AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

Tallu Quinn

Amethyst Ganaway

Tara Chapman

Destiny Burns

Christa Cotton
**FROM THE EDITOR**

**Staying the Course**

By Suzanne Brown (Atlanta)

“Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.” - Joshua J. Marine, Author/Lecturer

What does it take to face a challenge head-on and stay on course until it’s completed? What if you find out your chosen career path isn’t what you really wanted, and you decide to take the plunge and make a 360-degree turn into something completely different? How do you stay positive when the world around you seems to spin a continuous stream of negative news? This issue of the Quarterly focuses on our annual LDEI Award recipients and addresses the qualities that comprise our winners.

As I was thinking about what to write for the editor’s message, I re-read the biographies of all nominees for the Woman of Purpose Award. Bingo! My brain lit up. Every chapter’s Woman of Purpose nominee was an award-winning, having attained so many accomplishments in her respective career. Each synopsis about the nominees contained characteristics such as: trailblazer, visionary, entrepreneur, overcoming barriers, leader, purposeful, mentor, versatile and supportive. Our first Woman of Purpose Award recipient, Dame Talu Schuyler Quinn, certainly exemplifies these traits as her colleagues explain in our lead article.

Changing career directions takes courage and determination. All four Legacy Award winners made dramatic changes in their career directions. After 20 years as a Russian linguist in the U.S. Navy, Destiny Burns decided that was long enough and returned to her hometown in Cleveland, Ohio, to open a wine brewery. Tara Chapman spent 50 years working for the CIA, then discovered she loved bees. She is now founder/owner of a successful beehive business. After specializing in hospitality and tourism for an ad agency, Christa Cotton decided the beverage business was really where she wanted to be. She founded the New Orleans Beverage Group in 2017. A published culinary writer and food historian, Amethyst Ganaway (Charleston) has been in the food industry for over 12 years and has a variety of experience from managing restaurants to food writing. She was recently awarded an internship with America’s Test Kitchen and is working on a paper for the Oxford Food Symposium. Her Legacy experience inspired her to return to graduate school and, she eventually plans to open her own restaurant.

In Savannah, leadership and mentorship are woven into the mission of Big Bon Family of pizza and bagel businesses. Kay Heritage incorporates communication skills into the Big Bon Skills Mastery Plan. Key to her business model is a focus on transparency and communication. Don’t miss reading about how the pandemic has spawned new trends in how restaurants have kept their businesses going by creating meal kits for pick-up or delivery. Seems – pan cooking and more online culinary instruction has entertained viewers during months of staying at home. Chapters have held online programs and meetings via Zoom, again demonstrating commitment and resilience. In the LDEI President’s recent letter to the membership, Dame Judith Hollis Jones referred to resiliency. She states, “While we are tired of the tests (decisions relating to the San Antonio Conference), I know we’ll rise to the occasion as the leaders we are.”

I wish I were writing this message to share with you all of the amazing events I was able to attend with Dames this year of my presidency. Alas, not the case. However, I must say that Zoom and phone calls and the Table Talks with Les Dames series has allowed me to meet and learn from many of you. Thank you for enriching my life. I hope to see you in San Antonio in October or see you on Zoom for an event soon. Just know that my plans are to continue raising money for philanthropy and scholarships for women for years to come. You Dames inspire me!

**President’s Message**

**Rising to the Challenge**

Happy Spring, dear Dames.

As I write this message on a rainy day in my home office in Louisville, Kentucky, I am reminded of all the exceptional women through-out the world that I have met through LDEI. It gives me a feeling of strength to continue whatever endeavor I have at the moment. Recently, the Board of LDEI was presented with a difficult decision. With the increasing cases of COVID-19 in the US and many other countries, we need to consider the path forward about 2021 LDEI Conference.

The substantial financial loss that LDEI would experience by cancelling would be a significant blow for the organization. However, financial is absolutely not the most important factor in this difficult decision. The first aspect of consideration is safety and wellbeing of our members. As a Board, we made the decision to tighten the protocols for the Conference.

- Everyone must be vaccinated against COVID-19 to attend, no exceptions
- Masks must be worn indoors and on transportation and other closed areas

We also agreed that refunds would be granted to members with no penalties. Everyone needs to make their own decision after carefully considering their situation. Absolutely no pressure to attend. We would welcome it because we love your companionship, but we will not ask you to attend if you have concerns.

The 2021 LDEI Conference is shaping up to be an amazing event, full of educational, thought-provoking topics and delightful culinary experiences. A big thank you and salute to the Co-Chairs, Blanca Aldaco and Nancy Fitch and the entire San Antonio Chapter.

In order to allow participation by as many Dames as possible, the Virtual session is offered. This session will offer the keynote speeches from both mornings and luncheons. It will also offer the Council of Delegates Meeting. If you can’t attend conference, please enroll in the virtual conference session.
By Nancy Vienneau (Nashville)

As The Nashville Food Project celebrates 10 years of dedicated service, one way to look at the vision and accomplishments of its founder, Tallu Schuyler Quinn, is through the numbers:

- A vibrant staff of 24 overseeing multi-pronged programs in food justice
- Food recovery that kept over 225,000 pounds of food out of landfills in 2020
- Over 200,000 meals served in 2020; over 5000 meals now weekly
- Partnerships with over 70 organizations in food distribution
- Expansive agriculture, encompassing community gardens and a multi-acre farm that grows and shares food with thousands of Nashvillians

But that tells only part of the story of the woman behind it, a true Woman of Purpose.

The Nashville Food Project (TNFP) is an extension of Tallu’s worldview. Enacting social justice, she believes, takes in all facets of the food system, and her model of Grow, Cook, Share includes them: farming, gardening, nutrition, food preparation, food recovery, food distribution, and hospitality.

Fifteen months ago, Tallu was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. Rather than interview her, I’ve reached out to people who have worked with her over the years to tell her story. Following is a harmony of voices speaking about Tallu and her purposeful life.

As I reflect, I do believe I have done what I could with what I have been given. And what I have been given has been extraordinary—the love, the forgiveness, the humor, the family, the friendship, the education, the benefit of the doubt. It is all I’ve ever wanted; the only thing I have left to want is more. T.S.Q.
“Tallu has tenaciously but graciously worked over the root, Tallu is totally rad!”

Margot notes how easy it is to be impressed by Tallu. Her approach is humanistic and therefore a lot of fun,” Margot reflects. “She is about getting the job done but is genuine and curious heart and often follows up with “tell me more.”

She’s not afraid to be vulnerable, and I’ve never seen her shy away from hard conversations.

Even though she would acknowledge that this work is hard and can feel insurmountable, she believes deeply in the work and the hope of the community it builds, our interdependence with each other and the Earth, and how community helps shatter loneliness and feelings of scarcity or separation.

