call. Then it was truly off to the races as the Bountiful Bluegrass food stations opened for business, all hosted by some of Kentucky's great women chefs featuring plenty of local specialties and purveyors. Guests enjoyed:

- U Duck confit-enriched French Hot Brown from Dame **Stacy Duncan** of Brasserie Provence;
- U Tomato Soup with Dill Benedictine from Chef Ellen Gill of Gill on the Go;
- U Honey Cornbread with Cracklings and Kentucky Jam Cake with Honey Caramel from Chef Janine Washle of K's Café & Catering;
- U Red Rice Hoppin' John with Pulled Pork from Dame **Ouita Michel** of Holly Hill & Company;
- U Pimento Cheese Pie Bites and Kentucky Pie Bites with Chocolate, Bourbon, & Pecans from Dame **Brie Gollither** of The Pie Queen of BG;
- U Ultimate S'mores Dessert from Dame **Adrienne Cole** of The House of Marigold;
- U Grilled All-Beef Italian Meatballs in Bourbon Sauce from Dame **Paula Hunter** of The Black Italian;
- U Freedom Run Lamb, Capriole Chevre, and Benedictine Flatbread from Dame **Katie Payne** of Sullivan University;
- U Bourbon Barrel Smoked Pork Loin with Bourbon Sorghum Glaze from Dame **Emily Heyde** of Fork & Barrel;
- U Tuna Poke from Dame **Kelley Miracle** of Atria Senior Living (and Louisville Conference co-chair!); and
- U Scrumptious Lime Mint Sorbetto and bespoke Kentucky gelato flavors, such as Bourbon Ball and Raspberry Rose, from Dame **Kristen Gilbert's** Gelato Gilberto.

As if the Derby-focused food and beverage weren't enough, the Kentucky Dames had still more up their sleeves, including wagering lessons with Drew Deemer of ESPN Louisville; an insanely creative hat boutique from Veronica Stivers of Big Day Hat Design—who offered up a Derby hat lottery won by Atlanta Dame **Gena Berry**; and twangy bluegrass music provided by the talented Hickory Vaught & Friends Bluegrass Band.

But wait—there's still more! The Speed Art Museum was open for an hour during the party so that Dames and their guests could wander amongst the thought-provoking exhibits, including artist Amy Sherald's ephemeral portrait of Breonna Taylor and evocative items from their permanent collection. Afterward, Dames had a "shopportunity" for keepsakes in the museum's gift shop. As guests left the party, the Kentucky Dames presented each guest with a gift bag and a snack box of hot Kentucky Fried Chicken. Our hats are off to the Kentucky Dames for this very special evening, and for giving us the full Derby experience—even if it was in October!





HATS OFF TO THE DAMES!

It's not just a horse race—the Kentucky Derby is also a social event steeped in long-standing traditions such as wearing elaborate, stylish hats. The fashion-related symbolism of hats goes back to the earliest racing traditions in Paris and England's Epsom Downs, the predecessor of the Kentucky race. Before founding Churchill Downs, Meriwether Lewis Clark Jr. and his wife Mary visited England's Epsom Downs and were impressed with the well-dressed spectators. Mary became an early fashion influencer, motivating Kentuckians to “dress to the nines” for race day and post-race social events.

At the Speed Art Museum, **Catherine Sloman** (London) wore an innovative hat of simple elegance created from tilapia fish-skin leather. She says, “It was designed and made by my London-based friend, Jane Fryers.” Called a “couture upcycler,” Jane's hat tricks include recycling unwearable clothes and other materials into fashionable chapeaus. The award-winning milliner was once asked by Queen Elizabeth 11 whether the fish leather smelled fishy. Jane happily informed her that once the skin was tanned, there was no smell. Her hats have been displayed at Fortnum & Mason and appear in magazines and films.

Fascinators, beloved by British and American racing fans, are smaller and meant to accessorize outfits like earrings or a handbag. U.S. milliner Laura Whitlock calls them “the gateway drug of hat-wearing.” **Kate Howell** (London) says, “Fascinators are essentially decorative headpieces and cannot stand on the wearer's head on their own



L-R: Catherine Sloman (London) wore a colorful hat with flowers created from soft, supple tilapia leather. London Dame Kate Howell wears a fascinator, a small, eye-catching headpiece worn at a jaunty angle. Photos: S. Slack.

like hats. Generally, they need to be attached with a clip, a headband, or a comb. Simply put, fascinators don't have a brim or a crown like a hat— whichever you choose, enjoy the elegance and style your headwear gives you!”

Derby hats are not only an accessory. They're a statement and part of the traditional dress code, inspiring women (and men) to showcase their individual styles. (At England's Royal Ascot, top hats for the men and hats for the ladies are *de rigueur* in the royal enclosure; fascinators aren't allowed.)

It's all about having plenty of “hat-itude.” Dames exhibited it in spades during the “parade of hats” event at the museum! The late Lilly Daché, milliner to the stars, remarked, “A hat is an expression of a woman's soul. It is something that she wears on her head, but it belongs to her heart...” —Susan F. Slack.

TONI TIPTON-MARTIN DELIVERS BREAKFAST KEYNOTE SPEECH

By Robin Griffith (Charleston)

Dame **Toni Tipton-Martin** was the keynote speaker on Saturday morning during the LDEI Conference. Toni is an award-winning food and nutrition journalist who uses cultural heritage and cooking for social change. She is the cofounder the Southern Foodways Alliance and is currently the editor-in-chief of *Cook's Country* magazine and television show. The author of several best-selling cookbooks, she is the recipient of the Julia Child Foundation Award and a three-time James Beard Book Award winner. Above all, Toni is one of the most sincere and sweetest LDEI sisters you'll ever meet.



Toni began by sharing a very personal, cataclysmic event that changed the trajectory of her life and career. It was the story of how her father, Charles Hamilton, was in a major car accident on June 14, 1995, and was taken to MLK, Jr. Drew/Medical Center in Los Angeles. The negligent care her father received at the hospital led up to him passing away hours later, not from the injuries he sustained from the accident, but from gross medical neglect administered by physicians and staff. She was told casually in the hall by a nurse that her father, “had died.” Toni, who was also six months pregnant at the time, was devastated by this news and literally felt her world being pulled out from under her. Not knowing what to do next, she turned to her passion, journalism.

First, Toni focused on uncovering what had happened to her father. She learned that the surgeon—who performed what he deemed a life-saving surgery—was inexperienced. Her detailed reporting of the failures of the facility, which had the nickname, “Killer King” hospital, landed her story on 60 Minutes when Mike Wallace did a report on Black Medicine. The hospital was eventually closed and rebuilt into a state-of-the-art medical facility.

Toni's focus and drive led her to discover her passion, which is writing about Black cooks. She would tell the story of how using their gardens and home recipes (often passed down for generations) they would create amazing meals in their kitchens. Her writing journey would lead her to become a self-taught scholar. However, the most profound skill she developed was an ability to hear the voices and feel the presence of long-departed cooks who once stood in the kitchens she entered. She became attuned to their energy and spirit, allowing her to be their voice and tell their stories accurately.

Toni taught herself how to write grants and to create a nonprofit. One grant created a program in her name that would provide resources to writers in our industry so they could be heard. Specifically, it was to teach the skills that would help women to no longer feel marginalized. Yes—you are smart enough, pretty enough, and slim enough! It was at this time Edna Lewis reached out to her after hearing about her work. Toni shared the details of her Library Project; what started off as a passion for historical and cultural recipes and stories, quickly became a first-of-a-kind, culinary reference library with over 450 books—the oldest one being from 1827.

Toni made it a point to share the tips and skills she learned throughout her career. It's important to go back to your community and develop mentorships with your elders to hear their stories and get their recipes. She noted that often, these are mutual mentorships benefiting both mentee and mentor.

She also shared that she was on the advisory committee for the 10th Anniversary Report of Oldways' ground-breaking program, A Taste of African Heritage. The report notes that African Americans around the country began reclaiming their health using the wisdom of their ancestors through this successful, six-week cooking and nutrition program. The committee, all experts in African diasporic health and history, developed the African Heritage Diet Pyramid.

One of the Toni Tipton-Martin Foundation's next projects will be to make culinary picture books, to include children's books. Toni closed her keynote address by sharing a simple yet profound concept: “put the mask on yourself first.” This phrase is a powerful metaphor for life itself. It emphasizes the importance of taking care of yourself before you can effectively care for others. In a world filled with responsibilities, stress, and demands, it's a fundamental aspect of being able to give your best.





2023 M.F.K. FISHER PRIZE LUNCHEON



M.F.K. Fisher Prize Co-Chair Carol Haddix

Les Dames d'Escoffier International's M.F.K. Fisher Prize recognizes excellent works by women in any format of media that broaden understanding of the diversity and depth of the intersection of food and culture. The media format includes print, digital and broadcast (comprising television, radio, podcast, and video.)

After a lovely luncheon that featured Spiritless Mocktails, Kerrygold cheeses, wines from The Wine Group, Kentucky's Own Burgoo Stew, and Berry-Berry Cobbler, the award recipients (who could not attend) and their works of distinction were introduced by M.F.K. Fisher Prize Co-Chair Carol Mighton Haddix. The top three winners are:

FIRST PRIZE:

Kiki Aranita

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.

"KiKi Aranita's winning entry was chosen by the M.F.K. Fisher Prize judges before wildfires decimated parts of Maui. Her composition on the history of Hawaii's local food includes an important look at Hawaii's sometimes difficult history."



SECOND PRIZE:

Rachel Levin

Submission: "The Hunt"

Publication: Bon Appétit.

"Rachel Levin's winning submission is an insightful look at sustainable hunting, detailing her personal, transformative experience."



THIRD PRIZE:

Cynthia Greenlee

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

Publication: Issues in Science and Technology

"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."



The entries were judged by a panel of distinguished and diverse independent experts in food, culture, and media: Moni Basu, award-winning journalist and director of the MFA in Narrative Nonfiction at the University of Georgia; Sara Moulton, chef, cookbook author, and television personality; and Andrea Weigl, food writer, author, and television producer.

The 2023 M.F.K. Fisher Prize Committee also included Co-Chair **JeanMarie Brownson**, (who couldn't be present), **Sheana Davis**, **Christine Burns Rudalevige**, and **Melissa Hall**.

M.F.K. FISHER—THE GRANDE DAME OF FOOD WRITERS

M.F.K. (Mary Francis Kennedy) Fisher (1908-1992) is an icon in the gastronomic world and widely regarded as "the mother of American food writing." Her eloquent prose, witty reflections, and vivid style have inspired generations of readers, writers, and cooks. During M.F.K.'s travels, she wrote thought-provoking essays with observations that provided deeper insight into the cultural significance and rich traditions of global foodways and conviviality at the table.

Before the formation of LDEI, the New York Chapter (LDE) bestowed the honorary title of Grande Dame upon M.F.K. Fisher in 1978. During LDEI's 1990 Annual Meeting in San Francisco, Dame **Jerry DiVecchio**, founding president of the San Francisco Chapter, proposed the idea of establishing a "national scholarship" honoring M.F.K. Fisher. Jerry and Dame **Antonia Allegra** (San Francisco) soon met with M.F.K.; in 1991, the Arts of the Table Scholarship Award was approved at the Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. It was first presented at the 1992 Annual Meeting in Seattle.

Dame **Katherine Newell-Smith** notes, "The M.F.K. Fisher Award previously gave recognition and a monetary reward to a non-member woman in mid-career who was engaged in significant work in those same fields. However, in 2006, the nature of the award was changed to reflect M.F.K. Fisher's own realm of excellence: writing." —Susan Slack (Charleston).



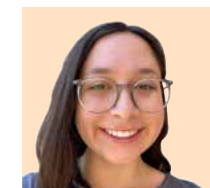
THE 2023 SCHOLARSHIPS FOR IMPACTFUL CHANGE

LDEI & The Wine Group Support Aspiring Women Leaders

The four winners of the inaugural Scholarships for Impactful Change were recognized during the M.F.K. Fisher Prize Luncheon during Conference. Dame **Amy Hoopes** (San Francisco) and **Nicole Quandt** (Sonoma) from The Wine Group were present to laud the four winners, who couldn't attend: Lani Furbank, CIA Greystone (Sustainable Food Systems); Samantha Maldonado, University of Michigan (Environment and Sustainability); Cecilia Picoaga, Pontificia Universidad de Católica de Perú (Sustainability); Donna Smith, Texas Tech University (Nutrition).

In a partnership, LDEI and The Wine Group (TWG), a global leader in the wine industry, award scholarships to women (not just Dames) currently pursuing their degrees at accredited schools and institutions in the following areas: culinary or pastry arts education; food systems or agriculture/farming; hospitality management; dietetics and/or nutrition; or in the beverage industries. The scholarships recognize the inherent need for diverse leadership to spearhead and create impactful change in nonprofits and NGOs by using the recipient's talents to educate, advocate, and activate.

In addition to their leadership skills, the four winners have demonstrated a passion for social justice/ social services and positive change. Scholarships for Impactful Change provided \$5,000 in scholarship funding to each winner.



Samantha "Sami" MALDONADO



Lani FURBANK



Donna SMITH



Cecilia PICOAGA



“If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.”— Henry Ford

The 2023 M.F.K. Fisher Prize/Partner Showcase Luncheon was an opportunity to recognize LDEI's new winners and to show appreciation to our valued Partners, who were showcased in video presentations during the event. As you will note in the following Partner bios (and throughout the issue), they provided products, services, and donations throughout the Kentucky Conference and at events during the year. Partners also helped with the sponsorship of awards programs, such as Woman of Purpose (page 40) and Scholarships for Impactful Change (page 27), which creates awareness for women in the culinary fields. Our partnerships are built upon mutual respect, collaboration, communication, and camaraderie. They are the cornerstone of LDEI's success, helping to further the development of women in food, fine beverage, and hospitality. We thank all of our Partners for your commitment in helping LDEI achieve its goals. In turn, it's equally important to embrace and support our partners throughout this year. Reach out to their representatives and invite them to participate on a chapter level. Visit their websites for fascinating, in-depth information about their products, their commitment to sustainability, and about their contributions to local and global communities.—Susan F. Slack.



