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JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION NAMES 2012 AMERICA'S CLASSICS AWARD HONOREES

*Five America's Classics Restaurants to be Honored at the Annual
James Beard Foundation Awards on Monday, May 7, 2012 in New York City*

New York, NY (March 13, 2012) – Today the James Beard Foundation announced the five honorees for the 2012 James Beard Foundation Awards America's Classics category, presented by The Coca-Cola Company. The America's Classics award is given to restaurants with timeless appeal and that are beloved for quality food that reflects the character of their community. This year's five America's Classics honorees will be celebrated at the annual James Beard Foundation Awards, the nation's most prestigious recognition program honoring professionals in the food and beverage industry, in an awards ceremony taking place on Monday, May 7, 2012 at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall in New York City.

"Every year, the presentation of our five America's Classics Awards are favorite moments at our ceremony," said Susan Ungaro, President of the James Beard Foundation, "Attendees at our awards love meeting these folks and hearing their stories, because they represent the diverse heritage, heart and community of our country's national cuisine. James Beard would have loved visiting them all."

The 2012 James Beard Foundation Awards America's Classics award honorees are:

The Fry Bread House (4140 N. 7th Avenue, Phoenix, Owner: Cecelia Miller)

No trip to Phoenix is complete without a visit to the Fry Bread House, a trim paneled room on a modest, sun-baked residential street, founded in 1992. The sign outside says "Native American Food." At the counter inside, you can order exhilarating, complex red and green chile stews that are a primal blast of the Southwest.

Owner Cecelia Miller comes from the Sonoran desert Tohono O'odham Nation, and her all-native staff is drawn from assorted Arizona tribes. Their blissfully delicious specialty is hand-stretched fry bread—downy bronze cushions the size of dinner plates, in both savory and sweet versions.

On the savory side: Indian tacos, layered with refried beans and beefy red chili, green chili, or chorizo, garnished with crisp chopped iceberg, shredded cheese, and tart red salsa. For dessert: fry bread baptized with butter and local honey or homemade chocolate.

The faithful clientele is wonderfully democratic, from Tohono O'odham friends of the house to hipsters and businessmen and the ever-present lucky traveler.

Nora's Fish Creek Inn (5600 W. Highway 22, Wilson, WY, Owners: Nora Tygum, Trace Tygum, and Kathryn Tygum Taylor)

Head west on Highway 22 toward the Idaho border at the base of Teton Pass. Take your GPS. Look for the packed parking lot and the sign on top of the log cabin: a 20-foot trout that covers almost the entire front of the roof.

Seven miles from Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in Wilson, population 250, Fish Creek Inn draws locals and tourists alike. When Nora Tygum opened the doors in 1982, she served sandwiches built on bread she baked herself.

Nora's has been a Jackson Hole destination ever since. Locals and tourists alike come here for huevos rancheros, pancakes nearly as big as the plate, and, of course, pan-fried local trout with eggs.

The future of the restaurant, now entering its fourth decade, is secure. Nora's son, Trace, and daughter, Kathryn, manage the business. More important, Kathryn is the resident pie and cobbler maker. "Some customers come in just for her banana cream or chocolate pecan pie," said her brother.

St. Elmo Steak House (127 S. Illinois St., Indianapolis, Owners: Stephen Huse and Craig Huse)

Open since 1902, St. Elmo is an Indianapolis institution. Sure, St. Elmo, the patron saint of sailors, is a curious namesake in a city without a navigable river. But this steakhouse, with its bone-in filets and fabled shrimp cocktail, served in a silver-rimmed, ice-lined bowl, has long been the city's special occasion restaurant of choice.

Old guard locals are not the only devotees. If there's a celebrity in town, this is the place to spot him or her, and the restaurant's walls are filled with photos of the stars: Colts quarterback Peyton Manning reviewed his first contract in St. Elmo's dining room.

Original owner Joe Stahr turned the reins over to Bert Condon in the 1940s, but within two years he sold to Sam and Ike Roth, who were joined in 1947 by their brother Harry Roth.

Harry Roth bought out his brothers and added partner Isadore Rosen, and the pair ran St. Elmo through 1986, when they sold to Stephen Huse; Craig Huse, Stephen's son, has run the restaurant since 1997.

St. Elmo's is a constant in the lives of its patrons. But it's not staid. A recent million-dollar makeover added private dining rooms, a wine cellar, and an open kitchen. St Elmo's is ready for another century of life.

Jones Bar-B-Q Diner (219 W. Louisiana St., Marianna, AR, Owners: James and Betty Jones)

Some incarnation of Jones Bar-B-Q Diner has been open since at least the 1910s. Walter Jones was the founder and first pitmaster. He lived in a dogtrot house, perched nearby. From the back porch, he served barbecue on Fridays and Saturdays.

Hubert Jones, the son of Walter Jones, and father of present-day-proprietor James Jones, recalled the family's initial barbecue set-up as "a hole in the ground, some iron pipes and a piece of fence wire, and two pieces of tin."

Jones Bar-B-Q Diner, one of the oldest African-American-owned restaurants in America, remains true to those roots. James Jones, the grandson of Walter Jones, tends the pits. His cooking apparatus is still elemental. And the pork shoulder, hacked into savory bits and served on white bread with a spritz of vinegary sauce, is as smoky as ever.