“I love how she has continued to push TNFP to get to the root causes and systems around food insecurity rather than just to fix surface symptoms,” Jennifer says. “When I think about the true definition of ‘radical,’ which is grasping things at the root, Tallu is totally rad!”

TENACIOUS YET GRACIOUS
Dame Margot McCormack, executive chef and owner, Margot Café and Bar
Margot met Tallu at her restaurant years ago when she was dining with her father at the table just outside the kitchen. She remembers her big smile and dancing eyes. She’s had many occasions to work with Tallu.

“Tallu sets a high bar. Her approach is humanistic and therefore a lot of fun,” Margot reflects. “She is about getting the job done but is genuinely interested in how you as a person are going to manage the tasks. She is thorough but pretty chill expecting people manage the work without a lot of emails and texts reminding people what they need to do.”

Margot notes how easy it is to be impressed by TNFP because the people whom Tallu and TNFP have as a very strong and present member of their extended community, a true friend.

“She was always supportive, honest, and open to any possibility,” says Tally. “When my barn burned down in 2015, she and TNFP gifted me money to help cover losses (without me asking). She’s so conscientious of the community around her. When I had the opportunity to work for TNFP, one of my main motivations was to work with her. I have always been so inspired by her expansive vision of social justice, and she is such a mentor for me in that way.”

Her dedication to food justice work is consistent through the lens through which she lived her life.

“Love of food, of hosting, of family and friends, her creativity, her writing, and her aesthetic, all channeled through her work in the community.”

“Tallu is for all of us.” Dame Christa Bentley, Chief Programs Officer, TNFP

Christa notes that Tallu’s commitment to the work of TNFP is bone deep. The mission and values are so much a reflection of her own values as a person.

“I have had just sold my small coffee shop in Franklin and was looking for the next chapter. A co-worker had a roommate working at TNFP and told me I should go volunteer. I walked into Woodmont’s South Hall building, met Tallu, and it was love at first sight! She made me incredibly welcome and appreciated. After a few months volunteer- ing, I transitioned into paid staff. I am honored to call Tallu a great friend. At the core of our relationship is a deep trust and admiration.”

Early on, Anne witnessed Tallu’s skills as a leader: self-aware, with the ability to connect with others on many levels. She created a foundation of openness and fairness that everything else followed naturally.

“She’s a gifted communicator; inspiring and energizing the staff was constant on my mind. Her in- nate ability to listen, after encouraging words, and be present was what I valued and respected the most. Plus, she is just damn fun to be around!”

Tallu’s belief that healthy food should be a right was at the foundation of everything and every decision. Her passion—and TNFP’s mission—to grow, cook and share food showed day in and day out.

“She truly is a leader and educator with a vision and passion for making our community a better place,” Anne says. “She created an environment where people thrived. We all supported her vision of a more just and sustainable food system. She guided and empowered us to create and take pro grams within TNFP to foster that vision.”

A BEACON OF LIGHT
Dame Christa Bentley, Chief Programs Officer, TNFP

“This is a one-of-a-kind organization that would not have happened without the personality and leadership of Tallu,” Lady says. “She didn’t just want to fill people’s stomachs, she wanted to help change their lives for the better through healthy, nutritious food—improve their overall health and create communities in the process. She made good employees and volunteers into great employees and volunteers because she saw the following her lead as irresistible.

Lady points out that what TNFP prepares isn’t your everyday sort of meal. Tallu trained her chefs and volunteers to the highest standard of food preparation and sustainability with a heavy emphasis on nutrition and education.

“She is a visionary who took her love and knowledge of food to a level that has impacted literally thousands of people in and outside of our community,” says Lady. “She saw food as a means to improve people’s quality of life and as a way to create meaningful change in places of most need. Her desires are different from most. She isn’t trying to make a big name or a lot of money for herself. Her desires are different from most. She isn’t trying to make a big name or a lot of money for herself. Her values are so much a reflection of her own values as a person.

“I always felt heard and inspired when working with her,” says Christa. “She brings an infectious happiness into every space she enters, which always made working with her a truly enjoyable experience.”

Christa notes that Tallu’s commitment to the work of TNFP is bone deep. The mission and values are so much a reflection of her own values as a person. I have spoken to quite a few people lately who have expressed what it means to them to know her, “she says. “That sums it up beautifully. She is an incredibly role model, friend, mentor, and beacon of light for so many people.”
Les Dames d’Escoffier International

FALL QUARTERLY 2021

Luminous

Dame Nancy Vienneau, friend, supporter, and admirer

I first met Tallu in 2011, when I visited TNFP in its infancy to write a story for Relish Magazine. Our paths have crossed numerous other years, especially after she joined our chapter in 2016. Dame Jennifer Justus and I felt honored to be Tallu’s co-nominees for this prestigious award. It is the same feeling I have now, assembling the voices for this story, so you can get a sense of why this person is a special human, so worthy of the inaugural Woman of Purpose Award. I think about her path to TNFP; her work at an inner city grocery in Boston, attending seminary, her studies in art and liberation theology, and her food security work with farmers in Nicaragua. Tallu has always been a seeker, and in her quest for food justice she became a visionary. Tallu is a keen observer, and takes in all the details that comprise each person she meets. She’ll share an observation, or pay a compliment, or speak a kind word that hits you so beautifully, so unexpectedly that it pierces your heart. And she is a luminary: someone of brilliant achievement, who inspires others and lights the path, shows the way. We all possess that light in degrees, emanating from within. Hers is luminous.

Grounded in Deep Humility and Humanity

Dame Cindy Wall, TNFP board member

While she is connected to Tallu through Les Dames and TNFP, Cindy considers her friendship with Tallu as her dearest connection. She values her for her passion, wisdom and gentle, steadfast guidance, plus she has a wicked sense of humor. According to Cindy, it’s never “work” to work with Tallu. “Tallu fully created TNFP and for almost a full decade, she nurtured and guided its evolution and forged it into the impactful and much-needed organization it is today. And even as her health has faltered, she’s so carefully made way for transitions of leadership. It has been an honor to witness that and a process I’ll never forget,” Cindy says.

Tallu’s accomplishments are all threaded with the deepest of purpose—for food security, food justice, food equity for her community, and her city, her world. “All of her achievements have another aspect, one that’s grounded in her deep humility and humanit y. She inspires everyone around her to share in this purpose, to create their own activism and advocacy, and to stand up for a better world,” says Cindy. “While in so many cases, those phrases can falter, she’s so carefully made way for transitions of leadership. It has been an honor to witness that and a process I’ll never forget,” Cindy says.