YETI

YETI

YETI is a rapidly growing designer, marketer, retailer, and distributor of a variety of innovative, branded, premium products to a wide-ranging customer base. The brand's promise is to ensure that each YETI product delivers exceptional performance and durability in any environment, whether in the kitchen, on the road, or anywhere else life takes you. Each lucky Conference attendee received a customized YETI Rambler® 35 ounce Mug with Straw Lid. Designed for cold beverages, the mugs are crafted with 18/8 gauge stainless steel and double-wall vacuum insulation. LDEI partnered with YETI to create the Woman of Purpose Award (page 40). At Conference, the winner was awarded a monetary prize by YETI's Senior Marketing Manager **LeighAnn Bakunas** (Austin); she also received a special collection of YETI products.

www.YETI.com



THE WINE GROUP

THE WINE GROUP

The Wine Group is a global leader in the wine industry with over 60 of your favorites brands including Cupcake, Imagery, Tribute, Chloe, and Franzia. Conference attendees enjoyed a variety of wine selections at the Opening Reception. California wines (2021) were served during the M.F.K. Fisher Prize Luncheon/Partner Showcase: Imagery Sauvignon Blanc, Tribute Pinot Noir, and Benziger Family Winery Merlot. Representatives from The Wine Group were **Amy Hoopes**, Chief Revenue Officer; Helen Kurtz (top), Chief Marketing Officer; and **Nichole Quandt**, Senior Director of Sales and Hospitality for Benziger, Imagery, & Concannon Wineries. LDEI partnered with The Wine Group to sponsor the inaugural Scholarship for Impactful Change (page 27). Jennifer Goldman, LDEI Past President said, “We are pleased to partner with The Wine Group to nurture the next generation of women leading meaningful change in their communities.

www.thewinegroup.com



WENTE

VINEYARDS

WENTE FAMILY ESTATES

Wente Vineyards is the country's oldest continuously-operated, family-owned winery in the country. The winery maintains its leadership role in California winegrowing under the ownership and management of the fourth and fifth generations of the Wente family. Wente Family Estates is the national and international sales and marketing organization representing Wente Vineyards, Double Decker, Murrieta's Well, and Hayes Ranch wineries. Wines served at the Legacy Awards Luncheon were: Murrieta's Well Sauvignon Blanc; Wente Vineyards 2022 Riva Ranch Vineyard Chardonnay; and Wente Angels Ink 2021 Pinot Noir. Wines at the Woman of Purpose Reception were: 2022 Louis Mel Sauvignon Blanc; 2022 Riva Ranch Vineyard Chardonnay; and 2021 Riva Ranch Pinot Noir. Wines poured during the dinner were: 2022 Niki's Rosé; 2018 Artist Series Serenity; and 2020 Wetmore Cabernet Sauvignon. Wente was represented by Misty Desai, Senior Brand Manager Innovation. CEO **Carolyn Wente** is LDEI's 2020 Grande Dame.

www.wentefamilyestates.com
www.wentevineyards.com



Kerrygold

ORNUA FOODS NORTH AMERICA (Kerrygold)

Ornua Foods is Ireland's largest exporter of dairy products. Ornua Foods North America serves American, Canadian, and Latin American markets. The name derives from the Gaelic "Ór Nua," or "new gold." Ornua's Kerrygold butter and cheese are produced from the rich-tasting milk of cows nurtured on small, family-run dairy farms. With the luck of the Irish, the cows graze contentedly in lush, green pastures nearly year round; the Emerald Isle has one of the longest grass-growing seasons in the world. The butter's natural golden color is derived from the milk's high beta-carotene levels from the fresh grass. Kerrygold provided delectable Irish cheeses, butter, and breakfast blends for Conference breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. The Opening Reception and M.F.K. Fisher Prize Luncheon/Partner Showcase featured selections of Aged Cheddar, Dubliner, Cashel Blue, Blarney Castle, and Skellig cheeses paired with fresh and dried fruits, nuts, sliced baguettes and butter. (salad photo: Kerrygold)

www.kerrygoldusa.com



Tito's

Handmade VODKA

TITO'S HANDMADE VODKA

Tito's Handmade Vodka—America's Original Craft Vodka—is distilled and bottled in Austin, Texas, by Fifth Generation Inc. In 1997, Bert “Tito” Beveridge, now a 50-something geophysicist, obtained the first legal permit to distill in Texas and created Tito's Handmade Vodka. Tito's distills its gluten-free, corn-based vodka using old-fashioned pot stills. The process is similar to those used in making fine single malt scotches and high-end French cognacs. Tito served the Oaks Lily Cocktail during the Opening Reception and cocktails during the Woman of Purpose Reception and Dinner. The pink-colored Oaks Lily is the refreshing, signature drink of the Longines Kentucky Oaks, a race for the fillies. The Oaks official flower is pink stargazer lilies. Visit Tito's website for inspiration and an abundance of creative cocktail recipes and infusions made with fruits, vegetables, flowers, nuts, and even candy. (Photos: Tito's)

www.titosvodka.com



steelite

INTERNATIONAL

STEELITE INTERNATIONAL U.S.A., INC.

Steelite International is a world-leading manufacturer and supplier of award-winning tabletop and buffet solutions for the global hospitality industry. Dual headquarters are in Pennsylvania and Stoke-On-Trent, England's pottery district, where the core range of Steelite's chinaware is manufactured. The company has a history of nearly 150 years. Influenced by hand-crafted country ware and hand-applied Japanese glazes and textures, Steelite launched Craft tableware 10 years ago, changing the global tablescape by inspiring chefs to replace their whiteware. Winner of a 2019 Green Apple Award for Environmental Best Practices, the company continues to enhance and expand its tableware portfolio, which is available to the home market exclusively through TableTopStyle. Steelite partnered with LDEI in 2023 for Table Talks with Les Dames. (Photos: Steelite)

www.us.steelite.com



SPIRITLESS

SPIRITLESS

Founded in 2019, Spiritless is a distilled, full-of-flavor, non-alcoholic brand. Kentucky 74 was crafted for everyone's favorite bourbon cocktails, while the most recent addition, Jalisco 55, is the perfect replacement for tequila. A unique reverse distillation process gives the flexibility to go completely spirit-free or to lower the ABV (alcohol by volume) by enjoying your favorite cocktails with half Spiritless and half full-proof spirit. Spiritless is woman-owned along with being vegan, gluten-free, non-GMO, and keto friendly with 0.5 percent ABV. Spiritless supports conscientious cocktailers—those who want to live fully but shake, stir, sip, and celebrate differently. Products served at the Opening Session and M.F.K. Fisher Prize Luncheon/Partner Showcase include Spiritless Whiskey Sours, Old Fashioneds, and Margaritas (Pre-Mixed Pour Over Cocktail Cans). Simply pop the can, pour over ice, and enjoy!

www.spiritless.com

ÖRA KING

ÖRA KING

The New Zealand King Salmon Co. Ltd has been perfecting sustainable husbandry practices and breeding expertise for a quarter of a century. Their classical breeding program has produced nine generations of King salmon, creating over 100 distinct salmon families; only the very finest examples are carried forward to the next generation. Through this program, a unique breed has been created called Öra King that is genetically distinct from any other king salmon found in the world. Only the highest quality salmon are hand selected by a master grader and branded Öra King. Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch gives Öra King its top rating for sustainability. "Öra King is to salmon as Wagyu is to beef." Öra King salmon was the featured entrée at the Legacy Awards Luncheon during the Kentucky Conference. (Salmon fillet photo: Öra King)

www.orakingsalmon.co.nz

SOPEXA

SOPEXA USA

Sopexa is an international food & beverage communication agency that has embodied the "think global, act local" adage for over 60 years. Sopexa continues moving forward to get a jump on the latest innovations, understanding the hottest trends, and working hand-in-hand with clients to develop creative, impactful strategies. Located in 24 countries, Sopexa has the ability to work all around the globe. From influencer and digital strategies, PR events, branding, and shopper marketing, Sopexa works with its clients to meet every challenge. In 2022, Sopexa generously provided financial support for the New York Conference. (Photo: Sopexa)

www.sopexa.com

NIMAN RANCH

NIMAN RANCH

Niman Ranch is a community of more than 700 independent family farmers and ranchers who raise pork, beef, and lamb traditionally, humanely, and sustainably to deliver the finest tasting meat in the world. Niman Ranch is the largest farmer and rancher network in North America to be Certified Humane®. The protein of choice for America's most celebrated chefs, Niman Ranch meat is also the premier option for discerning home cooks. The company's Raised with Care® practices mean the animals live a comfortable, stress-free life. Their natural diet consists of 100 percent vegetarian feed with no added hormones or antibiotics—ever! Strict Animal Welfare Protocols have been developed with the help of animal welfare expert Dr. Temple Grandin; they are among the strictest in the industry. Niman Ranch has provided delicious charcuterie and meats for numerous LDEI Conference menus. (Ham photo: Niman Ranch)

www.nimanranch.com



PLATE

Plate magazine engages chefs in all segments at the highest level and inspires them to explore their creativity. Driven by an insatiable curiosity and passion for food, Plate loves the challenge and excitement of taking food further and uncovering the most exciting food and drink ideas in the most interesting kitchens in the country. By sharing these ideas with their readers, they are stimulating creativity and menu innovation. The current (January/February) issue examines the roles that friends and family play in hospitality and the different ways they can shape restaurants.

www.plateonline.com



BUFFALO TRACE DISTILLERY

"Honoring tradition; Embracing Change." Buffalo Trace Distillery, designated as a National Historic Landmark, has been making award-winning bourbon whiskey the same way for over 200 years. The distillery is located on the banks of the Kentucky River, where early American pioneers and explorers followed the paths of ancient buffalo through the wilderness to new frontiers. Throughout prohibition, the distillery had permits to produce and bottle "medicinal" whiskey. In a tribute to the mighty buffalo and the rugged, independent spirit of the pioneers who followed them, Buffalo Trace Distillery created their signature Buffalo Trace Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey. The distillery has provided their fine bourbon whiskey for events at several LDEI Conferences. (Distillery photo: Buffalo Trace Distillery)

www.buffalotracdistillery.com



Piro.

OLIO PIRO

Brother and sister Romain and Dame Marie-Charlotte Piro (South Florida) are proudly bringing to foodies worldwide an award-winning, extra-virgin olive oil from the Maremma region of Southern Tuscany. Developed in cooperation with the Italian *Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche* and master miller Daniele Lepori, Olio Piro launched in 2018 and has been showered with accolades ever since. Complex and balanced, with floral aromas, herbaceous flavors, and a distinctive peppery finish, a drizzle of ultra-premium Olio Piro will take your dishes to the next level. Marie-Charlotte is the worldwide ambassador for Olio Piro. During the Partner's Showcase luncheon at the 2022 New York Conference, Marie-Charlotte provided olive oil for each table; in addition, each luncheon guest took home a bottle.

www.olio-piro.com



INFORMA CONNECT

The Restaurant & Food Group by Informa Connect is the leading business-to-business integrated media group connecting products, solutions, and thought leadership with the largest, most engaged and highly-qualified audience in the foodservice and grocery industries. (Photo: Informa Connect)

www.nrn.com

SESSION 1

FINANCING YOUR DREAM: EXPLORING UNIQUE FUNDING MODELS

Financing is a vitally important aspect to consider when embarking on an entrepreneurial journey. In this session, an expert panel presented the attendees with unique funding models and alternative approaches for financing their professional dreams.

The panel included Dame **Kristen Gilbert**, owner, Gilberto Gelato; Marianne Eaves, founder, Forbidden Bourbon & Eaves Blind; Cat MacDowall, founder, Naive & Nostalgic; Rachel Miller, owner, Star Hill Provisions, Harrison Smith House, Mr. Tubs; and Melina Patterson, vice president, Patterson & Company CPAs. The moderator was Kentucky Conference Co-Chair **Nicole Stipp**, the co-owner of Matson & Gilman and Trouble Bar.

Innovative methods of financing include crowdfunding and angel investing. The panel offered ways in which these models can help business owners acquire needed capital to turn their ideas into reality.

Crowdfunding enables anyone with an idea to seek funding from the public. There are various types of crowdfunding, depending on the type of business, the potential return for backers, and personal goals. Each one caters to different needs and has its set of advantages and challenges. Crowdfunding has created the opportunity for entrepreneurs to raise large sums of money from anyone willing to invest. Angel investors (venture capitalists) are wealthy, private investors focused on financing small business ventures in exchange for equity.

Panelist Kristen Gilbert, who has a PhD in Art History, discussed funding challenges. “You need to be creative and resilient to keep your business going, and failing is just part of learning.” In speaking about her business, Gilberto Gelato, she shared, “We have relied on traditional bank loans, investors, Square loan products, and we even appeared on Jeopardy as ways to keep our business going. If it were easy, everyone would do it!”



Financing Your Dream panel, L-R: Kristen Gilbert, Marianne Eaves, Cat MacDowall, Rachel Miller, Melina Patterson, and Nicole Stipp, moderator.



Session 1 panel, L-R: Moderator Penryn Craig, Brandi Johnson, Katie Harvey, Dame Lisa Windhorst, and Dame Stacy Duncan.

SESSION 2

SOURCING LOCALLY: CREATING SUSTAINABLE VENDOR RELATIONSHIPS

BY STACY ZEIGLER (ATLANTA)

Dame **Penryn Craig** was our moderator, and we had a very lively conversation on getting the wonderful food from our farmers into the consumer's hands. The panel consisted of Dame **Stacy Duncan**, co-owner Brasserie Provence; Dame **Lisa Windhorst**, Farmer and co-owner Spade and Table Farm; Katie Harvey, Workplace Wellness CSA Program; and Brandi Button-Johnson, WKY Value chain coordinator.



We learned that Kentucky has 76,000 individual farms that utilize 50 percent of all the land in the state. Currently, only 200 are Certified Organic, but the good news is that 3,000 others are in talks, so the future is bright! The key takeaways were utilizing our Dame contacts to make introductions, dropping off samples at restaurants for chefs to sample, and selling CSAs to employers for them to provide as an employee benefit in their wellness programs. Universities are a great place to start when rolling out this program. There are also grant programs in Kentucky, and other states may have something similar. Kentucky has a Buy Local grant that pays back up to 15 percent with an \$8000 cap if you buy local. It's worth looking into for your own home state!

We also talked about the role Covid played in supply and demand. Small farms sold 80 percent of what they grew to restaurants and caterers pre-Covid. During Covid, they had to move to farmers markets to sell. Although it is more work, the farmers do like the chance to interact with the buyers directly. As an audience, we emphasized to the farmers, don't sell yourself short. You have a product that people want and are willing to pay for.

We also spent a little time discussing regenerative farming. If we keep farming conventionally, we only have 50–60 years of topsoil left. Organic Association of Kentucky received a grant to start paying farmers to use regenerative processes. Soil health is so important, no tilling and not using chemicals and pesticides translates very directly to how healthy your plants are. This then translates to how tasty and healthy the products are when they get to the end consumer.

The parting words: Collaboration, Resiliency, and Redundancy. How will we meet the demand now that we have created the knowledge.

SESSION 3

HOW TO PUT IT OUT THERE

BY IRENE MOORE
(SOUTH FLORIDA)

This dynamic discussion focused on using PR and Marketing techniques to share your story and promote yourself in today's competitive market. Samples of Atrium Beer and Dark & Bloody Bourbon Mary cocktails—made with Buzzard's Roost Rye Whiskey—created even livelier discussions. The Bourbon Mary recipe is from *The Kentucky Bourbon Cocktail Book* by Joy Perrin and Dame **Susan Reigler**.



MODERATOR:

The moderator was Dr. Kimberly Miracle, who serves as the Director of Academic Affairs at the Louisville Education Center and as Assistant Professor of Theology. Kimberly is the sister of Kentucky Conference Chair **Kelley Miracle**.

PANELISTS:

Dame **Jamie Estes**, founder and president of Estes Public Relations, is a past president of the LDKY Chapter. During her career, Jamie has worked on more than 100 restaurant openings and dozens of national product launches. She's managed more than 60 chef appearances at James Beard Foundation events and worked with more than 15 James Beard winners, finalists, and semi-finalists.

Dame **Caroline Knop** is the owner of Simply PR. Caroline got involved in the food industry and event planning after opening NYC and international locations for Planet Hollywood and the New York City Motown Cafe. Her Simply PR clients in Louisville are HB Productions (Tailspin Ale Fest), StageOne Family Theatre, The Jewish Community Center of Louisville, CenterStage, Ballotin Chocolate Whiskey, APRON Inc., and Gordon Biersch.