In the Delta town of Marianna, not far from the Mississippi River, Jones Bar-B-Q Diner is a beacon of community pride and continuity.

Shady Glen (840 East Middle Turnpike, Manchester, CT, Owners: William and Annette Hoch)

Since 1948, families in the fertile dairy country of central Connecticut have made pilgrimages to the sandwich counter, soda fountain, and booths of Shady Glen. Decorated with children's-book murals, the restaurant still makes its dozens of flavors of ice cream using local milk, although no longer from the cows that used to live next door.

In addition to great ice cream and house-mixed sodas, Shady Glen serves a singular cheeseburger. Here's how they do it: three or four squares of American cheese are laid on the griddle, overlapping the custom-ground patty. The protruding

edges, grilled to Le Corbusier curls, gloriously soar outside the bun. Diners either break off the crisped pieces, or take off the bun top and fold them over the burger.

John Rieg, son of German immigrants, learned to make ice cream from University of Connecticut professors. Bernice, his wife, conceived the cheeseburger. Today William Hoch Sr., his wife, Annette, and William Hoch Jr. operate Shady Glen's two locations and stubbornly stick with tradition.

"We don't want to be millionaires," William, Jr. said. "We're more than happy to see a smile on people's faces."

"We are honored to be a sponsor of this year's James Beard Foundation Awards, and in particular, of a category that resonates with Coca-Cola's own place on the American cultural landscape," said Dana Barba, VP, Region Commercialization of Coca-Cola Refreshments, sponsor of this year's America's Classics award. "The James Beard Foundation Awards recognize the best of the best in food, restaurants and chefs and our association brings the equity of great brands together."

To qualify for the America's Classics award, establishments must have been in existence at least ten years and they must be locally owned. The honorees are selected each year by the James Beard Foundation's Restaurant Committee, which is composed of 17 people throughout the country, many of whom are notable food critics and culinary writers. The Foundation also holds a public call for entries, allowing the public the opportunity to offer suggestions for which restaurants they think should win.

On Monday, March 19, 2012, the James Beard Foundation will announce the final nominees for all award categories during an invitation-only brunch at the Azure Pool at The Venetian and The Palazzo in Las Vegas. Nominations will also be announced live via the Foundation's Twitter page at twitter.com/beardfoundation and streamed live for the first time on Eater.com at 11 a.m. PST/2 p.m. EST. The James Beard Foundation Book, Broadcast & Journalism Awards Dinner, an exclusive event honoring the nation's top cookbooks, culinary broadcast programs, and food journalists, will take place on Friday, May 4, 2012 at Gotham Hall in New York City. The following Monday, May 7, 2012, the James Beard Foundation Awards Ceremony and Gala Reception will take place at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall in New York City, during which the Restaurant and Chef and the Restaurant Design and Graphics awards will be handed out, along with a number of special achievement awards, including Humanitarian of the Year, Lifetime Achievement, and Who's Who honorees, as well as the five America's Classics inductees. This year the ceremony will once again be streamed online at jamesbeard.org for those unable to attend the live program in New York City, allowing them to participate in this moment of culinary history. The Award winners will also be posted in real time on the James Beard Foundation's Twitter page at twitter.com/beardfoundation.

The annual James Beard Foundation Awards honor the best and the brightest talents in the food and beverage industries, celebrating outstanding achievement in each of the following categories: Restaurant and Chef, Restaurant Design and Graphics, Books, Broadcast and New Media, and Journalism, as well as several special achievement awards. Each category has an individual Awards Committee made up of industry professionals who volunteer their time to oversee the policies, procedures, and selection of judges for their respective Awards program. All award winners receive a certificate and a medallion engraved with the James Beard Foundation Awards insignia. There are no cash prizes.

The 2012 James Beard Foundation Awards are presented with support by the following partners: Premier Sponsors: All-Clad Metalcrafters, Green & Black's® Organic Chocolate, Lenox Tableware and Gifts, Mercedes-Benz; Supporting Sponsors: Campari, The Coca-Cola Company, Delta Air Lines, Jade Range LLC, Lavazza, Southern Wine & Spirits of New York, Stella Artois; Gala Reception Sponsors: Acqua Panna® Natural Spring Water, Ecolab, Pernod Ricard USA, Rums of Puerto Rico, S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water; and with additional support from Chefwear, St Giles Hotel New York, and Visa Signature.

About the James Beard Foundation

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation is dedicated to celebrating, preserving, and nurturing America's culinary heritage and diversity in order to elevate the appreciation of our culinary excellence. A cookbook author and teacher with an encyclopedic knowledge about food, James Beard, who died in 1985, was a champion of American cuisine. He helped educate and mentor generations of professional chefs and food enthusiasts. Today, the Beard Foundation continues in the same spirit by administering a number of diverse programs that include educational initiatives, food industry awards, scholarships to culinary schools, and publications, and by maintaining the historic James Beard House in New York City's Greenwich Village as a "performance space" for visiting chefs. For more information, please visit jamesbeard.org. Find insights on food at the James Beard Foundation's blog [Delights & Prejudices](#). Join the James Beard Foundation on [Facebook](#). Follow the James Beard Foundation on [Twitter](#).

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