And Then There Were Four…

By Julie Chernoff (Chicago)

The Key to This Year’s Legacy Awards was Flexibility

When the LDEI Legacy Awards Committee started this process at our October 2019 Nashville Conference, we never could have imagined that it would take until now to complete the journey, literally and figuratively. We had a great response to our request for Legacy applications, and six amazing Legacy Experiences on offer. What could go wrong? A Change of Plans

The onset of the pandemic in March 2020—coinciding with our application deadline—necessitated an extension to the end of the month, given the severity of industry impact. Our committee then vetted and pondered over the many applications received from women across North America, the strongest group of applicants in recent memory, making the judging a difficult but ultimately very satisfying experience. By mid-April 2020, we were thrilled to announce the six wonderful, accomplished women, all up-and-comers in the hospitality industry, who were selected as the 2020 LDEI Legacy Award Winners. Despite the uncertainty posed by the pandemic, it was clear that these women provided a beacon of hope that our industry would not just survive but thrive. We kept in close touch with the Legacy winners and their prospective hosts over the summer as the pandemic peaked and hopes for the much-awaited Legacy Award Experiences faltered. With heavy hearts, we realized that we would have to push off the experiences to the summer of 2021 and hope for a cautious return to travel by the fall. We invited them to participate in the October 2020 LDEI Virtual Conference with a promise of “Next year, in San Antonio.” They were gracious about it all.

By mid-April 2020, we were thrilled to announce the six wonderful, accomplished women, all up-and-comers in the hospitality industry, who were selected as the 2020 LDEI Legacy Award Winners. Despite the uncertainty posed by the pandemic, it was clear that these women provided a beacon of hope that our industry would not just survive but thrive. We kept in close touch with the Legacy winners and their prospective hosts over the summer as the pandemic peaked and hopes for the much-awaited Legacy Award Experiences faltered. With heavy hearts, we realized that we would have to push off the experiences to the summer of 2021 and hope for the best. We invited them to participate in the October 2020 LDEI Virtual Conference with a promise of “Next year, in San Antonio.” They were gracious about it all.

As circumstances continued to shift and uncertainties remained, by December 2020 the Legacy Committee made the difficult decision not to add any additional Legacy Award winners to the 2021 class, but rather to proceed with the members of the 2020 class and fulfill our commitment to them. It was not a given at the time that we would even be able to accomplish that goal, but with promising news of the vaccine’s efficacy, we were cautiously hopeful. By April 2021, we were able to com municate to our winners and hosts that we were back in business. Sadly, we learned this spring that two of the six winners (Crystal Zhao of Minneapolis, Minnesota and Katherine Rapin of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) had left the industry, and while they can always proudly say that they are LDEI Legacy Award winners, they were no longer eligible to complete the Award experiences, nor to attend the 2021 San Antonio Conference. Our sincere apologies to the Chicago Dames (Journalism Award) and the Austin Dames (Food Chain Award) who were ready and waiting to host these experiences. We know it was a disappointment for all involved, but the rest of the Legacy Award winners and hosts pressed on.

Your 2020/21 Legacy Award Winners

The four remaining Legacy Award Winners were all intrepid travelers. In June, Tara Chapman of Austin, Texas flew to California for the Agriculture Award with our Dames of the Sacramento Valley, while Annychast Gay way of Charleston, South Carolina headed south to the NOLA Culinary Award. In July, Christa Cotton of New Orleans, Louisiana was off to the mezcal and agave fields of Mexico for the Fine Spirits Award, and Destiny Burns of Cleveland, Ohio visited the Wente Family Estates in September for the Wine & Hospitality Award. They and their hosts persevered despite the rise of the Delta Variant, various mask mandates, COVID testing, and vaccination requirements. We thank our partners at The Julia Child Foundation for sponsoring the LDEI Legacy Awards each year. After nearly two years of emails, texts, calls, social media posts, and, of course, Zoom, we could not be more thankful that we were finally able to deliver these experiences and look forward to meeting our these winners at the San Antonio Conference. But why wait? Here’s your chance to learn a little bit more about the winners and their Legacy experiences.
Tara CHAPMAN, Austin, Texas

Winner of the Sacramento Agriculture Award

Tara Chapman is the founder/owner of Two Hives Honey, a full-service honey and beekeeping business in Austin, Texas. Originally from rural West Texas, Tara graduated from Duke University in 2003, and was offered a job with the Central Intelligence Agency. She spent the next 10 years working for the federal government, serving in Afghanistan, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, and Pakistan. Once back home in Austin, Tara took her first beekeeping class with her friend Gina, now a member of the Two Hives team. Inspired by—and in love with—the bees, Tara quit her government job to work for a beekeeper in East Texas rearing queen bees. What started as a solopreneur running hive tours has evolved into a socially conscious business that aims to educate the community, support other local businesses, and of course, offer you the best damn honey Texas bees can make. Tara’s expecting her first child in early October but is hoping to drive down to Conference from Austin with the baby and her husband, Austin, if she’s up to it.

Special thanks to Sacramento Dames President Amina Harris for hosting Tara during her stay and Sue Robison for spearheading the trip, which included visits to Lane Giguiere’s Matchbook Wines, Mary Kimball’s Land-Based Learning, the Davis Farmer’s Market with the Yolo Dames, Carol Barsotti’s Farm Fresh to you, various farm visits with Chef Allyson Harvie, and dinners at Liz Mishler’s Bella Bru Café and Catering, Sue Robison’s home, Christy Hayes’ Mojo restaurant, and Allyson Harvie’s home.

“My Legacy experience was an incredible week of female companionship, mentorship and fun that I haven’t experienced since college,” says Tara. “This week was so fulfilling and nurturing after a year of unknowns and COVID hardships and challenges—and unplanned life changes, including getting unexpectedly pregnant! After each day spent with each Dame, I brought back a ton of inspirations and creative ideas to implement in my own business.”

Destiny BURNS, Cleveland, Ohio

Winner of the Wente Family Estates Wine & Hospitality Award

Destiny is a Cleveland gal born and bred. After high school, she enlisted in the U.S. Navy as a Russian Linguist to see the world. Twenty years later, she retired as a Cryptologic Officer and began a second career as a defense industry executive. She even moonlighted as a volunteer firefighter and EMT—a true Renaissance woman. Extensive worldwide travel led to a dream of one day opening her own food- and wine-related business. Upon turning 50, newly divorced, Destiny moved back to Cleveland to open a craft-brewery-style urban winery in a 1920’s-era auto repair garage in her neighborhood. Her dream of “good wine made fun that celebrates Cleveland and creates community” is now a reality!