Dame **Melissa Richards-Person** is the chief marketing officer of Third Arm Consulting. Third Arm Consulting is a brand strategy company focusing on marketing strategy, strategic planning, international growth, and product development, shaping and stretching vital brands.

Attendees learned that the elements of what makes our brands unique can translate into PR and Marketing strategies. The main takeaways were:



Moderator: Dr. Kimberly Miracle. Dark & Bloody Bourbon Mary samples. Panelists, L-R: Caroline Knop, Melissa Richards-Person, and Jamie Estes.

MARKET YOURSELF IN SOCIAL MEDIA

- Start with your “brand DNA.” Everything flows down from that.
- Use TikTok if you don't have a following. Don't forget about YouTube, and Pinterest is a good way to showcase recipes, menus, and décor.
- Follow people on Instagram and other platforms that you want to engage with so they will follow you.
- For iPhone photos, watch YouTube about how to take good food photographs.

REACH OUT TO MEDIA

- “Stalk” the media—Find out about them on social media and direct message them through their platform.
- Read print writers' columns to figure out how to pitch them.
- For TV, familiarize yourself with the TV show's host and the audience.

- The easier you make the producer's job, the more likely you are to get on their show. Give them a couple of facts about what you're presenting and their work is already done, increasing the value of what you bring to the table.

KNOW THE VALUE OF PR

- Don't assume “I can't afford it.” Invest in yourself. Work the PR agent's fee into your budget for your growth.
- Some firms offer both PR and Marketing, so research first before you decide.
- If the PR firm you're considering is a big firm, don't count them out because you're small. You'll find people that are really passionate about your company.

SESSION 4

FOOD WASTE PATHWAYS: INNOVATIVE MODELS AND CONCEPTS

BY BETH DAVIS-NORAGON
(CLEVELAND)

FeedingAmerica.org notes that nearly 40 percent of all food in America is wasted. That 119 BILLION pounds of food represents 130 billion meals a year. That's the equivalent of three meals a day, every day for a year, for almost 119 million people. For perspective, California has 39 million people. The population equivalent of three Californias eating three meals for a year's worth of food is the amount thrown away every year in America. We don't have a production problem in America; we have a perception problem, and we have a reverse scarcity problem. Food is too easy to get for the majority of Americans, so they don't treat it with the respect it is due. Retailers feel compelled to toss perfectly good food because of "best by" dates. Catered functions overproduce food to present the idea of plenty, then toss the leftovers.

In the Food Waste Pathways session at the Louisville Conference, three Dames presented success stories from their programs to defeat hunger, not by buying more food, but by redirecting perfectly viable food prematurely destined for the landfill to the table. The moderator for this session was Dame **Gina Brown**, the founder and executive director of Let Us Learn, Inc.

Because soup kitchens closed down during COVID, the chef community stepped up by cooking meals. Dame **Rhonda Bowles Kamar**, cofounder of Feed Louisville, harnesses the chef mindset to fight hunger in the community. Feed Louisville cooks hundreds of hot meals daily that go directly to the houseless community, using overproduced food from local restaurants, bakers,

caterers, and farmers. Last year Feed Louisville diverted 160,000 pounds of food from the city's landfills.

Dame **Annette Ball**, the chief program officer of Louisville's Dare to Care, noted they target populations that access traditional food pantries. She was inspired by seeing a three-year-old take a bus with a transfer to get to a community center to get a hot evening meal. Dare to Care provides foods to hundreds of emergency kitchens, shelters, and food pantries, but also operates several forward-thinking programs to get food to the most vulnerable populations including a Mobile Pantry targeting isolated pockets of need, Senior Outreach, and Summer Meals for Kids.

For Dame **Katie Davidson**, MS, RD, a community wellness coordinator at the Purdue University Extension in Floyd County, inspiration for her career path came from finding out she had grown up in a food insecure home. By fostering health and wellness at the community level, the Purdue Extension aims to promote better lives for the county residents.

It is important to look around in our own communities to see what can be done at a local level. Check with local food pantries to see what they need. People go crazy at Thanksgiving volunteering at foodbanks and shelters, but what about the other 364 days of the year?

Think outside of the box. The first community refrigerators ("freedges") started popping up around 2015 in Europe and more recently, during the Covid pandemic in the US. Everyday citizens can wrap, label, and donate leftover food to a nearby community refrigerator, knowing that someone can eat it instead of throwing it away.

Ultimately, the goal is to use the food we already have to feed people instead of the landfill. Everyone can contribute in some way to be a part of the solution to food insecurity.



Food Waste Pathways Panel, L-R: Dames Rhonda Bowles Kamar, Annette Ball, Katie Davidson, and the moderator, Gina Brown.



SESSION 5

WHY BOURBON MATTERS EVEN IF YOU DON'T DRINK

BY DESTINY BURNS
(CLEVELAND)

Bourbon history is American history. Just ask Dame **Susan Reigler**, an author, educator, and past president of LDEI Kentucky Chapter, and the Bourbon Women Association. She's passionate about bourbon and the key role it has played in our history. I'm not a bourbon drinker, so I came into this session with an open mind (and palate) and zero knowledge. Here's what I learned.

In the 1770s, excess grain in Bourbon County, Virginia, (now Kentucky) was being made into whiskey and often used for barter and as currency. We sampled Mellow Corn whiskey from Heaven Hill Distillery as an example of this. In 1791, Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton instituted a Whiskey Tax which led to the Whiskey Rebellion. George Washington led troops into battle to put down this rebellion—the last time a sitting president led troops on the battlefield. In 1802, then President Thomas Jefferson repealed the tax; it was reinstated by his successor, James Madison, just in time to help fund the War of 1812. In the early 1900s, the Federal Income Tax replaced the Whiskey Tax.

In 1818, the first sour mash recipe was documented by Catherine Carpenter. It's still used today, much like a sourdough starter, from batch-to-batch to control bacteria and promote consistency. In the mid-19th century, bourbon was sold by shopkeepers out of a barrel, and



Dame Susan Reigler, author and educator, discusses how whiskey and bourbon have affected America's history and economy.

it was common for them to "stretch" the product adding water, kerosene, and turpentine and coloring it with tea, prune juice or even spittoon contents (yuck!). George Garvin Brown ended this practice around 1870 when he came up with sealed and signed glass bottle packaging to help ensure quality. This made his family rich and resulted in Old Forester, Louisville's "hometown bourbon," which we sampled. The Bottled-in-Bond Act of 1897, the first consumer protection law in the U.S., included the quality standards applied to bourbon. We also learned that President Harry Truman started each day with a shot of Old Grand-Dad B.I.B. Bourbon, and we tried some too.

In 1920, Prohibition became law. What was once 2000+ distilleries became six, for medicinal purposes only. Of note, there were 6 million prescriptions written, and this is also why you can buy whiskey in a drug store but

not a grocery store. During Prohibition, 250,000 jobs and \$11 billion in tax revenue were lost, and moonshine and bootlegging flourished. One distillery was even dismantled, transported, and reassembled in Juarez, Mexico, during this time—we sampled Mary Dowling Tequila Barrel from Rabbit Hole Distillery to celebrate this.

The repeal of Prohibition and World War II helped spur the comeback of bourbon, along with the invention of penicillin and the commercial use of industrial alcohol to make synthetic rubber. Today, bourbon has a \$9 billion impact on the Kentucky economy, with 95 percent of the world's bourbon being made there. We sampled Maker's Mark and learned that Mary Samuels was responsible for the brand name and the famous red wax seal. Long live women in bourbon—and thanks, Susan, for taking us on an amazing, intertwined journey through American and bourbon history!



Dee Dee Taylor, the owner of 502 Hemp in Louisville.

SESSION 6

THE HEALING POWERS OF CANNABIS

BY ANITA LAU (LA/OC AND SAN DIEGO)

A former paralegal from Middletown, Ohio, Dee Dee Taylor relocated to Middletown, Kentucky, to be with her now husband, John Taylor and his daughter (who is now Dee Dee's daughter). As a paralegal, Dee Dee started off in collections, "an AWFUL job" in her words, and after having to repo a mobile home from a woman battling cancer, she quit. "I felt this was not what I was meant to do," says Dee Dee. "I've always felt I was put on earth to help people."

Dee Dee's husband, John, suffers from Grand Mal seizures. At one point, he was prescribed 20 medications, and the pharmaceutical drugs he was taking to control these debilitating episodes were not working. When the doctors wanted to up those medications to 28 pills, Dee Dee was convinced their negative side effects were taking a toll on his health. She suggested John find a natural alternative, which led to the foray into this now life-changing "medicine" for John, and now for both of their careers.

At the time, cannabis was legal in some western states, so John traveled west to learn about CBD oils and how to make them. Once he began using the products, the seizures stopped for five years and since then, while he still experiences seizures from time



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CANNABIS
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to time, it is significantly lower and definitely nowhere near as debilitating as before.

When the Kentucky Hemp Pilot Program started in 2014, John and his business partner were the first to be licensed as processors. They've since been in business making quality, safe products with Kentucky hemp. Dee Dee started using John's CBD oil to aid in her severe anxiety with panic attacks, and noticed a remarkable difference. Two years later, in 2016, Dee Dee left the paralegal world and focused full time on the hemp business.

Dee Dee didn't start out to be an alternative healer. She set up booths at fairs and festivals around town as KY Beauty and Wellness. However, she quickly found her passion and realized her calling. Learning about new advances in the hemp industry has made her a leader and pioneer in advocating for hemp in the state of Kentucky.

In 2022, Dee Dee was appointed by Governor Beshear to his Medical Cannabis Advisory Committee and continues her cannabis advocacy as an honorary board member to KY Moms for Medical Cannabis. On September 21 of the same year, Dee Dee was commissioned a Kentucky Colonel for her advocacy work in the cannabis industry. She advocates for legal hemp products and restrictions on Delta 8 products instead of an all-out ban.

The following year, Dee Dee was honored to be awarded the 2023 Entrepreneur Boom Award from the Jeffersontown Chamber. She was also nominated in 2023 as a Most Admired Woman with *Today's Woman* magazine. This is a testament that following your passion is the true indicator to success!

Dee Dee owns 502 Hemp Wellness Center, Louisville's premier hemp boutique, and the recently opened 812 Hemp in Clarksville, Indiana. She is excited to grow into Southern Indiana and offer her expertise to the local community with safe, quality, reliable products. This year, 502 Hemp is an Official Hemp/CBD Product Partner for the Kentucky Derby Festival; the company also partnered with the festival for the past five years.



Grants Session Panel, L-R: Moderator: Dame Stacy Duncan, Tabitha Underwood, and Dame Gina Brown.

SESSION 7
GRANTS 101: WRITE YOUR
PATH TO SUCCESS

BY MARILYN FREUNDLICH
(ST. LOUIS)

For many organizations, grant writing is the most important component of their entire fundraising strategy. In fact, a single grant application can make or break an organization, so if a group is trying to secure funding for their nonprofit or community organization, it's important to learn how to write a strong, successful proposal. At this session, Dame **Gina Brown**, founder and executive director, Let Us Learn, Inc., and Tabitha Underwood, system manager, Community Engagement UOfL Health provided the essential components and techniques needed to elevate grant-writing skills. The session was moderated by **Stacy Duncan**, co-owner, Brasserie Provence.

Before filling out the grant application, a considerable amount of research should be done to understand the philanthropic environment of your community. Foundations tend to have existing monies to fund nonprofits, as well as some businesses. Foundations also have their own values, know what they want to spend their money on, and often require reporting on outcome, impact, and projects after the monies are awarded. The applicant has to understand the values of the foundation and decide if they mesh with their own. Your research should include the types of programs and projects a funder gives their monies to. Support may be given for general operating, projects, and programs, and it's up to you to match your programs and needs to their priorities.

Your city's community foundation is the best place to start with your grant research. Giving is often widespread and more generous; it is focused on your community and these foundations have a broader range of



priorities. However, they are often stricter in the programs they give to.

Always be sure that you can advocate succinctly for your organization. Prior to applying, outline the goals of your project, the values of your group, as well as the project's values, and what the money will be used for. Then try to match this up to a funder. What are you trying to accomplish? What are the values of the project, and what do you need the money for?

Developing a relationship with the funders is a great way to start the process. Put your organization out in the community, as funders like seeing the work that your group is doing. Attend the same meetings and cross paths with them so they understand your priorities. Don't hesitate to ask for a meeting. They may refuse, but it's a good way to introduce your organization to them. Get to know your funders in order to build a strong relationship!

Grant applications can be a long and tedious process. A statement of need is important as you are marketing your project and highlighting what the needs are in your community and what the funding will accomplish. Your project description should also be short and concise. Funders may also want some type of measurement evaluation, so you should have a plan when writing the grant. The evaluation can include number of participants, pictures, impact statements, and pre- and post-surveys.

Gina and Tabitha gave all session attendees a grant-planning template, which will be valuable as one begins that first grant application. No doubt, this session's buzz words were "building relationships"—with funders (community foundations, the United Way, etc), community organizers and leaders, and other nonprofits. Grants 101 provided a solid springboard for the basics of grant writing, as well, the many elements necessary to attain success.

SESSION 8
A TASTE OF KENTUCKY'S MAKERS

BY PATRICIA ERD (CHICAGO)

A Taste of Kentucky's Makers, focused on Kentucky regional products, proved to be a seminar of the most fulfilling variety—entertaining, educational, and delicious. There were two substitutions in the original panel lineup, which included Dames **Penryn Craig** (moderator), owner Craig's Creek Farm; **Judy Schad**, owner/founder, Capriole Farms; **Judy Hollis-Jones**, cofounder and CEO, Buzzard's Roost Whiskey, LDEI past president; and **Brie Golliher**, The Pie Queen. With all due respect to the original presenters, you might easier be convinced that these replacements were ringers!

In place of Judy Schad, recovering from surgery, was her granddaughter Piper Schad, Involved early in her life showcasing products at local farmers markets, Piper left her job as marketing specialist for tech startups to rejoin Capriole as a brand strategist. She discussed the origins and evolution of Capriole, difficulties in staffing, how important it is to have people taste their product, which then sells itself. The time and effort required to take care of a herd of 500 goats led to their sale to an Amish farm where they now buy the milk back and have more time to focus on their high quality productions. We greatly enjoyed a tasting of several cheeses: the Tea Rose, featuring herbs, flower petals, and fennel pollen; the Wabash Cannonball, a creamy, ripened chèvre; and Piper's Pyramide flavored with smoked Spanish paprika. This cheese was named after Judy and Larry's first-born, fiery granddaughter!

Pinch hitting for Judy Hollis-Jones, whose presence was required during one of her busiest business weekends of the year, we were treated to the sharp-



Taste of Kentucky's Makers panel: L-R: Piper Schad, Brie Golliher, Susan Reigler, and moderator Penryn Craig.

witted, firecracker personality of **Susan Reigler**, director of whiskey education at Buzzard's Roost. And educate us she did, as we learned about the complexity of bourbon making, an incredibly deep subject involving chemistry and makers filled with passion for their craft. Susan touched on difficulties getting bourbon into different states, shipping challenges, sourcing, contract distilling, ingredient percentages, rivets, fermentation, toasting with different heats, charring, caramelization, layering, esters, and how to taste. We were treated to a tasting of smooth Buzzard's Roost Char#1 Rye Whiskey accompanied by an exceptional bourbon truffle. The phrase used here, "getting liquid to lips," clearly works!

Pie Queen Brie Golliher discussed her goal to be a part of the local community, working with farmers for all of her ingredients. She creates pies using seasonal fruit that is locally sourced. She

discussed her collaborations with local entrepreneurs such as ice cream makers and shops, the shortbread crusts she makes for her savory pies, and the most popular Kentucky pie along with the challenges and changes that Covid introduced. During that period, she coined the term "SurPIEval boxes," which went out to customers in every single state! Shipping is a concern with her fragile pies; consequently, she only ships mini pies and sandwich cookies. We devoured samples of her pimento cheese pies and her mini chocolate chip bourbon pecan pies, which were lovingly decorated with a cutout in the shape of Kentucky. Moderator Penryn Craig, with her insightful and thoughtful questions, generated lively discussions. All of our talented panelists clearly love their work; we can testify the proof is in the pudding.

SESSION 9

LEGAL MATTERS: GOVERNANCE SESSION TAKEAWAYS

By SHEILA CRYE (WASHINGTON, D.C.)

Jackie Henson serves as general counsel for LDEI. She works with nonprofit organizations exclusively. Jackie framed the session as a question-and-answer discussion. What follows is a summary of the most important ideas to put into action in your chapter.



Q: Do you really need a compliance officer, or is there a chain of command in place for resolving complaints? Could it be part of the whistleblower policy?

A: There is no requirement to have a compliance officer, so you can take it out of the bylaws and put the equivalent into one of your policies. It is helpful to have a person who is responsible for investigating matters that people bring to the chapter's attention.

You can give them whatever title you want. You can call it an ombudsman. Jackie is not concerned so much with what you call them as what they're doing. They are getting a set of facts from somebody who says, I think something's not going right. So you have a responsibility to the chapter to get to the bottom of it. In some cases, it might be nothing. In some cases, it could be serious.

The policy should be worded so that the compliance officer investigates a situation or complaint and then reports to somebody, usually, the executive committee or the board.

You should try to preserve confidentiality if you can.

Q: Is it okay in the whistle blower policy to have the president and 1st vice president be the persons you complain to, or if both those people are implicated, have the next person in the chain of command receive the complaint?

A: Jackie suggests having three people named, so the complainant may pick one of the three. Make sure that the persons you have chosen are aware that complaints may come to them, and they are comfortable with that role. One or more such persons could be nonboard members, but that doesn't have to be the case. It could be a past president or parliamentarian, someone respected in the chapter. People will know who to complain to because the procedure is stated in the whistleblower policy.

If you look at the Form 990, which is the information return that you file with the IRS, it asks whether your chapter has three written policies: 1. Conflict of interest; 2. Whistleblower; and 3. Document retention.

Q: Can all documents be scanned in and put in a safe place? How long must the board keep minutes and other important documents? How long do they have to be available to the membership?

A: You can scan your documents and keep them on a disc file. There are some documents that you keep forever, basic documents like articles of incorporation and any amendments, the bylaws and any amendments, Form 990s, and minutes. Look at your state statutes for nonprofit corporation records. There may be a section on records in the nonprofit corporation law that will tell you how many years to keep various records.

Q: Do we need to make board minutes available to the membership on the chapter website? Do committees need to take meeting minutes? Do certain documents need to be filed or linked together?



Jackie Henson, general counsel for LDEI, conducts a workshop to help Dames run their chapters like a business.

A: Some chapters make the minutes available upon request, and others just make them available to a member who requests them. Remember that there are two types of committees: (1) board committees, such as the executive committee, audit committee, and finance committee—they are the ones with decision-making power, and they should keep minutes; and (2) advisory committees that report to the board and don't normally keep minutes. The documents that need to be attached to minutes are ones related to a vote.

Q: Must all chapter members complete a conflict-of-interest statement each year?

A: Only board members and officers need to re-sign the statement annually. The duty of loyalty provides that directors and officers owe a duty of loyalty to the nonprofit corporation; you put your self-interest behind that of the corporation. If you would profit from the result of a board vote, you must 1. Disclose your conflict of interest, 2. Leave the meeting, and 3. The minutes should record the conflict and the procedure that was followed.

Q: A chapter produces a holiday gift guide every year, which is sent electronically. They invite members Dames and other female-owned businesses to contribute content to the gift guide. The chapter doesn't receive any money from it. The chapter is promoting women-owned businesses around the holidays. Is there a conflict because they are promoting Dames and other female business owners?

A: The organization's activities must be charitable in nature. An activity that primarily serves private interests may jeopardize a chapter's exempt status if it is carried on to a degree that is more than an insubstantial part of the organization's activities. If an activity does not have a charitable component, it can generate unrelated business income, which is taxable income.

If you're providing a benefit solely to a member and not to the community as a whole, that's not a charitable activity. For example, if you provide an outlet on your website and social media to promote a Dame's cookbook, and the proceeds go to her, that would be problematic.

If you can show how the chapter is making this activity into something that's charitable and/or educational and that it's related to your mission, you may not have to worry about unrelated business income. At a chapter's educational program, it would be okay for the speaker to sell their book afterward. A chapter could promote women-owned businesses to the public as an educational initiative.

Every Member Milestones column in the LDEI publication contains news about the accomplishments of members, including new books and products. It is intended as an educational initiative. In addition, there is no money changing hands. We should not, however, include a link to purchase those things.

A membership directory on your website with the members' photos and business contact info is information, which is education. Most associations have a membership list that they make available.



LDEI COUNCIL OF DELEGATES RECAP

By GREG JEWELL (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR)

The LDEI Council of Delegates meeting, held each year at the Annual Conference, is the time when chapters get to play a role in the governance of the organization. Each chapter has one delegate for every 25 members, and delegates are responsible for three areas: bylaws changes, approving the annual LDEI budget, and approving new chapter charters.

At the meeting in Louisville, the delegates were asked to vote on two changes to the LDEI bylaws: removing the verbiage in the bylaws that ties the Annual Conference to the month of October and updating the minimum number of charter members necessary to form a chapter. Both of the bylaws changes passed.

With the change in the bylaws, the Annual Conference will likely move to a Q1 meet-

ing in 2026, and there will be no in-person conference in 2025.

Then-president **Jennifer Goldman** reviewed a number of new policies that were implemented during her tenure, including:

- A new timeline for the submission of dues. Chapters must submit membership dues by September 1. There no longer is a grace period.
- Formalizing LDEI's investment policy.
- Transitioning the former M.F.K. Fisher Investment Fund to an LDEI savings investment account.

The Treasurer during the meeting, **Stephanie Jaeger**, reviewed the proposed budget for 2024. Much of the discussion surrounded the pre-work that accompanied the proposed budget. There were a number of questions about the 2023 figures that required follow up after the meeting. But the budget numbers were accurate and a motion was made

and passed to approve the 2024 budget. Items of note in the budget included:

- Implementation of an online auction in Q1 of 2024 to assist with cash flow early in the year
- Re-evaluation of the M.F.K. Fisher Prize program in 2024
- Hiring of a public relations company to create a brand awareness campaign for LDEI
- Reimagining of the organization's publications
- Reducing the number of in-person meetings for the LDEI Board of Directors
- No dues increase in 2024

2023 Board of Directors, L-R: Deborah Mintcheff, Barb Pires, and Anita Lau. Stephanie Jaeger and Greg Jewell. L-R: Jennifer Goldman, Kathy Gold, and Marilyn Freundlich. L-R: Irene Moore, Kersten Rettig, and Erin Byers Murray.

BLUEGRASS BOUTIQUE

In support of the community and LDKY, a variety of local Kentucky items were available for Conference attendees to purchase and take home.





LDEI'S WOMAN OF PURPOSE: NINA MUKERJEE FURSTENAU

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH YETI®

BY NANCY VIENNEAU
(NASHVILLE)

"A cape is just an apron backwards. Wear that cape! Share the love!"
—Nina

Dame **Nina Mukerjee Furstenau**, our 2023 Woman of Purpose Award winner, is a super hero in her apron-cape. She uses her superpowers to deeply examine food on a plate, and uncover its underlying, often unexpected stories. Lyrical and visionary in both spoken and written word, she illuminates the stories of food and identity, culture and history, soils and health, hunger and longing. She crosses boundaries; dispels myths. She is both disrupter and connector. Brava!

Her journey was sparked by this powerful moment from childhood: On vacation with family in India, six-year-old Nina was in the back of a bus when she saw a boy, about her age, with outstretched arms. She tossed him the banana from her lap and watched as he grabbed it and hungrily, bit right through the peel. The image of that boy just trying to survive became etched in her mind and formed the course of her life. That image became one of a series of images that built her body of work, not unlike Van Gogh's reflection of how a series of small things can lead to the larger idea. Nina's larger idea is that the food is the catalyst, the connector, and a means to bridge the gap.

A memoirist: The experience propelled her to write *Biting Through the Skin: An Indian Kitchen in America's Heartland*, her story of growing up as a first-generation immigrant brought from Northern India to rural Pittsburg, Kansas. Truths: We are all looking to belong—food can

be that link to belonging. Cuisine can change with place. Culture and heritage can be kept vital even

scrawled on a recipe index card.

A food activist: As a Peace Corps volunteer in Tunisia, Nina bonded with the women in their kitchens helping them prepare their heritage foods. She witnessed firsthand how the once nutrient-rich soils had become so depleted, affecting the growth and health of the community. This experience further informed her direction.

A food educator: After getting funding through USAID for a Feed the Future project, Nina worked side-by-side with seven women farmers in Mozambique to create a low-literacy cookbook of protein-rich legume recipes. The additional protein dramatically improves the physical and mental growth of children. *Tasty! Mozambique* provides the recipes for the better health and well-being of a community while celebrating the stories of the women.

A director of food systems communication: Through the University of Missouri's Science and Agricultural Journalism program, Nina led the way to new food narratives, teaching writers to approach food and food systems beyond novelty and taste; soil health is key to nutrition. In a society increasingly disconnected from food origin, this perspective—which encompasses climate change, soil depletion, regenerative agriculture—needs to be infused in the content.

A food historian: As a U.S. Fulbright Global Scholar, Nina travelled to India to research Bengali foods and how colonialism and



globalization have transformed them. She traces ingredients and the dishes they are part of, how they tell stories of politics, of economy, of violence, of comfort. That undertaking became the foundation of her 2021 book, *Green Chilis and Other Imposters*, and challenges us to consider the ever-evolving nature of assimilation.

A community leader and guide: During the pandemic, Nina collaborated with a group of women in Missouri to launch the website www.thecommoningredient.com.

Dedicated to feeding people better in a time of widening inequality gap, this initiative highlights local farmers and producers, hunger and food security nonprofits, nutrition educators, and avid home cooks. More than a resource, it is a mighty source for stories and recipes, and connecting neighbors in hope and need. The Common Ingredient is also becoming borderless—a true Nina vision—with a sister site launched in Virginia.

Nina's work continues in myriad forms to bridge the gaps. Her

podcast *Canned Peaches* considers the origins of foods of the Midwest, which come from places very different than what most expect. Propelled by the disturbing rise in hatred of Asians, she is completing a documentary for NPR, *Feasting Asia*. It looks at the secret life of food in America, as influenced by "the Other" on the American palate. All the while, she has remained a vital force in the St. Louis Chapter of LDEI, as a speaker, teacher, chef, and valued contributor to the chapter's GCI projects. She has championed full cultural experiences of food, drink, and dance. She continues to foster a broadened respect for any plate of food and the stories it tells. Daily, she inspires us all to don the apron-cape and awaken our superpowers.

In accepting the 2023 Woman of Purpose award, Nina distills her global-and-local mission, extending Einstein's statement, "Imagination is more important than knowledge." She says, "Imagine our world as a deeply connected place, rich and essential."



RAFFLE WINNERS



SUNDAY BRUNCH AT THE BUTCHER ROSE

By BETH PAV (AUSTIN)

Walking up the hill to The Butcher Rose, there was a cool breeze wafting through the trees with the promise of fall. One of the oldest houses in the city of Louisville, it was THE place to round out the LDEI 2023 Conference with Sunday Brunch. Conference keynote speaker, Toni Tipton-Martin was guest of honor and host on the publishing eve of her new book, *Juke Joints, Jazz Clubs & Juice: A Cocktail Recipe Book: Cocktails from Two Centuries of African American Cookbooks*.

Having just had the grand tour several days before, I learned The Butcher Rose was built in the 1790s as a residence. Over 200 years old, the home has gone through many iterations and is now a venue, modern B & B, and a Ladies First Social House. Each of its six rooms are aptly named for women in music such as Aretha, Yoko, and Loretta. It was a pleasure to walk through the door once again and see how a house presented event style.

Our Kentucky Dame hosts and vendors included Farm to Fork Catering, Heaven Hill Distillery, Trouble Bar, and Foxing Books. The brunch co-chairs, **Nicole Stipp** (owner, Trouble Bar) and **Sherry Hurley** (owner, Farm to Fork Catering), filled the tabletops—Kentucky style—with cocktail fixings, bubbles, sweet and savory nibbles, along with a buffet of hearty breakfast bites including the ever-popular Kentucky Hot Brown (casserole). Straight from Toni's cookbooks, namely *Jubilee*, we tasted banana bread, blueberry muffins, and pickled shrimp. The Bloody Mary mix, taken from *Juke Joints, Jazz Clubs & Juice* was a revelation; rich, spicy, toothy and one of best I've ever had.

Rounding out this delightful brunch, we were inspired by Toni and Felicia Corbett, Trouble Bars' star cocktail creator, in their presentation of how to make a Blackberry Ginger Smash, which was the catalyst of Toni's new cocktail book. She described her book as an educational history on the Black spirit's culture. When asked advice on how to create a great cocktail, Felicia said, "Study the *Flavor Bible* (...a guide to culinary creativity)". Apt advice!

After a final toast to Toni, Felicia, each other, and The Butcher Rose, we bid farewell. A BIG thank you to our sister Dames in Kentucky!

Photos: Beth Pav.



CUCUMBER COLLINS

Toni Tipton Martin's Cucumber Collins recipe comes from her newest cookbook, *Juke Joints, Jazz Clubs, and Juice*. She shares, "The elderflower's floral undertones take the place of sugar or simple syrup; it's a perfect foil for the aromatic gin, which is infused with rose and cucumber."

- 1 (½-inch-thick) slice of peeled cucumber
- 2 ounces (¼ cup) gin of choice (preferably Hendrick's or Maior)
- 1 ounce (2 tablespoons) St-Germain Elderflower liqueur
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- Ice cubes
- Crushed ice
- ½ cup lemon-flavored sparkling water
- 1 lemon twist or peeled cucumber slice

In a cocktail shaker, muddle the thick cucumber slice until juicy. Add the gin, liqueur, and lemon juice. Fill with ice cubes. Shake hard for 10 seconds to mix well. Fill a Collins glass halfway with crushed ice. Strain the gin mixture into the glass and top off with the sparkling water. Garnish with the lemon twist or cucumber slice. Serves 1.