Destiny’s visit to the Wente Family Estates in Livermore, California included a stay at the charming Wente Vineyards Guest Cottage. She spent a full day in the vineyards with fifth-generation winemaker Nikki Wente during harvest, had dinners with Carolyn Wente and Aly Wente, met with winemakers Elizabeth Kester and Karl Wente, discussed wine quality and small lot wines with winemaker Andy Lynch, learned about Wente catering and events, and enjoyed the Livermore Wine Trolly experience.
Amethyst GANAWAY, Charleston, South Carolina

Winner of the NOLA Culinary Award

Amethyst is a South Carolina native with a passion for food that extends beyond the kitchen. Her focus is on gaining and spreading knowledge of the culinary arts and history, particularly the foodways of the Southern United States. Amethyst has been in the food industry for over 12 years and has a wide array of experience from managing restaurants to food writing. She was recently awarded an internship with America’s Test Kitchen and is working on a paper for the Oxford Food Symposium. In her spare time, she loves spending time with her dogs and family, reading, gardening, and playing video games. She hopes to attend graduate school and eventually open her own restaurant in her hometown. Meanwhile, she has spent much of the pandemic on a writing tear, with articles in The New York Times, Eater, Food & Wine, Garden & Gun, Plate Magazine, Serious Eats, and more. She is also the lead recipe developer and content creator for Chef Pierre Thiam’s West African food brand, Yolélé.

Amethyst spent her legacy week at NOLA Dame Nina Compton’s exquisite Compère Lapin restaurant, working front and back of the house to get the feel for how an award-winning restaurant is run. A memorable visit to Liz Williams’ Southern Food & Beverage Museum was an integral part of the experience, and Amethyst also enjoyed a beautiful night out with NOLA Dames Jennifer Kelly, Beth D’Addono, Elizabeth Pearce, Dee Lavigne, and LDEI Legacy Award Vice Chair Stephanie Carter.

“My experience was phenomenal and truly life changing,” shares Amethyst. “After not being in a physical restaurant because of the pandemic, it was refreshing and inspiring to be back in one, but even more so to be in James Beard Award winner Nina Compton’s restaurant. This was my first time ever working in a restaurant run by a black woman chef, and it meant even more to see dishes that I could recognize. Additionally, it was my first ever time in New Orleans, and being from Charleston, I felt right at home! I have never eaten so much food in my life and I didn’t even get to try half of the places on my list. I returned home feeling refreshed and unafraid to continue my career in an unapologetic way.”

Christa COTTON, New Orleans, Louisiana

Winner of the Mexico Fine Spirits Award

A native of Leesburg, Georgia, Christa Cotton graduated from Harbert College of Business at Auburn University before moving to New Orleans in 2010. After climbing the ropes at a local ad agency specializing in hospitality and tourism, Christa founded the New Orleans Beverage Group in 2017. The company holds the trademark to El Guapo, a line of cocktail mixers, bitters and syrups that are manufactured in-house and distributed internationally. In her current role as CEO, Christa draws on her experience with myriad food and beverage brands, including her family’s distillery in Georgia. Christa volunteers her time mentoring women interested in breaking into the consumer packaged goods industry and is dedicated to empowering women in hospitality. She is a certified sommellier, and mother to her beautiful daughter Flora—as well as Archie Manning, her Bernese Mountain Dog. In addition to her 2020/21 LDEI Legacy Award, she is also a 2020 Tory Burch Foundation Fellow, and a 2021 Lee Initiative Women Culinary and Spirits program mentor.

The Fine Spirits Award was generously sponsored by José Cuervo and thoughtfully arranged by Mexico Dame Araceli Ramos. It included business meetings, city visits of Guadalajara and Tlaquepaque, a day in the José Cuervo agave fields, distillery tours, and more. Many thanks also to Mexico Chapter President Veronica Castro and LDEI Past President Maria Gomez-Laurens for their help in facilitating the Mexico Legacy experience.
A leader is an individual with the unique ability to influence and guide members of an organization, team, family, or tribe towards a particular goal or vision. For Dame Kay Heritage, founder of the Big Bon Family in Savannah, GA, leadership is as integral to her business model as the ingredients she selects to make her award winning pizzas and bagels. “A leader,” Kay tells me, “is someone who shares freely.”

Born and raised in South Korea, Kay moved to Sacramento, California, at the age of 13 and then found her way to settle in Savannah—her “other” South—nearly 30 years ago. “In Korean culture you greet your guests with ‘have you eaten?,” she says. “My mother was my earliest culinary influence and inspiration. Food, as it is in our family and now our business, is an expression of provision, love, and care.” Her sentiment about food is reflected in her approach to leadership: honest, welcoming, nourishing, and accessible.

Kay, a military veteran who served as an oral surgical assistant in the US Army, has implemented two main tools for her entire Big Bon team: The Big Bon Skills Mastery Plan and an employee training deck which outlines the company’s practice of conscious communication and work culture expectations. “For Big Bon, creating a safe environment for all staff really comes down to two things: transparency and communication,” Kay says. “It’s a practice and we figure it all out together.”

During onboarding, employees are introduced to communication tools they can use both in and out of work. “Ninety nine percent of problems arise from miscommunication,” says Kay. “So if we know this, we can nip it in the bud by offering a practical solution.” One of their most used tools is the 7-45-48 rule in which seven percent of the way we communicate is verbal, forty five percent is body language, and forth eight percent is tone of voice. “If ninety three percent of communication is nonverbal, imagine how much could get lost in translation,” Kay affirms. “We can all have off days—we are allowed to! So if something is noticed we get right to the core and ask with genuine compassion ‘what is going on?’”

These communication practices were adapted and put into place after Kay’s experience with Nick Sarillo’s program called Trust and Track. “As restaurant owners we have this incredible power that we can use for good,” she proclaims. “We have a great privilege to offer mentorship and leadership within our walls—we need to take advantage of that.”

Additionally, these cultural values are shared openly on Big Bon’s website which states, our purpose is to coach our team members in business and life skills and to create memorable experiences around great food. “I want to see individuals thrive so long as they have love and passion for whatever they were created to do,” Kay says with reverence. “I tell all of my employees that they are rivers and I am not trying to dam them off. They are encouraged to use Big Bon as a launch pad—it’s a vehicle, a tool.”

Also presented during the onboarding process is the Big Bon Mastery Skills Plan which clearly defines the skills needed to progress in leadership within the company. Covering everything from food safety and ServeSafe certification to managing practices and financial reporting, the Mastery Skills Plan is designed to help individuals learn the ins and outs of running a business. “This is meant for entrepreneurs who might want to own a restaurant or bakery one day,” she says. “The operational side—profit and loss statements, rent, ordering costs, etc.—it’s all transparent for them because that is crucial to their learning.”