Reprinted with Permission:
Toni Tipton-Martin



CHAPTER PROGRAMS *Nichole Bendele (San Antonio)*

ANN ARBOR | ATLANTA | AUSTIN | BIRMINGHAM | BOSTON | BRITISH COLUMBIA | CHARLESTON | CHICAGO | CLEVELAND | COLORADO | DALLAS
FRANCE | GREATER DES MOINES | GREATER MADISON | HAWAII | HOUSTON | KANSAS CITY | KENTUCKY | LONDON | LOS ANGELES/ORANGE COUNTY
MEXICO | MINNESOTA | MONTEREY BAY | NASHVILLE | NEW ENGLAND | NEW ORLEANS | NEW YORK | NORTH CAROLINA | PALM SPRINGS
PHILADELPHIA | PHOENIX | PORTLAND | SACRAMENTO | SAN ANTONIO | SAN DIEGO | SAN FRANCISCO | SEATTLE | SONOMA | SOUTH FLORIDA
ST. LOUIS | TUSCANY | WASHINGTON, D.C.

ATLANTA *Toby Bloomberg*

We were proud and honored to bring the career dreams of 10 talented young women a step closer. The 2023 Scholarship Awards Dinner was a sold-out event that welcomed more than 100 Atlanta members, friends, and industry supporters. Since 2001, the Atlanta Chapter has offered annual scholarships for education and continuing education grants to female applicants pursuing culinary or pastry arts, farming, beverage management, hospitality, or agriculture coursework. The Philanthropy Committee, headed by Dame **Simone Byron**, oversaw a review process. Grants and scholarships were presented to young women attending, or who will be attending, Johnson and Wales University, Culinary Institute of America, Georgia State University, Kennesaw State University, and Gwinnett Tech College.

This year we welcomed the largest class of new members in our chapter's history. It included 23 dynamic women who will strengthen our ability to continue to promote the LDEI mission. Membership Chair **Cathy Pennington** coordinated an exciting Welcome Dinner that **Marie-Laure Coste Dujois** graciously hosted at her beautiful new venue Le Jardin Français, a floral and garden design atelier. **Cathy Conway** from Avalon Catering treated us to a wonderful variety of delicious food, and **Shirley Hughes Tubbs** with Sweet Cheats created French macaron towers. **Lisa Smith** with Vineyard Brands contributed wines.



Stephanie Fischer (L) and Karen Bremer. Photo: Carolyn O'Neil. Atlanta Scholarship Honorees. Photo: Simone Byron.

AUSTIN *Lindsey LeRoy*

Austin Dames gathered on September 24 to welcome new members and go over general business. Vista Brewing offered a picturesque hill country backdrop for the meeting. The attendees enjoyed drinks from Vista Brewing, Wine for the People, Stonehouse Vineyards, and The Turtle, as well as food from Vista Brewing and bites from Antonelli's Cheese



Austin Dames gather at Vista Brewing for the fall meeting to welcome 43 new members.

and Michelle's Patisserie. The group inducted 43 new members—the chapter's largest class to date!

Dames had a blast learning how to make pretzels like a pro at Abby Jane Bakeshop during the October hands-on workshop event. The talented **Abby Love** graciously opened her doors and lent her skills to the group, who were able to take home the fruits of their (baked) labors after the class. If you have a chance, be sure to visit her gorgeous space in Dripping Springs (16604 Fitzhugh Rd Unit C) and snag some pastries, breads, pizza, and all the baked goods.



Austin Dames learn how to make pretzels like a pro at Abby Jane Bakeshop.

BIRMINGHAM *Martha Johnston*

Champagne & Fried Chicken was bigger and more successful than ever before. Our sales were up 25 percent from last year. Many of our guests joined us for a picnic at Pepper Place and enjoyed dancing to the band. Rave reviews are still coming in.



New Member Reception: Birmingham welcomed 12 new members, bringing our chapter total to 103 members. One new change to this year's Champagne & Fried Chicken fundraiser was frying the chicken on site, which took a team of Dames to execute, and they delivered. Many attendees said this year's chicken was the best yet. It takes the entire Birmingham Chapter to make Champagne & Fried Chicken happen every year—and this year's event was bigger and more successful than ever before. While the fundraiser started as a drive-thru (and we still offer that option), many of our attendees also decided to stay and enjoy their picnic on site at Pepper Place.

Not only did we raise money for operating expenses and our philanthropic programs, but we were able to share enough leftover chicken with a local shelter for two meals for the men, women and children who come to eat. September 30, we awarded our second Hispanic student \$3000 scholarship to Diana Hurtado during Fiesta Birmingham, which is Alabama's largest celebration of Hispanic culture and heritage. At the Annual Meeting, August 13, we celebrated our 10th Anniversary with cake made by Dame **Telia Johnson**. In the last 10 years we've grown from 55 to 103 members. Seventeen active Dames were founding members. Twelve new Birmingham Dames were welcomed at a Champagne reception September 12. **LaCrista Hutchinson**, VP Membership, welcomed the group. All left empowered to make our upcoming year a success. September marked the seventh year of Les Dames Takeover at the Market at Pepper Place. Proceeds from the event will fund our cooking and nutrition instruction outreach program.

BOSTON *Lucille Giovino*

This is tough—how to choose which events to attend given there are so many? Well, all of them! Our chapter was honored with the Epicurean Club of Boston's (America's oldest professional chef association established in 1894) Service to Industry Award for our chapter's scholarship fundraising supporting the "next generation of women culinarians." Dames **Robin Cohen** and **Hannah Bartholomew** accepted the award. At Common Craft Brewery we supported local beverage makers and had a relaxed and fun time. Then to Portugalia Marketplace for a tour, wine tasting, lunch, and the inevitable shopping with beckoning specialties lining the shelves. Next was brunch with legendary Italian chef, Dame **Mary Ann Esposito** at the Tuscan Village Marketplace in NH to enjoy wonderful stories and delicious food and wine with more shopping. Our final event for November was a visit to Harvard's Schlesinger Library which houses the historical collection of renowned women including our Boston Dames' chapter archives. Curator Jenny Gotwals guided us through the entire facility from the temperature controlled basement environment for the archival materials (with unbelievable rows of Dame Julia Child's writings), then to a classroom where our memorabilia from the 1960s to the present was on tables to study and admire.



Boston Dames visit the Schlesinger Library.

BRITISH COLUMBIA *Cassandra Anderton*

Dame **Cristina Dias** hosted members of the British Columbia Chapter at Mogiana Coffee in Burnaby, the coffee roaster she founded in 2008. From a long line of coffee farmers, Cristina's family has been growing coffee at their farm in Brazil in the Mogiana region since the 1890s. For five generations they have practiced sustainable farming. Cristina shared her family's story with **Cassandra Anderton**, **Cate Simpson**, **Karen Dar Woon**, **Linda Seiffert**, **Nancy Wong**, **Margot Baloro**, and enthusiastic incoming Dames **Jennifer English**, **Fariba Hafezi**, and **Nicole-Ann Poitras**. The Dames experienced the entire roasting process and enjoyed some traditional Brazilian dishes and desserts, alongside local wines and cider. The British Columbia Dames toured **Leigh Stratton's** North Vancouver

Bridge Brewing and sipped on some of their brews amongst the tanks while Leigh discussed the brewing process. Delightful snacks from the sister restaurant were served while Dames **Stephanie Jaegar**, **Jennifer Massolo**, **Cindy Evetts**, Cristina Dias, Cassandra Anderton, Margot Baloro, Jennifer English, Fariba Hafezi, and Nicole-Ann Poitras discussed future outings for our chapter.



British Columbia Dames tour Mogiana Coffee Roaster. BC Dames sip on brews and enjoy snacks at Bridge Brewing.

CHARLESTON *Susan Slack*

The Charleston Board conducted an energetic November Business Meeting at 5:00 p.m. on November 14, at Ms. Rose's Fine Food and Cocktails. Dames attended in person and by Zoom. After a call to order by **Robin Griffith**, chapter president, the meeting agenda included the introduction of guests, a member survey, and committee reports, plus an educational DEI Committee presentation by **Julie Shaffer** and **Isabella Macbeth**. There was an update on the chapter's holiday party, and lots of discussion on fundraisers and fun chapter activities for 2024. Julie Schaffer graciously donated a surprise raffle gift for one lucky Dame who attended the meeting in person. The chapter has been busy with various activities such as Dames Participating in Casual Crabbing with Tia. There was also Dame participation in the Charleston Wine and Food's Community Impact Awards. Several Dames attended the October LDEI Conference in Kentucky: Robin Griffith, **Rhonda Mitchell**, **Mary Kay Gill**, **Helen Mitternight**, **Belinda Smith-Sullivan**, and **Susan Slack**. Several spouses joined their wives in Kentucky to share in the fun.



Top: LDEI President Jennifer Goldman and the Charleston Dames. Top L: LDEI President Jennifer Goldman with the Charleston Dames. Top R: President Robin Griffith conducts a Zoom meeting. Charleston Dames and spouses at the Speed Art Museum: L-R: Mary Kay Gill, Rusty Griffith, Robin Griffith, Chef Kevin Mitchell, Rhonda Mitchell, Belinda Smith-Sullivan, Susan Slack, and Ferris Kaplan with Helen Mitternight.

CLEVELAND *Debbie Pappadakes*

Our first Business Pitch Competition was August 26 at the Cleveland Garlic Festival. Three finalists made 15-minute pitches to a judges' panel, which included Les Dames 2023 International President Dame **Jennifer Goldman**. First, second, and third place grants were awarded to three impressive local female entrepreneurs in the culinary industry: Terranean Herbs & Spices, Deep Roots Self Care Co., and Silvanas Kitchen. Our Annual Meeting was at Dame **Dannika Stevenson's** SipSavorSoul Cooking School in Akron, Ohio. We toured the LeBron James Family Foundation's House Three Thirty, a community gathering space. From its state-of-the-art kitchens to the open spaces for community events and youth to gather, Dames appreciated the impact the foundation is having on Northeast Ohio's regional community. In November, our chapter teamed up with Spiritless brands and 111 Bistro in Medina to host A Dame Fine Event benefit for our grants and scholarships fund. The five-course menu was paired with a selection of traditional and Spiritless non-alcoholic cocktails. The event was spearheaded by Grande Dame **Bev Shaffer**, Chapter President **Pat Bennett**, **Beth Davis-Noragon** and many others.

DALLAS *Aamina Masood*

In August, the incoming board spent a day planning, goal setting, brainstorming, and enjoying delicious food from hostess **Nikky Phinyawantana's** Asian Mint Restaurant. Members took a tour of the Dallas Cowboys' AT&T stadium where they saw the locker rooms, cheerleaders, press boxes, private suite of owner Jerry Jones, and the massive kitchen. September was fun-filled with Amber Fletcher hosting a Pre-State Fair Corny Dog Get-Together at the State Fair of Texas. During the State Fair, many Dames showcased their skills with demos. The chapter participated in North Texas Giving Day, for fundraising. In October, the Hoot 'N Holler Pep Rally set the stage for a large format-style fundraising event scheduled for September 21, 2024. Members gathered in Fort Worth for a fundraiser at Dena Shaskan's new wine bar, Wines From a Broad. Guests indulged in exquisite French wines presented by Ann Connors and donated by winery owner Sylvie Cazes of Chateau Chauvin. In November, the chapter featured an in-person presentation by guest speaker Holly Shipley on "Women and Generative AI." Dames Volunteer Day was spent creating pies with Hugs Training Academy employees under the guidance of Lauren Ford Smith, director of Hugs Cafe.



Dames Destiny Burns, Jennifer Goldman, and Pat Bennett with Pitch Competition Winners. Dames Shara Bohach and Pat Bennett, chapter president, with guests at the November 2 benefit dinner. Cleveland Dames gather at House Three Thirty following the Annual Meeting.



Dallas Dames Pre-State Fair Corny Dog Get-Together. Dallas Dames volunteer to bake pies. Dallas Facebook. Incoming Dallas Board.

GREATER MADISON *Linda Eatherton*

Six members were added to the Greater Madison Chapter rolls this month! Members gathered at the beautiful Wollersheim Winery in Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin, where members **Julie Coquard** and **Celine Coquard Lernerz** hosted a potluck dinner and raffle to celebrate our growing new group. New to LDEI are **Suzzette Meltcalfe**, acclaimed chef/owner of The Pasta Tree in Milwaukee; **Kate Thompson**, seasoned food journalist and publisher; and **Megan Hile**, master chocolatier, chef, and co-owner of the Madison Chocolate Shops in Madison, Wisconsin. In addition, Chef **Judi Barsness**, master pastry baker, has transferred from Minneapolis to join our group. And we are thrilled to welcome back two founding members, **Pam Reardon** and **Kara Bresnahan**, who were instrumental in the birth of this Madison Chapter.



Greater Madison Chapter celebrates a growing membership! Welcome Chef Suzzette Meltcalfe, Chef Megan Hile, Chef Judi Barsness, Kate Thompson, Pam Reardon, and Kara Bresnahan!

LONDON *Kate Howell*

Over the pond in London, the chapter is pleased to have provided a bursary to a young, new talent in the food world on a journey towards her dream of owning and running her own bakery. Alex Beighton already has amassed great knowledge



In London, Alex Beighton is in her street food cart, Gouda for the Soul. Photo: Alex Beighton.

of the street food scene running Gouda for the Soul, which delivers award-winning cheese toasties to events. Alex has been fully funded by the chapter to study at The School of Artisan Food for six months. The School of Artisan Food is dedicated to inspiring and helping people from all walks of life to learn about healthy, sustainable, and delicious food. Alex will benefit from a range of hands-on courses taught by world-class tutors. The chapter is proud to have supported the start of a career in such a tangible way. A future Dame is in the making!

MINNESOTA *Andi Bidwell*

Our program on October 26 focused on upcycled foods, which "use ingredients that otherwise would not have gone to human consumption. They are procured and produced using verifiable supply chains and have a positive impact on the environment." About 8 percent of human-caused, greenhouse-gas emissions can be attributed to food loss and waste globally, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The Upcycled Food Association was created to work on this world-wide problem. Among other initiatives, it designed a "mark" for products containing upcycled ingredients. The first upcycled certification using this mark came in 2021; now there are hundreds of products at grocery stores. Sue Marshall, founder and CEO of Netzro, a food upcycling equipment and technology company, was our speaker for the evening. She gave a fact-packed presentation to around 30 of our members. Netzro's current focus is on the harvesting of spent grains from breweries and distilleries into nutrient-rich, upcycled grains used in snacks, cereals, seasonings, and milled as a specialty flour. The goal is to make upcycled food taste great. Member **Shelley Santrach** prepared a delicious meal using upcycled foods in every course at The Central Mix—a gathering and kitchen space.



Sue Marshall (left) and Shelley Santrach (right). Photo: Andi Bidwell

NEW YORK *Susan Kostrzewa and Karen Tenenbaum*

LDNY inducted 29 new Dames on September 23 at Manhattan's Al Coro, owned by Dame **Melissa Rodriguez**. A rousing message was given by outgoing president **Wanda Mann** and an introduction of the just-released LDNY cookbook, *Stirring the Pot*, by Dame-authors **Silvia Baldini** and **Sharon Franke**. The food at the event was inspired by the book and recreated by Dame-chefs **Kathryn Gordon**, **Susan Lifrieri Lowry**, **Janeen Sarlin**, ICE students, and served by New York City Tech students. A raffle included items such as large-format bottles of Dame-produced or -owned wines, cookware sets, chocolates, caviar, and more. Wines from Winebow, Ferrari, Wente, and Oceano were poured alongside bites from Al Coro, and desserts were provided by Magnolia Bakery as well as by Chef **Jessica Craig**. Ric Kallaher captured the joy and spirit of the evening with his beautiful photographs.