Kay herself, whose vast career has ushered her from the world of medicine to the culinary world, recalls the profound influence her first mentor had on her and how that still carries through in her ethos today. “Ellen Lew was a very well known and respected caterer and cookbook author in Savannah,” Kay says as she lovingly recalls her first catering experience with Ellen. “What she did for me was pay it forward. She shared her recipes, taught me how to price per person, and guided me through the world of catering. She was truly one of my most impressionable examples of what a leader is and should be.”

“Ellen Lew was a very well known and respected caterer and cookbook author in Savannah,” Kay says as she lovingly recalls her first catering experience with Ellen. “What she did for me was pay it forward. She shared her recipes, taught me how to price per person, and guided me through the world of catering. She was truly one of my most impressionable examples of what a leader is and should be.”

To learn more about Dame Kay Heritage and her award-winning Big Bon outlets, visit www.bigbonfamily.com.
Savannah, Georgia

Board Meets In Person for First Time Since January 2020!

By Liz Barrett (Chicago)

The LDEI Board of Directors had its June meeting live-and-in-person for the first time in a year and a half, in Savannah, GA on June 11 and 12. The two-day meeting was many board members’ first experience meeting each other in-person, since all meetings have been held on Zoom, since the pandemic began in early 2020. There was lots of elbow-bumping and – some hugging too, since everyone present was fully vaccinated! As some members were not able to travel, they participated in the meeting on Zoom. Savannah was chosen as the destination because it was easily accessible by most board members and has an LDEI chapter that is somewhat accessible by most board members and has an LDEI chapter that is somewhat new, established in 2018. It was a great opportunity to meet and mingle with Savannah Dames and patronize several Dame-owned restaurants.

The meeting convened on Friday afternoon. Topics included board member reports, including a financial review. The upcoming San Antonio Conference was discussed in great detail, with an eye toward enacting strict Covid safety measures to keep attend-

tees as safe as possible.

On Friday evening, Dame Martha Nesbit coordinated a delicious happy hour at Noble Fare, owned by Dame Jenny McNamar. Board members and Savannah Dames had a great time get-
ing to know one another over cocktails and hors d’oeuvres.

The next stop was The Grey, helmed by Dame Masmaha Bailey. The four-
course prix fixe menu was absolutely incredible, featuring fresh spring vegetable and seafood and a Brown Sugar Tart to finish that made everyone want to lick their plates!

Several board members greeted Sat-

turday morning with an early walk to Dame Kay Heritage’s Big Bon Bodega for homemade bagel breakfast sandwich-
es (the smoked salmon was a winner!) Board members got to hear Kay’s story —how she started a food truck specializing in pizza and morphed that business into a popular casual restaurant offering handmade bagels as well as special pizza “pop-up” events.

Back at the hotel (the Mansion on Forsyth Park), the Board reconvened for an all-day strategic session. Immedi-

date Past President Bev Shaffer shared a recap of the Strategic Planning Initia-
tive and its task force accomplishments (see article on page 20 of this issue). Other topics addressed included the Chapter Board Liaison (CBL) Hand-

books developed by the three current CBLs – Dame Ingrid Gangestad, Bonnie Tandy LeBlang and Kathy Shearer—to help future CBLs navigate responsibilities of the job with greater ease and consistency. Content for up-

coming Quarterly issues was discussed as was progress on the new LDEI web-

site, which is slated to launch this fall. After adjourning, the group headed to another Savannah restaurant with a Dame in the kitchen: Ardsley Station, where Natasha Gaskill is the pastry chef: We were spoiled with her tan-

taizing and creative ice cream flavors and pastries.

The Board owes an enormous thank-

you to Dame Martha Nesbit for coordinating some excellent restaurant outings and meet-ups, giving us an opportunity to connect with so many Savannah Dames and enjoy the flavors of Savannah. (Thanks, too, to Martha for copies of her book, Nibbles & Scribbles: Cooking and Writing in the Deep South, and her delectable, homemade cookies, Mrs. Sullivan’s Bennie Wafers).

To Benefit LDEI

By Bev Shaffer (Cleveland) Immediate Past President, LDEI

Who doesn’t love some bling, especially when it means that you and your friends can shop and give back to LDEI? We are pleased to be partnering with Kendra Scott jewelry for our first ever national “Shop for Good” event.

Here’s just a teaser of the details:

• Kick off (virtual event) the evening of Friday, December 10
  o Co-hosted by a Kendra Scott representative and Dame Joi Chevalier (Austin)
  o Jewelry fashion show and ability to begin shopping during virtual event
• In person and online shopping begins Saturday, December 11 (coinciding with LDEI founder Carol Brocks birthday)
  o In these select Kendra Scott stores, a mention of Les Dames must be made in order for LDEI to benefit from the sale
  ﾃ Austin (flagship store)
  ﾃ Boston (Dedham Legacy Place)
  ﾃ New York (SoHo)
  ﾃ Cleveland (Eton Chagrin)
  ﾃ Chicago (Southport Avenue)
  ﾃ Atlanta (Perimeter Mall/Adirondack Dunwoody)
  ﾃ Charleston, South Carolina (King Street)
  ﾃ Newport Beach (Fashion Island)
• On-line shopping (and now shipping internationally) will benefit LDEI with use of a special code to key in at time of final on-line purchase
• Anyone shopping in person or on-line may still mention or use code on Sunday, December 12th and benefit LDEI
• Twenty percent of all sales will be given back to LDEI

Dames and friends are invited to attend the virtual, in-store and on-line events. And we are excited to announce that Kendra Scott has just introduced a line of jewelry for men as well.

Look for more details (and your shopping code) as the dates get closer. For now, why not curate your “gifts” list and sit back and relax until December.
How the Pandemic has Created New Trends

By Jean-Marie Brownson (Chicago)

This global pandemic has changed us. We don’t eat, cook, or shop like we used to. Dining out looks very altered. Heck, we are even drinking differently. Many of us in the food, wine, and hospitality business choose to see the glass half full. We embrace the fascination with cooking, the restaurant chefs that share their kitchen secrets in Zoom classes, and the upsurge of on-line food and wine shopping.

Director of Strategic Insights and Community for the Les Dames d’Escoffier International, Maryam Ahmed, says: ““Consumers have largely reconnected with their kitchens,” says Maryam Ahmed (San Francisco). Owner, PLAYTE Kitchen and Maryam + Company. “Social media content for cooking is at an all-time high. We see much more conscious consumption. Our clients want to hear the story of who grew the food, understand where the food came from, and what to expect seasonally. I think we have a range of reasons to thank for that, from planting home gardens to exploring TV series such as High on the Hog.”

Indeed, screens have become a vital connection for consumers, foods, and brands. Audrey Altmann writes in Consumer Insights about the colossal impact of the video-sharing app TikTok. The app virtually created the dalgona coffee craze as well as pancake cereal and baked feta pasta. Simple, fun recipes created with easy to find ingredients.

When we are not cooking in our homes, or ordering takeout from local restaurants, we just might be gardening. Rise Gardens, Click and Grow, and the indoor AeroGarden all saw a surge in sales since March 2020. The garden-to-table trend is clearly poised to stick around.

No matter where you live, if you can find a patch of earth to wander, even if it is just a postage-stamp-sized backyard, it helps to know which plants can sustain you. Self-sufficiency is a sought-after state.

The American consumer has learned how to prepare more meals at home,” says David Portalatin, foodservice industry advisor for The NPD Group. “If you look at grocery sales data, for example, grocery sales are still up double digits versus two years ago.”

It’s not just folks in the United States cooking more. Rosa Jackson (Paris), owner of the cooking school Les Petits Farcis and food tour company Edible Paris, tells us “one of the big stories of the ‘confinement’ period in France was the success of the show Toux en Cuisine, filmed in the home of popular French chef Cyril Lignac.”

Every night Lignac cooked a nostalgic dish such as croque monsieur, crêpes with ham, breaded fish with homemade ketchup, and chocolate mousse. More than two million viewers followed along in their own kitchens.”

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Local food also is on trend more than ever. Bottlenecks in the nation’s food supply chain and rising concerns about health and the environment opened our eyes to long-existing inequities in the food system. We’ve banded together to lift up our communities, to support farmers, local restaurants, and suppliers. In turn, we also demand more from food companies; more transparency, more authenticity, more safety.

We look forward to eating and cooking together without trepidation. In the meantime, we will be thankful for a glass half full.
Strategic Planning Task Force Update

Liz Barrett (Chicago)

In January 2020, LDEI President Bev Shaffer initiated a Strategic Planning project with the goal of looking at who we are as an organization and how we can continue to grow and facilitate change while being respectful of our history. As a group, we reviewed our mission and vision statements as well as our Guiding Principles, before moving on to more strategic ideas.

One of the first outcomes of the initiative was the formation of six task forces. There was great care taken to ensure the task forces were made up of Dames with specific subject knowledge and expertise and who represented a diverse cross section of different chapters. In June 2021, Bev shared a comprehensive update on progress and key accomplishments with the Board. “I’m proud of the research and recommendations that came out of this initiative, and I think we are more strongly positioned as a dynamic organization supporting women in food, beverage and hospitality,” said Bev. “I want to thank the task force members for their excellent insights and hard work.”

Perhaps one of the biggest outcomes was the ratification of an updated new-member application process. “We thought it was important to ensure that qualified women feel welcome and join our organization,” added Bev. “By eliminating the ‘by invitation only’ aspect of our application, we hope to attract and engage women from all strata of the food, beverage, and hospitality industries who meet membership requirements.”

There were many other results from the Strategic Planning initiative, below is a summary of each task force’s key accomplishments.

CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

GOAL: To diversify and engage our members by evaluating and modernizing our membership policy and structure.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENT: Creation of a style guideline outlining specific of logo usage, colors, fonts, and other details that will help all chapters present a professional and consistent look on websites, social media channels and digital and printed materials.

We are on a mission to present a consistent face to the world, so we hope this style guide helps chapters be true to our brand and messaging so anytime someone sees Les Dames it’s recognizable,” said Bev.

MEMBERSHIP POLICY MODERNIZATION TASK FORCE

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BRAND STRATEGIC TASK FORCE

GOAL: To ensure our presence and image by revitalizing our brand, its uniqueness, relevance, and impact.

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DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION TASK FORCE

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NEXT STEPS

The Strategic Plan was designed to roll out over a three-year period (2020—2023). “As with all Strategic Plans, not everything presented to the LDEI Board by these committed Dames on the task forces was approved or executed. My hope is that future LDEI Boards will look to these recommendations and continue to move our organization forward,” commented Bev.

Operational Grants Offer Opportunities for Chapters

By Ingrid Gastegast (Minnesota Chapter)

Most chapters spend money on line-items such as community programs, mentoring, scholarships, relationship building, education, and administrative costs. Paying for these items is often done through gala, chapter dues, other fund raisers and donations. How are the new membership and Dames are looking for alternative sources of income and having success with grants. The Los Angeles Orange County Chapter received a grant for $5000 from the state of California Dame Patty Mitchell, president of the chapter, shared that the chapter’s accountant, Sterling Belfant, informed the board that the chapter qualified for the California Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant. The funds are to be used only for operational expenses and cannot be used for other grants or scholarships.

Instead, the LA/Orange County Chapter will use the money to pay accounting fees, state, county and city business licenses, chapter insurance and other operational expenses.

Party, as well as Sterling, and chapter past president, Anita Lau, collaborated to fill out the application. There was a period of about a month where questions and answers flew back and forth to determine if the chapter qualified and they did. So far, the chapter has not been informed that they need to report back to the state on how the funds were spent.

Beth D’Addono, president of the New Orleans Chapter and Rebecca Friedman, chair of the global culinary initiative chair, mulled over the opportunity for a sustaining operating grant from the Goldfinch Family Foundation. Originally, Beth and Rebecca set up a meeting with Lisa Williams, the founda- tion’s director of grant making to ask about applying for a grant. The foundation undertook a training program of $5000 that the chapter hoped to take during the meeting. Lisa asked more questions about the chapter and liked what she heard. Lisa said the family preferred to give money for overall support of a cause—not a one and done. She recommended the chapter apply for a standing (renew- able) grant of $5000 for operational expenses. If granted, Beth said the chapter could use some of the money to upgrade the chapter’s website, establish an angel fund to offset programming for Dames and to replenish their accounts. Beth expects there will be an annual report to stay in compliance. If once established, the foundation is likely to renew the grant. Dame Liz Williams, the chapter’s vice president of phi- lanthropy, will be involved in establishing and maintaining the relationship with the foundation. The deadline for the application is early September, so our fingers are crossed for the New Orleans Chapter.

Knowledge is Power

An operating grant, also known as an unrestricted grant, is a lump sum capital given to a nonprofit organization to support its general mission and pay for overhead expenses, such as rent, salaries, furniture and other day-to- day costs. Small nonprofits have been hesitant to seek operating grants with the belief that foundations only want to support programs. Some foundations want to develop a long-term relationship, offering a reflective nonprofit, first through grants to provide funding, offering sustaining operational grants. But, just like Beth learned, other foundations want to develop a stronger relationship immediately through sustaining operational grants. Family foundations make about half of all registered foundations in the United States and account for 44 percent of foundation assets. Boards of family foundations usually include family members from at least two generations. These grant-making bodies may seem much less accessible than a community foundation and often do not have a website. Many will not accept an unsolicited application. However, the foundation exists to support charitable organizations. One successful strategy for connecting with family foundations is to talk directly with one of the organization’s officers. Usually, board members make an appeal to its board to support the idea that the foundation is in the individual’s interest. Another benefit of family foundations is that they may make operating grants and try to build long-term relationships with the organizations they support.