The New York Chapter inducted 29 new Dames—a record number! Photo: Anthony Leo.



On November 7, LDNY hosted a Chocolate & Vanilla event at the Barry Callebaut Chocolate Academy. Guests enjoyed fun and educational demonstrations including tempering chocolate with **Penny Stankiewicz**; making elevated chocolate truffles with Jessica Craig; and exploring the chocolate process from bean-to-bonbon with **Rhonda Kave**. LDNY thanks **Louise Kramer** and **Joyce Appelman** for their generous support. The event was sponsored by Tahitian Gold Vanilla, Caravedo Pisco, and Barry Callebaut Chocolate Academy.

SAN ANTONIO *Elise Russ*

The San Antonio Chapter hosted their annual fundraiser, Fried Chicken and Bubbles, at the UTSA Southwest Campus on Sunday, September 10, from 5-8 p.m. There was picnic fare from local chefs and Dame-helmed kitchens paired with bubbles, beer, and champagne cocktails. The proceeds raised enabled LDEISA to fund many expenses including scholarships for young women studying culinary-related fields, assisting with community gardens, teaching nutrition to underprivileged families, and providing a holiday celebration in December for children at Roy Maas Youth Alternatives. Fried chicken was featured from: Chef Bruce Auden, Biga on the Banks; Chef Jeff Balfour, Southerleigh Haute South; Chef Nicola Blaque, The Jerk Shack and Mi Roti; Chef Jason Dady, The Dady Group; Dames **Nancy Fitch** and **Naylene Dilligham**; Chef John Russ, Clementine; Chef Damien Watel, BISTRO9; and Chef Andrew Weissman, Mr. Juicy. The fried chicken was accompanied by sides and desserts from Dame-run kitchens. The event was a huge success and LDEISA raised over \$50,000. The San Antonio Dames, along with the local community, gathered on November 5 to celebrate the incredible life of Dame **Mary Martini** (September 4, 1956-August 6, 2023). It was a joy to see her life so beautifully celebrated. Well loved, she will be missed dearly.



Scenes from San Antonio's LDEISA Fundraiser Fried Chicken & Bubbles

SAN FRANCISCO *Jodie Chase*

Award-winning reporter and producer Teresa Cotsirilos is the newest Karola Saekel Craib Excellence in Food Journalism fellowship recipient. A staff reporter at the Food and Environment Reporting Network (FERN), Teresa covers labor rights and climate equality in the nation's food system. Dames **Roberta Klugman**



Dames Alice Medrich (left) and Roberta Klugman (right) presented Teresa Cotsirilos with the Karola Saekel Craib Excellence in Journalism fellowship from the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter. Photo: Kristen Olson.

and **Alice Medrich** presented Teresa the \$5,000 award, which is awarded annually to a woman and/or nonbinary food/wine journalist whose writings show talent and promise and is a non-Dame journalist in the greater San Francisco Bay Area.

SEATTLE *Diana Dillard*

We warmly welcomed 10 new members to the Seattle Chapter at the Annual General Meeting and dinner held at Brimmer & Heel-tap Restaurant October 23, 2023. These energetic women bring passion, commitment, and loads of diverse talent to the chapter.

New Seattle Chapter Members, (Back Row, L-R): Rebecca Earl, Corfini Gourmet; Emma Birdsall, Tavolata Belltown; Katarina Du Charme, Macrina Bakery; Sam Stout, Macrina Bakery; Joanie Parsons, Parsons + Co.; (Front Row, L-R): Tiffany Layco, Mayflower Park Hotel; Executive Chef Vicky Williams, Kiona Vineyards Winery; Co-Owner Jamie Hunt, Fast Penny Spirits; Founder/CEO Catherine Jones, Wilbur Ellis Co, Viticulture; Not Pictured, Publisher/Editorial Director Stephanie Swane, Modernist Cuisine, The Cooking Lab.

SOUTH FLORIDA *Irene Moore*

Les Dames South Florida held a fund-raising lunch and rum tasting at the Rum Room in Miami Beach on November 11. Co-chaired by Dames **Irene Moore** and **Gina Natoli**, the theme of the event was new-world flavor with an old-world feel. Rum Room

is one of the city's best-known spots, loved by locals and visitors alike. The historical, century-old landmark restaurant has a neighborhood speakeasy vibe. The bar is known for its variety of high-quality rums and specialty rum cocktails. The lively lunch began with a tasting of two Florida rums. St. Augustine is made in St. Augustine and distilled from select regional sugarcane syrups in copper pot stills and then barrel-aged. Papa's Pilar, made in Key West, is named for Ernest "Papa" Hemingway's beloved boat, the Pilar, which inspired this rum from one of his favorite ports of call. The menu featured contemporary Latin flavors, highlighting South Florida's fresh local ingredients, with specialties such as Croquettes de Jamon, Ropa Vieja Empanada, Paella-Style Prawns, Chimichurri Steak, Fire-Roasted Corn, Sofrito Rice, and for dessert, Espresso Tres Leches.



South Florida Dames lunch in Miami at the Rum Room. L to R: Irene Moore, Jackie Kleis, Annie Hall, Aurora Fernandez, Gina Natoli, Jane Silverman. Photo: Jane Silverman.

WASHINGTON, D.C. *Carole Sugarman*

After a pandemic hiatus, the Washington, D.C. Regional Chapter resumed its biennial symposium this past fall. The chapter has been known in the D.C. area for this dynamic event and fundraiser, which has been held since 1995. Entitled Bringing It to the Table: Taste. Talk. Transform, the symposium featured 16 choices for breakout sessions, including panel discussions and cooking demos on the themes of taste, talk and transform. A big draw was the opening panel, a discussion about advancing an equitable food system that included **Carla Hall** and NPR/CBS News' Allison Aubrey. During the lunch break, Dame authors signed and sold their books. Held at the city's historic National Union Building, attendees called it "relevant," "inspiring" and "extraordinary."



Washington, D.C. Regional Chapter President Sheila Crye kicks off the opening session.

The event was dedicated to the late **Goody Solomon**, a founding member and tenacious journalist who left a generous bequest to the chapter. The Washington, D.C. Regional Chapter is also inviting all Dames to attend our monthly Zoom programs, which are free, engaging, and educational. Chef and cookbook author **Kim O'Donnel** shared novel methods of cooking beans; other programs have included Holiday Traditions Through Black Diaspora Foodways, and Vegan Means Business. If you would like to receive notice ahead of each month's online program, please contact President Sheila Crye at president@lesdamesdc.org

2023 LDEI Patron Program

Thank you to all the Dames and chapters who contributed so generously to the Patron Program. The program was established in 2016 to engage our Dames, chapters, and Dame-owned businesses in a partner-like experience. Your support played a pivotal role in our ability to ensure that LDEI could continue to provide the outstanding programs and meaningful experiences we've come to enjoy at Conference. With heartfelt thanks and deepest appreciation, we acknowledge the 2023 Patrons. —Kathy Gold, LDEI President.



CONFERENCE PATRONS (\$500)

- Atlanta Chapter
- JeanMarie Brownson
- Cleveland/Northeast Ohio Chapter
- Nashville Chapter
- Marilyn Freundlich
- Kathy Gold
- Paula Lambert
- Deborah Mintcheff
- Paige Marie Poulos
- Minnesota Chapter
- Eileen Spitalny
- Washington, D.C. Regional Chapter
- Kentucky Chapter
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- Jennifer Goldman
- Kimberly Miller
- Kersten Rettig

SUPPORTING PATRONS (\$2,500)

- Dallas Chapter
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THE BROCK CIRCLE COMMITTEE:

The members of the 2024 Brock Circle Committee are:

Co-Chair Barb Pires (Atlanta), LDEI Board Treasurer

Co-Chair Jennifer Goldman (Cleveland), Immediate LDEI Past President

Holly Kinney (Colorado)

Emily Snyder (South Florida)

Wendy Allen Bohannon, Atlanta Chapter President

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LDEI'S 2023 STATE OF THE UNION

BY JENNIFER GOLDMAN (CLEVELAND) LDEI PAST PRESIDENT

The LDEI President and Board of Directors present a recap of the year at the Council of Delegates meeting at our Annual Conference. This year, we decided to make a presentation to everyone who attended our gathering in Louisville to inform more Dames of the work being done to enhance our organization. While the full report was sent to the entire membership in an eblast on October 12, 2023, here are a few of the highlights:

Last year, a partnership was forged with The Wine Group to establish the Scholarships for Impactful Change, which provide four \$5000 education scholarships to support women in hospitality-based programs who are seeking to head up positive community impact. We were blown away by the winners we met on the webinar presented in October and are very excited that this initiative will launch again in April.

We've all experienced that business, in general, operates very differently in a post-Covid world. Combined with the impending change in LDEI's management company at the end of 2027 and a softer balance sheet, the Board took a deep dive to see where the organization is currently and how to move forward to continue to

be the successful, sustainable nonprofit organization we are proud to be.

We're in the process of engaging a partnership development firm to secure partnerships for LDEI this year. And we made the *Quarterly* completely digital, which makes the printing funds available for engaging a PR firm whose purpose is the advancement of the LDEI brand. The M.F.K. Fisher Prize is being reimagined as a stand-alone symposium, which we are very excited about, and we are making creative changes to our Annual Conference that are sure to engage more members, take less of a toll on host chapters, and not be a financial burden on our association. The Inaugural LDEI Online Auction will kick off soon as well.

The demographics survey that was conducted last year had a 37 percent response rate and, based on those who responded, we have opportunities for growth. A number of our chapters are actively seeking a more diverse membership, and those efforts should continue to be a primary focus this year as 56 percent of our Dames are 56 years of age or older, which speaks to the depth of career experience of our members. But to be a sustainable association, we need to recruit younger women who will carry forward the significant work of LDEI. We have also learned that while nearly all of our Dames have full-

time careers, 31 percent are self-employed entrepreneurs, and, as such, our representation and influence within the various industry segments continues to expand.

We appreciate all those who responded to the surveys we sent last year to gather information on who we are and what drives us. This information is critical to providing relevant programming and long-term planning, so it is imperative that each chapter and every Dame respond to surveys and requests for information.

LDEI is a strong organization with the industry's top women leaders as members. It has a significant and respected legacy of 36 years. We have the most members we've ever had; 2600 in 44 chapters in six countries. And we are accomplishing impressive work in our communities. The primary mission of our chapters, simply put, is to raise money and give it away through scholarships and other important initiatives. Over the course of LDEI's history the chapters have collectively raised and donated over \$10 million dollars!

It was a busy year for LDEI! It is a privilege to be part of an organization of women who are driven by purpose and a willingness to share their gifts to help others. Keep up the good work. Your time and efforts make ALL the difference.



Top photo: Wigwam Resort.
Lavender and cactus flower photos:
Jenelle Bonifield/Food & Lifestyles

A Date in the Desert 2024 PHOENIX CONFERENCE

"Excited" doesn't begin to describe how the Phoenix Chapter feels about hosting this year's LDEI Conference. It is our goal to make it remarkably fun, delicious, and educational for all attendees.

For non-Westerners, I'll emphasize, our valley is not a dreary, lunar-like landscape. We are in the Sonoran Desert, the lushest desert in the world!

So what should you expect? Obviously, warmer weather; October temps hover in the high 80s to mid 90s, but hey, it's a dry heat! Bring that swimsuit, those are perfect temps for dipping into three onsite pools, or for enjoying a dual water slide (I can already hear the "Dame dares" this will generate)!

The Wigwam is one of Arizona's top luxury resorts; it's also a piece of Western history, opening in 1929. Today it reflects a rare aura of quiet elegance woven with historic Southwest charm. Expansive grounds span 440 lush acres, including a 26,000-square-foot, award-winning spa, with a private lap pool. For some, 54 holes of onsite championship golf will be irresistible, as will three award-winning dining venues. Anchoring it all are 331 elegantly appointed rooms.

But what about the Conference? We're still planning—but here's a quick breakdown of what we've already lined up:

THURSDAY OPTIONAL PRECONFERENCE ONSITE EVENTS: If wine is your thing, experience an immersive dive into Arizona's thriving industry - led by Dame **Peggy Fiandaca**—owner of LDV Winery, along with multiple vineyard-savvy Dames, capped off by a well-curated, pairing luncheon.

Those into indigenous foods won't want to miss a culturally inclusive demonstration/luncheon class that begins with a primer on indigenous

southwest ingredients. It transitions to a four-course demonstration, including fresh corn tamales, chicken/tepeary bean stuffed poblanos, and mesquite/piñon crust cheesecake.

Come evening, experience our Harvest Moon Festival partnership with C-CAP (Careers Through Culinary Arts Program). You'll be bussed to the legendary Phoenician Resort, where you'll spend the evening choosing between 30+ food stations, plus complimentary wine and cocktails. Each station represents a high school's most promising culinary students paired with top-tier mentoring chefs and they're all competing to win your vote for People's Choice Award!

Friday and Saturday daytime sessions will be engaging and educational. Friday evening, we're celebrating both sides of Arizona—Country and Western. Bring your boots; we'll provide hats. Line dancing lessons, a fireside cowboy poet, chuck wagon staples, and lots of boot-scootin' fun rounds out your day.

Optional After-Conference Events: Join us Sunday for a once-in-a-lifetime brunch. Choose between former Phoenix Dame/President and James Beard Award winner, Chef Charleen Badman, who will host a Dames-only brunch at her Scottsdale restaurant, F&B. Or, visit Dame **Kim Hassarud**, a renowned mixologist and owner of Garden Bar in historic downtown Phoenix, for an indulgent brunch at her charming 1914 bungalow turned craft cocktail mecca.

Allow room in your suitcase; we're hosting a Cookbook and Curio Shop where all cookbooks are only \$5! A little FYI—many are already talking of bringing spouses/partners. Come—experience the excitement that is LDEI's 2024 International Conference in Arizona!

— Conference Co-Chair Candy Leshner



Experience the Culinary Diversity of the Sonoran Desert



MEMBER MILESTONES *Dottie Koteski (Philadelphia)*

ATLANTA

Gena Berry, owner of Culinary Works, served as the head of Culinary Logistics at the inaugural BHAM FOOD + CULTURE Fest. There were over 60 chefs and beverage professionals who participated in events throughout the week. www.culinaryworks.net



Gena Berry

Jennifer Hill Booker's restaurant, Bauhaus Biergarten celebrated its one-year anniversary. www.bauhausbiergarten.com



Jennifer Hill Booker

Kaffee Hopkins was named Vice President of Marketing and Administrative Officer at Sterling Hospitality. Kaffee previously served as the company's director of brand marketing and has played a vital role in the success of Marlow's Tavern, Woodall, and Sterling Culinary Management. www.sterlingculinarymanagement.com



Kaffee Hopkins

Natalie Keng along with her popular Pigs in a Blanket recipe was highlighted in the September 18 issue of *People* magazine. The recipe is from Natalie's new cookbook *Egg Roll & Sweet Tea*. www.globalhearth.com



Natalie Keng

Rebecca Lang launched a new online business. Rebecca Lang Cooks Curriculum is a subscription-based website for use in high school and middle school kitchen classrooms. www.cookscurriculum.com



Rebecca Lang

Lenada Merrick was the keynote speaker at the October Home Economists in Business (HEIB) luncheon and spoke about her exciting long and varied career.