Networking provides a foray into learning about family foundations and sharing your chapter’s story. Start by asking questions within the organization. When attending other fund-raising events, network with other individuals to find out if they know of foundations they might connect with.

Also, try searching the IRS website for private foundations. Under the Search By box select Organization Name. Then enter family foundation. Add your chapter’s city and state. A list of potential family foundations will appear. Take some time to further search this site and others to determine if there may be a connection between the family foundation and your chapter.

Officers and directors for the family foundation will be found on Form 990 which you can access through IRS search site. The 990 also lists previous grants to organizations. For tips on networking, consider Writing Toolkit in the member’s only section of LDEI.org.
Southern Cuisine from the African Diaspora

By Suzanne Brown (Atlanta)

From the early 1500s to the late 1800s, the transatlantic slave trade brought many enslaved Africans to the Americas, Europe, the Caribbean Islands and Honduras. Voyages were long and those onboard were subjected to all types of abuse. While those onboard the ships were victims, Africans were also immense contributors to the creation of a new world. They brought skills that built cities and were central to new demographic, social, and cultural development of the Western Hemisphere. Women who survived the ordeal brought knowledge of medicinal plants, skills at gardening, new cuisines and more. Longing to preserve their food traditions, many women slaves braided plant seeds in their hair.

That’s exactly how African women aboard transatlantic slave ships in the 1600s were able to transport indigenous seeds such as rice and benne (sesame) to South Carolina. In the years that followed, more and more African seeds reached southern states. Okra was exceptionally popular in New Orleans where French Louisianans mixed okra with other vegetables that became Gumbo, a Louisiana staple.

Fast forward into the next century when America was introduced to the peanut, also known as groundnut, earth nut, ground pea, and the African words, “pindaar and gootter.” Peanuts, indigenous to South America, were introduced to Africa by the Portuguese and then brought to Virginia by enslaved Africans.

If you are from the South, you have likely heard the term “mess of greens.” This term refers to a medley of leafy vegetables such as turnip greens, mustard greens, collards, and kale cooked together. Africans living on plantations would combine leftover greens from the garden and cooked them together, seasoned with ham hock. With the emphasis on healthy eating condoned in today’s diet, cooking oil may be substituted for ham hock. No matter the seasoning, southerners add pepper sauce to liven up the taste of greens and other vegetables such as black-eyed peas. Easy to make, the sauce consists of a mixture of tiny tabasco peppers and vinegar.

Atlanta Dames experienced authentic tastes of early Southern cooking in their first in-person meeting with the theme “Georgia Cuisine from the African Diaspora.” Held in the instructional FarmED Kitchen & Bar and hosted by Dame-Chefs Jennifer Booker and Ashley Mitchell, guests snacked on a recipe of Spiced Groudnuts prepared by Chef Booker. As Chef Booker shared the evening’s agenda, students from the culinary arts programs at Miller Grove High School and Tri City High School were in the kitchen preparing a selection of dishes that became Gumbo, a Louisiana staple.

Dames and their invited guests stood around steaming pots watching students cook Hoppin’ John, Tomato & Okra Gravy, Somali-Inspired Seed Wafers with Chocolate Gravy.

Introduced in 2012, The Brock Circle was established to assist in stabilizing the financial foundation of LDEI now and into the future. Named for our Grand Dame and founder Carol Brock (New York), the Brock Circle has provided funds for leadership conference speakers, special webinars, and various LDEI educational initiatives under the guidelines outlined in our LDEI Operations Handbook, with the goal of providing all members access to these inspiring events and materials.

Join me in welcoming our newest Brock Circle member, Jennifer Goldman (Cleveland). A heartfelt “thank you, Dames” to those who have made an investment in the future of LDEI and our members who will carry on our legacy.
Charleston

Charleston’s new Board of Directors for 2021-2022 includes President Helen Mitternight, Vice-President Amanda Neirouz, Secretary Jamie French, Treasurer Katherine Frankstone, and Immediate Past President Angela Colyer Dupree. The chapter revamped its policy requirements for maintaining membership. Helen Mitternight explains, “Previously, membership was two-tiered, those unable to attend at least 50 percent of the business meetings were categorized as sustaining members and charged significantly more for dues. We wanted to discount ‘checkbook members,’ who write a check and forget about it. In practice, though, we wound up penalizing members who were engaged in other ways besides meeting attendance.” A new point system allows members to earn points through any number of activities, including donations. A minimum number of points must be earned per chapter year to remain in good standing. Helen adds, “Our members are so busy; COVID has only added to that. We want to make it easier for members to stay engaged with the chapter.”

Former chapter president Jen Kulick and husband Mike are relocating their iconic Charleston restaurant, The Tastemooe, renovated for its eclectic decor, craft beers, dive bar-style sandwiches, and irresistible duck fat with garlic aioli. In 2012, the restaurant was featured on Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives. Mike showed Gay Fieri how to make their signature sandwich, “Mike’s Famous Duck Club.” www.tattooedmoose.com/menus.html

Chateau

Chateau, the summer edition of the Dallas Dames’ summer fundraiser, featured a fun and exciting outdoor event for Dallas Dames and their guests. The event was held at Chateau, a beautiful venue in the heart of Dallas, with gorgeous weather and a delightful atmosphere.

The event began with an opening cocktail hour, where guests enjoyed delicious hors d’oeuvres and cocktails while socializing with friends and meeting new members. The highlight of the evening was the fundraiser itself, which included a silent auction, live auction, and raffle. The auction items included a variety of unique and exciting items, such as a private cooking class with a renowned chef, a weekend getaway in a luxury cabin, and a VIP experience at a major music festival.

The live auction featured a variety of exciting items and packages, including a trip for two to a exotic destination, a donation to a local charity, and a private house party. The raffle featured a variety of exciting prizes, including a luxury spa package, a gourmet food basket, and a private cooking class with a celebrity chef.

The event was a huge success, with guests enjoying the atmosphere and the delicious food and drinks. The Dallas Dames raised over $10,000 for various local charities, including the Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum, the Dallas Area Mental Health Foundation, and the Dallas Children’s Advocacy Center.