Lenada Merrick

Sarah O'Brien, owner of Little Tart Bake-shop, celebrated 12 years in business. Sarah has three locations: Grant Park, in the Krog Street Market, and in Summerhill. www.littletartatl.com



Sarah O'Brien

Sarah Pierre opened a second 3 Parks Wine Shop located in the popular Glenwood Park shop in the Old Fourth Ward. Her Eastside Beltline spot has expanded outdoor space and room to host events. www.3parkswine.com



Sarah Pierre

Deborah VanTrece's restaurant, Twisted Soul Cookhouse & Pours, was acknowledged as Recommended in the first Atlanta Michelin Guide. www.twistedsoulatl.com



Deborah VanTrece

Hope Webb's restaurant, Estrellita, was awarded the status of Bib Gourmand in the first Atlanta Michelin Guide. www.estrellitaflipino.com



Hope Webb

Virginia Willis is writing a monthly column, "Food Focus," for *The Atlanta Constitution Journal* and additionally, twice a month will join the AJC 5:30 Challenge five ingredient dinner in 30 minutes or less team.



Virginia Willis

AUSTIN

Karen Killough's Vista Brewing opened a new, larger location in San Antonio offering more space for sharing engaging, community-focused events—and, of course, more craft beer and Texas wine, plus a full coffee program.



Karen Killough

Kati Luedecke opened new project Bottega, a shop offering coffee, ice cream, and fine foods in Austin, Texas.



Kati Luedecke

Sara Mardanbigi and Kendall Antonelli were selected for the James Beard Women's Entrepreneurial Leadership Program. Antonelli's Cheese also announced the signing of a lease and opened a new tasting room in 2024; the celebration included a citywide cheese scavenger hunt to reveal the new location.

Veronica Meewes released *Drink Like a Local: Austin* (HarpCollins, 2023), a guide detailing the history and recipes behind Austin's best bars. At present, she is currently working on her fifth book project, a comprehensive exploration of barbecue across Texas.



Veronica Meewes

Julie Myrtille announced the opening of her second retail location of Julie Myrtille Bakery. Julie's Gooley Choco-Caramel Dream dessert won top prize during the Junior League's 2023 Girl Scouts Cookie Confection contest.



Julie Myrtille

Sara Hamza Watson's Vacancy Brewing took home a gold medal at this year's Great American Beer Festival (GABF) for their Jet Lag Lager.



Sara Hamza Watson

BIRMINGHAM

Geri-Martha O'Hara, co-owner of Big Spoon Creamery is working with top Birmingham chefs to create a new, monthly, chef-inspired ice cream flavor such as Neapolitan created by James Beard Award winner Frank Stitt, composed with Valhrona chocolate, Madagascar vanilla bean, and strawberry ice creams. Upcoming chefs are featured on the website. www.bigspooncreamery.com



Geri-Martha O'Hara

Deborah and Alexandria Stone, mother-daughter owners of Stone Hollow Farmstead, made it on OPRAH'S Favorite Things 2023 list for the third year in a row. Their Blissful Breakfast Box features wildflower honey, rose geranium syrup, sprouted flour pancake mix, and honeysuckle jelly. www.stonehollowfarmstead.com



Deborah Stone



Alexandria Stone

Jan Walsh, food and wine writer, created her first cartoon series, *That Guy!* featuring a foodie who causes a scene wherever he goes but thinks he is charming and charismatic. It is published monthly on Cartoons page of "CulinaryCartoons.com" and on *SubStack*. www.culinarycartoons.com



Jan Walsh

BOSTON

Christine Gilchrist Tuttle, leading New England interior designer, was chosen to curate a table for the "To Live & Dine" gala to benefit the Greater Boston Food Bank on October 21 at the Mandarin Oriental hotel. Christine was delighted to present a Dinner in the Cotswolds table decorated completely with the best of British design. Christine Tuttle Design focuses on residential and small hospitality projects. www.christinetuttle.com



Christine Gilchrist Tuttle

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Meeru Dhalwala, the first recipient of the Women of WORTH Empower Award, was recognized as a true champion of equity in the culinary world. Her impact in the community goes far beyond the kitchen. She's a strong advocate for women in business, a leader in addressing climate change, and a proponent of healthy and sustainable cooking. worthassociation.com/yes-shef-2023-recap



Meeru Dhalwala



Christina Ferreira

Christina Ferreira was honored with the Kelowna Chamber of

Commerce Top 40 award. Christian founded Impact Events in 2008 and has grown the business from a solo side hustle to a small but mighty agency. In addition to an impressive client portfolio, Impact Events also owns five large community festival-style events. www.ow.ly/5IFV50P4AtV

CHARLESTON

Ashley Strickland Freeman, food stylist and recipe developer, hosts a new food and travel blog called Little Black Skillet. www.littleblackskillet.com



Ashley Strickland Freeman

Amethyst Ganaway, Charleston Chapter secretary, is a chef and food writer. Her article "A city built on oysters" was recently published in the *Charleston City Paper*; she also wrote about a favorite Thanksgiving dish—Low-country Seafood Dressing—for *The Spruce Eats*.



Amethyst Ganaway

Robin Griffith, the Charleston Chapter president, met recently with The SC Governor's School for Agriculture to advise on their planned culinary and hospitality programming.



Robin Griffith

Sarah O'Kelley's new Grape to Table wine club celebrates the magic of wine, food, and travel through an exploration of small, family-run wineries and detailed pairing suggestions. Sarah draws heavily from Old World Europe with an occasional New World gem thrown into the mix.



Sarah O'Kelley

Rhonda Mitchell, the Charleston Chapter vice president, celebrates the one year anniversary of her popular catering business, The Drizzled Pear.



Rhonda Mitchell

Isabella Macbeth, US national oyster shucking champion, recently traveled to Bordeaux, France, to represent the USA at the World Seafood Chef Challenge.



Isabella Macbeth

CHICAGO

Katie Ayoub, President of Katie Ayoub & Associates, was the recipient of the 2023 Betty Bastion Outstanding Service Award from The International Foodservice Editorial

Council. IFEC's highest honor is presented annually to a member who has made significant contributions to the well-being of IFEC and the field of foodservice communications through outstanding leadership, service, and professionalism. www.ifeconline.com/betty/

COLORADO

Holly Arnold Kinney, proprietress of The Fort restaurant, received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Colorado Restaurant Association and was inducted into the Colorado Foodservice Hall of Fame. This prestigious award celebrates individuals who devote their careers to the spirit of hospitality and for their dedication to the foodservice industry.



Holly Arnold Kinney

DALLAS

Jennifer Bajsel, a private chef in Dallas, Texas, renowned for her home-cooked meals with a global touch, shares enticing dessert recipes in *Living Magazine*. Alongside her culinary expertise, she hosts an Italian cooking show on national streaming television, which enriches the culinary experience for audiences with her diverse and flavorful creations.



Jennifer Bajsel

Leslie Brenner was featured in *D Magazine* unveiling a groundbreaking exploration of sweet potatoes. The article showcased her expertise and innovative approach, and it introduced unexpected ingredients to redefine the classic dish. Brenner's feature promised readers a delightful and unique culinary experience with the decadent sweet potato.



Leslie Brenner

Tiffany Derry, recognized for Roots Southern Table, introduces Radici, her latest venture—an Italian restaurant in Farmers Branch. Collaborating with partner Tom Foley, Radici, meaning "roots" in Italian, offers wood-fired vegetables, homemade pasta, and more. Positioned near Roots Southern Table, the third concept from T2D Concepts adds a flavorful Italian touch to Dallas dining.



Tiffany Derry

Amber Fletcher, the Corny Dog Heiress featured in *Texas Monthly*, carries on the legacy



Amber Fletcher

of the iconic Fletcher's Original Corny Dogs. Her grandfather and great-uncle pioneered the famed "meal on a stick" in 1942 at the State Fair. Amber prepares to serve millions during the fair, embodying her distinctive, casual style.

Aamina Masood made waves at the QuadM market with her delectable offerings, which included halal marshmallows, nan khatai, and tempting brownies. QuadM is fostering support for Muslim female entrepreneurs and has transformed into a nationwide phenomenon. Aamina's stall sold out quickly, attesting to the widespread demand for her treats and the market's growing influence.



Aamina Masood

Andrea Meyer was featured in *Pastry Arts Magazine*, October 2023. She discussed her culinary journey, highlighting the significance of her macaron depositor for precision. She showcased signature products, blending tradition and innovation. Andrea expressed future goals, including expansion plans, illustrating her commitment to pushing creative boundaries in the realm of pastry arts.



Andrea Meyer

Katie Natalie celebrated a culinary milestone with the unveiling of a long-anticipated food truck at Saginaw High School. The menu boasts her family-inspired killer chili, all-beef brisket link, Fritos, a premium Caesar salad, and pumpkin chocolate chip muffins. Culinary excellence takes center stage at Saginaw High School's program!



Katie Natalie

Rachel Edenson Pinn recounts her immersive summer 2023 trip through Italy's Veneto and Abruzzo regions in her *D Magazine* article, "How to Create Your Own Italian Vacation in Dallas." She includes recommendations from local, Dallas readers to capture the authentic Italian experience, from exquisite wines at Grappolo Wine Shop to delectable gelato at Botolino.



Rachel Edenson Pinn

Lauren Ford Smith, the committed executive director of Hugs Cafe Inc., is appointed to the McKinney Main Street Board of Directors. Recognized



Lauren Ford Smith

for fostering community connections and creating positive impacts, her leadership at Hugs Cafe Inc. has made it a beacon of hope and inclusion.



Hao Tran

Hao Tran, owner of Hao's Grocery and Cafe, is honored with the Eisenhower Award for Organizational Involvement by Fort Worth Sister Cities International. Recognized for community service beyond daily business operations, Tran's commitment shines. Her grocery and cafe contribute not only to local needs but also foster international connections, solidifying her well-deserved recognition.



Fana Yohannes

Fana Yohannes of Carver Park in Dallas delights patrons with Fana's Ethiopian Pop-Up, featuring traditional dishes like Doro We't. Collaborating with Chef James Rowland, the events, held at Carver Park and other venues, consistently sell out. Due to popular demand, Chef Yohannes has also conducted cooking classes, turning diners into culinary enthusiasts.

LONDON

Alison Swan Parente MBE, initiated food education project Best Food Forward at The School of Artisan Food. Work with health professionals and teenage students is ongoing and exciting, as is the project mapping food education provision in secondary schools all over England. www.bestfoodforward.co.uk



Alison Swan Parente

LOS ANGELES/ORANGE COUNTY

Jamie Knee was chosen as a permanent wine judge to represent the USA at Concours Mondial Competitions worldwide including Croatia, Mexico, and Macedonia. She's also a new member of Circle of Wine Writers and initiated Central Coast Women in Wine in Santa Barbara, supporting women in the wine industry. linktr.ee/Petitewinetraveler



Jamie Knee

NASHVILLE

Paulette Licitra led her 10th culinary group tour to Italy in October 2023. Her group of eight spent 10 days in Venice cooking with local chefs, shopping the great Rialto market,



Paulette Licitra

visiting DOCG Prosecco producers, and exploring the outer lagoon with local fishermen who provide local Venetian seafood. ChefPaulette.net

NEW YORK

Julie Hartigan, a dual member in both the New York and Italy Chapters, hosted her second sold out Women Supporting Women Tuscany Tour featuring women winemakers, artisans, chefs, and guides in Italy, including fellow Italy Dames! www.JulieHartigan.com



Julie Hartigan

June Hersh has been tapped by Taste Awards to be an expert judge. The Taste Awards honor the best in food, fashion, and lifestyle programming. Fellow **Lidia Bastianich** will be inducted into the Taste Hall of Fame at this year's ceremony. www.thetasteawards.com/



June Hersh

Marion Nestle's article from the *American Journal of Public Health*, "Regulating the Food Industry: An Aspirational Agenda," is reproduced in *The Best American Food Writing 2023*, edited by Mark Bittman. www.foodpolitics.com



Marion Nestle

Caity Moseman Wadler was honored to join the National Board of Directors of Slow Food USA in September 2023. She is energized to work with the global, grassroots movement toward good, clean, and fair food for all. Slowfoodusa.org



Caity Moseman Wadler

Hiroko Shimbo in 2023 became a chef-instructor for the Japanese Concentration Program (a special credit earning program for the students) at the Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, New York. Hiroko will continue to teach the Program in 2024.



Hiroko Shimbo

NORTH CAROLINA

Diane Flynt's book, *Wild, Tamed, Lost, Revived: The Surprising Story of Apples in the South* (Ferris and Ferris imprint) was published by UNC Press in September 2023. The book explores the South through the lens of an



Diane Flynt

agricultural ingredient not often associated with the region. Dame Angie Mosier's photographs illustrate the book. www.foggyridge-cider.com/dianes-book-wild-tamed-lost-revived/

Sandra A. Gutierrez released her newest cookbook *LATINISIMO* (Knopf) in two separate editions (one in English and another in Spanish). This is the first time Knopf publishes the same book in two languages simultaneously. www.sites.prh.com/sandra-gutierrez



Sandra A. Gutierrez

PHILADELPHIA

Aliza Green's newest cookbook, *Aruba's Papiamento Cuisine: New Caribbean Cooking Celebrating its Creole Roots and Multicultural Flavors*, was published by Panamericana in Bogota, Colombia. The author's second book about the food of Aruba, it is an introduction and a love letter to the food, chefs, and producers on this "One Happy Island." www.alizagreen.com



Aliza Green

PHOENIX

Patty Emmert has an exciting new role as director of resilient food systems for the award-winning nonprofit Local First Arizona. Her efforts will address systemic food insecurity across Arizona while supporting the efforts of local farmers and growers. www.ediblephoenix.com



Patty Emmert

Shannan Perciballi is the new editor/publisher of the locally focused quarterly *Edible Phoenix*, taking the reins from Dame **Pamela Hamilton**. Pamela was an early supporter of Edible Communities and owned the Phoenix franchise for 17 years. www.ediblephoenix.com



Shannan Perciballi

SACRAMENTO

Amy Myrdal Miller and co-author Linda Hachfeld won a Silver Medal in the 2023 Living Now Book Awards for *Cooking à la Heart: Fourth Edition*. The Living Now Book Awards recognize exceptional life-changing books and their creators. *Cooking à la Heart* celebrates plant-forward eating patterns that promote cardiovascular wellness.



Amy Myrdal Miller

SAN FRANCISCO

Georganne Brennan, author and co-founder of L'Apéro les Trois, aperitif wines, celebrated the launch of her newest book, *Pistachio*, with lunch and a book signing at the L'Apéro les Trois tasting lounge in Winters, California. Photographed by Robert Holmes, *Pistachio* features sweet and savory recipes inspired by world cuisines.



Georganne Brennan

Danielle Fiala and husband, Zane, opened Doctorbird Market, a specialty food market located in Old Town Pittsburg, California, whose offerings range from wines and craft beer to high-quality snacks and pantry items. The shop's products are thoughtfully sourced, with a focus on local producers, family-run businesses, and makers from underrepresented communities. www.doctorbirdmarket.com



Danielle Fiala

Alison Seibert's public relations and communications agency, The James Collective, was named, for the second year in a row, as one of the top 100 agencies by the PR Net for 2023. She also announced TJC's representation of Marmalade.co and Schoolhouse brands. www.thejamescollective.com

SEATTLE

Stephanie Swane, publisher and editorial director of *Modernist Cuisine*, chaired a panel of esteemed judges for the IACP Cookbook Awards 2023. The committee is responsible for managing the integrity and efficiency of the judging process but does not cast votes or influence the judges' decisions.



Stephanie Swane

Deba Wegner assisted in the following 2023 openings: Farzi Café—first US location of this wildly popular brand; Northwest Spirits Distillery; Von's 1000 Spirits Restaurant; Agave Cocina & Cantina; Mayuri International Grocery and Bellwether Law offices. www.yourrecipeforsuccess.com



Deba Wegner

SONOMA

Lisa Stavropoulos's award-winning business, Greek Grape Wine Tours, recently achieved another impressive accolade by the World Luxury Travel



Lisa Stavropoulos

Awards as the Best Wine Tour in Europe. In previous years, GGWT was twice named Best Wine Tour in Greece by Travel & Hospitality Awards. www.greekgrapewinetours.com

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Amber Croom won Season 2 of FOX's Crime Scene Kitchen cooking competition show, sharing \$100,000 with her co-contestant. Amber is the founder and executive pastry chef of And 4 Dessert, an appointment-only confectionery studio in Baltimore. and4dessert.com



Amber Croom

Daniella Senior's Colada Shop was named a 2023 Hot Concepts winner for the *Nation's Restaurant News*. coladashop.com



Daniella Senior

Tambra Raye Stevenson of WANDA participated in a panel as part of Local Change, National Impact: CSPI's Partner Convening, a three-day conference bringing nearly 50 food leaders to Washington. She also spoke on the closing panel at the Food as Medicine: Policy Summit. iamwanda.org

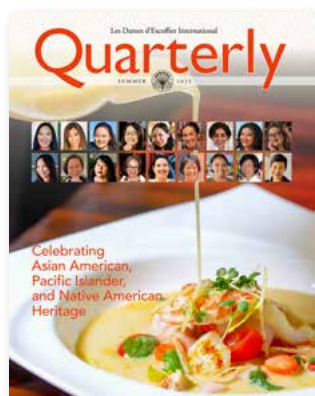
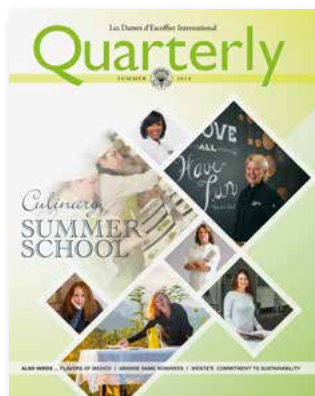
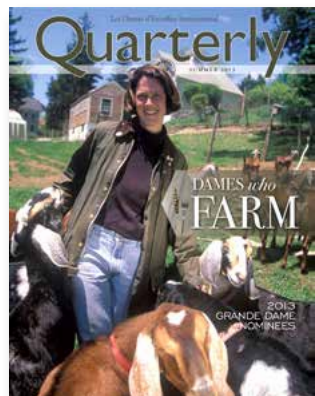
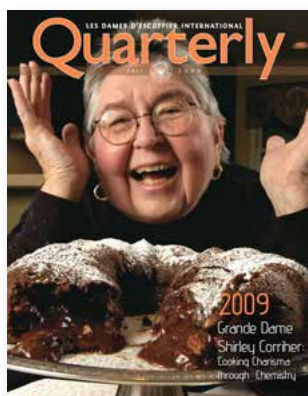
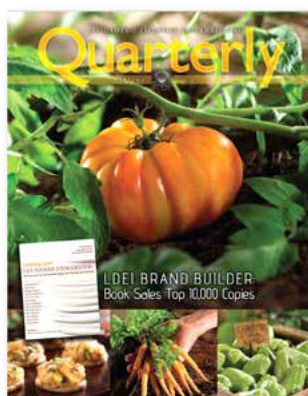
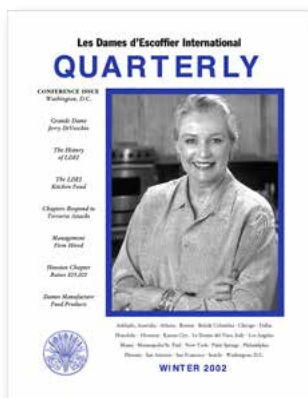


Tambra Raye Stevenson

Paola Velez, an award-winning chef, community activist, and entrepreneur, sold her pecan-plantain sticky buns in Nordstrom stores' restaurants during Hispanic Heritage Month. She also introduced a limited-edition kitchen workwear line with Urban Outfitters' Urban Renewal brand. smallorchids.com



Paola Velez



The Quarterly: It's Not Goodbye, but Thank You!

BY SUSAN SLACK (CHARLESTON)

This final issue of the *Quarterly* marks the end of an era in LDEI's communication history, but it also signals a new beginning with the publication of *the feast*. The first issue, edited by **Kendra Thatcher**, (Philadelphia), will be launched in April.

In 1989, prolific writer CiCi Williamson hatched the idea of producing a simple, printed *Newsletter* to mail to the membership. (The first Annual Conference had been held the year prior.) These were the challenging days of “cut and paste” on cardboard; not “copy and paste” on the computer! The World Wide Web (WWW or “the web”) was also created in 1989 by British computer scientist, Sir Tim Berners-Lee. The one-page *Newsletter* and the web helped lay the groundwork for the way Dames communicate, work, learn, and socialize today.

In 1999, 25 years ago, **Pam Williams** (BC) was president and the *Newsletter*—expanded to four pages—was LDEI's go-to publication. In 2000, after CiCi's Special Millennium issue was produced, the *Newsletter* became the Les Dames d'Escoffier *Quarterly*. **Abigail Kirsch** (LDNY) presided over an organization of 19 chapters and 884 Dames. In the fall of 2001, **Katherine Newell Smith** (Washington, D.C.) became *Quarterly* editor.

With print going the way of vinyl, the online incarnation of the *Quarterly* continues to evolve. As *the feast*, it will fully embrace today's tech savvy media, which spans the written word to include video, audio, and social media. Happily, the extant *Quarterly* issues are available at the LDEI website in the Member's Section, and issues of *the feast* will be housed in that space too.

Kendra Thatcher, my talented co-editor, has done the heavy lifting in creating the new publication, while I have primarily focused

on this *Quarterly* issue...no small feat! *The feast* will inform, empower, and entertain Dames, while celebrating our Partners.

Producing the *Quarterly* magazine has been a labor of love. We hope to preserve its spirit while continuing to connect Dames and chapters in meaningful ways. There is a lot of talent in this organization as you can see. Moving forward, we hope our savvy Dame journalists will continue contributing to *the feast*.

Eight different Dame editors have utilized the benefits of technology and digital advancements to improve the photography and layout of the *Quarterly*. They are:

CiCi Williamson (2000-2001; 2011-2021)

Katherine Newell Smith (2001-2003)

Connie Hay (2003-2004)

Jerry DiVecchio (2005-2006)

June Hayes (2006-2007)

Sarah Graham (2007-2008)

Susan Slack (2008-2024)

Suzanne Brown (fall 2021)

Kendra Thatcher (spring 2022-2024)

Department Editor **Dottie Koteski** (Philadelphia) oversees Member Milestones; **Nichole Bendele** (San Antonio) is responsible for Chapter Programs. Dottie and Nichole, both exceptional editors, will continue their work with Kendra and me on *the feast*. Second Vice President **Anita Lau** (LA/OC-San Diego) “keeps the trains running” efficiently as the liaison between the *Quarterly* editors and the LDEI Board. Joni Keith, our talented graphic designer, transforms your articles in each issue into beautiful designs. She is hard at work creating a new vision for *the feast*.

Over the years, many people have supported the *Quarterly*: LDEI presidents, *Quarterly* Board liaisons, hard-working managing editors, department editors, Greg Jewell and his staff, and especially, the writers. In addition to Katherine Newell-Smith and **Suzanne Brown**, Dames **Teresa Farney** (Colorado) and **Sandy Hu** (San Francisco) acted as thoughtful advisors throughout the years. Their interests are very much aligned with the success of LDEI. My thanks and gratitude to them all.

It's been a privilege and pleasure to serve as the *Quarterly* editor. As we say goodbye to an era filled with memories and growth, it's time to embrace a new perspective. After all, endings are just new beginnings in disguise.



Katherine Newell Smith
(2001-2003)



Connie Hay
(2003-2004)



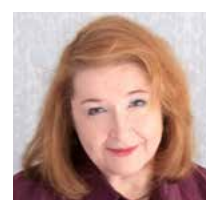
Jerry DiVecchio
(2005-2006)



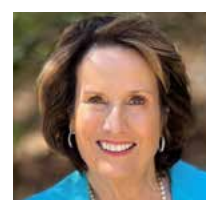
June Hayes
(2006-2007)



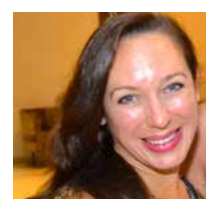
Sarah Graham
(2007-2008)



Susan Slack
(2008-2024)



Suzanne Brown
(fall 2021)



Kendra Thatcher
(spring 2022-2024)



Nichole Bendele
(Department Editor
Chapter Programs)
Dottie Koteski
(Department Editor
Member Milestones)

The Times They Are A-Changin'

BY SUZANNE BROWN
(ATLANTA) 2009-2010
LDEI PRESIDENT

“The Times They Are a-Changin’,” the song written by Bob Dylan in 1963, was a commentary on changes taking place at the time. For example, The Civil Rights Movement, the assassination of President John Kennedy, the Vietnam War, all created change that affected people everywhere.

No matter what changes are taking place in the world today, no matter how hard, we adjust and live with them. It's like pulling up a pair of Spanx. Once you get them up, you like the way they look regardless of how uncomfortable the process was.

In 2009, when I was LDEI President, the *Quarterly* was our only communication vehicle. Members looked forward to receiving their copies in the mail. At the time, CiCi Williamson, founder of the LDEI *Quarterly*, and **Susan Slack** were co-editors, each taking responsibility for two issues. Being able to save and re-read articles kept members engaged and able to learn about upcoming events in detail. One major event in 2009 was the publication of our LDEI cookbook. On the cover of the spring *Quarterly* was a picture of the cookbook and headline, “LDEI Brand Builder: Book Sales Top 10,000 copies.”

Throughout the *Quarterly*'s history, I've had the opportunity to write many articles. But the topper was when asked to edit the 2021 fall *Quarterly*. That was the issue that focused on our first Woman of Purpose award winner, **Tallu Schuyler Quinn**. The issue also featured our Legacy Award winners. I've saved a few issues of the *Quarterly*, and it's nostalgic to look through them and remember all the incredible accomplishments of our members. I'm grateful for the past to hang onto but know that change is inevitable. And I surely don't want to be left behind.

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YETI BUILT FOR THE WILD.

The Quarterly: A Bridge to Communication

By KATHERINE NEWELL SMITH
(WASHINGTON, D.C.) 2008-2009
LDEI PRESIDENT

The *Quarterly* was launched in January 2000 with stories highlighting the 1999 Annual Conference in Atlanta: **Edna Lewis** honored as Grand Dame; an all-star Dames panel on food trends, LDEI's partnership with Italy's *Le Donne del Vino*. Second Vice President, CiCi Williamson (Washington, D.C.) was the inaugural editor. That CiCi was assigned this ambitious undertaking was fortuitous. She is a facile and prolific writer, a good photographer and adept at layout. When I stepped into the role the following year, the template was already set up, the printing company contracted, and a volunteer conscripted to stuff and mail the issues to members. Remember, this was still dial-up technology and printed labels. Also, CiCi continued to take the photos.



While the editorship was incredibly time consuming, I loved the interaction with members. Cajoling stories and milestones, convincing various Dames to cover chapter and LDEI events, and interviewing members who were doing impressive projects, enabled me to know so many Dames. I did find it amusing when well-meaning PR reps submitted two-pages of copy for a Dame client's milestone with the admonition that it "could NOT be cut." I would respectfully return an edited 50-word piece that miraculously covered all they intended to say.

As the *Quarterly* editor, I gained an appreciation of how important having such a communications bridge was for members. It gave them a window to see that they are part of something larger than their individual chapters and that they have "sisters" all over the world they can call on.

After volunteering for years, **Susan Slack** and CiCi (under LDEI President **Teresa Farney**) were finally hired to share the editorship from 2012 through spring 2021. It was an important step to professionalize the publication. I am especially proud that, during my 2008-2009 presidency, I recruited Susan to become editor. She has done a spectacular job.



CiCi Williamson
and Susan Slack.
Photo: Lori Willis

the feast (A New LDEI Publication)

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

DEADLINES April Issue - March 1; June Issue - May 1;
August Issue - July 1; October Issue - August 30; December Issue -
November 1

MEMBER MILESTONES

(Editor, Dottie Koteski)

To submit your milestone, go to this link:

<http://link.ldei.org/ldei-member-milestones> For any questions or issues, email the editor at MemberMilestones@ldei.org.

Include:

- **CHAPTER**
- **DAME'S NAME**
- **Maximum 50 words** for each Dame about personal honors or accomplishments, but not about new product introductions or other promotions. Please include a website URL, if applicable. Press releases and cookbook covers are NOT accepted.

PHOTO: You may submit a high resolution quality headshot to accompany your news (see below), and agree to the photo permissions questions for the photo. *Note: Due to space constraints, only two Member Milestones will be published per Dame per year.*

CHAPTER PROGRAMS

(Editor, Nichole Bendele)

To submit your chapter program, go to this link: <http://link.ldei.org/ldei-chapter-programs> Up to 200 words about chapter events that have already occurred. For any questions or issues, email the editor at ChapterPrograms@ldei.org.

Include:

- **CHAPTER**
- **SUBMITTER'S NAME**
- **Maximum 200 words for each chapter.**
- **Captions** for all photos submitted. Photos without captions will not be used. Submissions that exceed 200 words will be edited to comply. Press releases are not accepted. We regret we don't have space to print full menus but menu items can be included in the copy. *Note: "Chapter Programs" and "Member Milestones" may be dispersed through LDEI social-media channels, as well as in print and online.*

PHOTOGRAPHY/IMAGES

- Electronic images must be properly focused and in color with a minimum resolution of 300 dpi (TIFF or JPEG).
- Cell phone photos are acceptable if they meet requirements.
- Do not send photos taken off the Internet or embedded with text in Word files or PDF files.
- Include photo credits, if required.
- A maximum of three photos can be submitted per chapter.
- **ALL PHOTOGRAPHS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY CAPTIONS OR THEY WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED.**

LDEI regrets that we cannot include lengthy profiles of individual Dames due to space limitations. Submit Dames' accomplishments to "Member Milestones" or to LDEI's Closed Group on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/218435184886471/>

Appearing in person or online at an LDEI-sponsored event grants LDEI full rights to use any resulting photography images or video, and any reproductions or adaptations for *the feast*, social media, PR, or other purposes to help achieve the organization's aims.

UPCOMING IN APRIL—Inaugural Issue of *the feast*

- *Austin dishes out the secret sauce for their infamous You Grill, Girl fundraiser.*
- *The plant-forward trend is here to stay—and here's why we all should get onboard now.*

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THE HOME
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Photos: Susan Slack, LDEI, Anita Lau.