The Dallas Dames are grateful to everyone who attended the Chateau fundraiser and supported their mission of empowering women in the Dallas area. They look forward to hosting more fun and exciting events in the future.
In June, we hosted a summer soirée at Rivoli Bluffs with Urban Roots, our partner/beneficiary of some of our fundraising funds—the picnic and tour was led by Dame Amy Brown. Our July fundraiser, Gourmet Pizza & Salad Kit Party in a Box, was curated by Dames Nikki Espelanding, Andi Bidwell, Pam Powell, and Amanda Moreno-Damgaard in partnership with the Food Building’s artisan pizza ingredient providers (Baker’s Field Dough, Alemany Cheese Mozzarella, Food Building Red Sauce, and Red Table Meat Salami), Salad Gift Dressing, Revol Greens, Isadora Nuts, Iron Shoe Farms, Urban Roots, and Lunds & Byerly’s.

ONTARIO
Les Dames d’Escoffier Ontario Board, is excited to announce La Bibliothèque d’Escoffier (Ontario). Our 1,000 cookbook and wine book library was set up during covid 2021 and are happy to announce that we have a registered librarian who will be guiding us in organizing and documenting each book and new books, as they arrive. We are very thankful that Jo-Ann McArthur, President of Nourish Food Marketing has donated some of her office space for the library. Jo-Ann and her team produced a contemporary style to showcase our books and we are looking forward to our first in-person event.

PHILADELPHIA
For our first in-person event since last March, Chapter President Jill Weber hosted a happy hour in the gorgeous garden of her Jet Wine Bar. It was a lovely night for current and new members to connect and relax. Registered dietitian and nutrition college professor Jeanie Subach hosted an open house for Philly Dames at West Chester University to showcase the incredible Rams Chef program she leads. This ground-breaking initiative features eight go-getter young adults with developmental disabilities who’ve acquired culinary and gardening skills over the school year while being assisted by dietetic students. Jeanie will be publishing research that will help kick-start other similar programs at surrounding universities, ideally with Dame support! Our chapter has also taken on the Sisterly Love program, which was first created by Dame Bridget Foy last year during quarantine and further developed with Ellen Yin and Jill Weber as a way to support, sustain and benefit our local community of women entrepreneurs. Sisterly Love hosts markets, collaborative-meal menus, Happy Hours, and more while promoting greater mentorship between our current and future members.

PHOENIX
This past May Les Dames Phoenix held a virtual chocolate-tasting workshop hosted by Maureen and Jim Elitzak, owners of award-winning small-batch craft chocolate maker and an artisan chocolate shop. Viewers received a bag for the event with a number of chocolate items. The instruction card inside read: “Store chocolate at 55 to 73 degrees. A wine fridge is OK. The regular fridge is not. Choose bars with 60% to 80% cacao percentage. Maureen and Jim then proceeded to guide us thru sampling our chocolate which began with almond-shaped roasted beans, followed by the bars then finishing up with bonbons. We learned about everything from choosing and harvesting the chocolate to understanding the percentages of cocoa solids to sugar. Maureen finished the class showing how she crafts the chocolate into bonbons using unique ingredient combinations like earl grey lavender, blackberry cardamom, prickly pear, and strawberry balsamic to name a few. It was a wonderful evening and we all walked away feeling very informed about the wonderful world of chocolate!

SAN ANTONIO
San Antonio Dames gathered on August 10 for a Happy Hour with a Purpose. And, what a purpose it was! Great friends, stellar food, fine wine and fabulous silent auction items were the order of the evening.—with proceeds from the shindig used to generate funds to help cover conference registration costs for lucky winners of the after-party raffle. Hostess Dame Blanca Aldaco, offered her beautiful home for the event and attendees each brought a bottle of wine and a favorite dip, appetizer or dessert. Offerings ranged from a mezze platter and finger sandwiches to peach cobbler and a platter of lemon, turtle and ginger bars. Even the weather cooperated, with the overflow crowd able to gather on the patio where a cool wind swept the heat of the day away. Besides Dames, the event was open to potential members, friends, and significant others where a cool wind swept the heat of the day away. Besides Dames, the event was open to potential members, friends, and significant others. The winners of the raffle were announced in a live video a few days after the event, when auction and raffle proceeds were reconciled.

FALL QUARTERLY 2021
ATLANTA
Naomi Green accepted a new role at Atlanta-based Giving Kitchen, where she previously served as Development Director. In her new role as Senior Director of Expansion of Operations, Naomi will help drive the growth of Giving Kitchen into new markets around the southeast with an eye on national growth.

Virginia Willis, Chef Instructor for the Digital Streaming Platform Food Network Kitchen is now hosting live cooking classes on the app. Food Network Kitchen can be streamed on a computer, phone, tablet, smart TV, or devices with Media Player, available for eating at the café or lingering at the Sorelle Pie Counter.

CHRIS BRIDGES
LeS Dames d’Escoffier International named Senior Director of Food & Beverage for The House of Glunz, Barbara Glunz received the Dame of Distinction Award by the Chicago Chapter. Barbara was a founding member of the chapter and held dual terms as president. Barbara worked as French Wine Specialist at Paterno Imports and presently manages The House of Glunz, one of the oldest family-owned wine shops in the country.

BIRMINGHAM
Christian Rousell announced the debut of a new column for a suite of hyper-local Birmingham-based magazines. The column will focus on destinations within a drive or a single air flight from Birmingham. She will explore the south’s best in terms of where to eat, drink, sleep, and DO! Joy Smith, chef and owner of Sorelle Catering, opened Sorelle Coffee in Homewood. The grab-and-go café features breakfast, lunch, and dinner items. Seating is available for eating at the café or lingering at the Sorelle Pie Counter.

Mary Grace Viado, corporate executive chef for Village Taverns, was Cal-Mex category winner at CADARIGO competition held at CIA at Copia in Napa. Viado prepared Mexican Cauli shrimp sashimi with homemade Arpas during the Facebook Live competition on July 26. There were 60 contestants who competed in three categories.

BOSTON
Judith Fabre McDonough was honored at the La Notte Rosa Del Vino Event in Trebicacca Calabria, Italy at the Miramar Palace Hotel. At the event, Fabre McDonough was the only American female wine importer/distributor honored for her continued dedication and educational expertise in Italian Wines.

Katie Del Rio Gacanovic is the Assistant Director of Food & Beverage for The Newbury Hotel which opened summer 2021. Del Rio Gacanovic was a key player in designing and launching a successful food and beverage program for the four dining venues in this new Boston hotel.

BRISTOL

CHRIS BRIDGES
Cassandra Tomassetti’s company, Art 2 Catering, catered the wedding of celebrities Blake Shelton and Gwen Stefani, in July. The couple gave her and her catering company a shout-out on Instagram.

DALLAS
Tiffany Derry, who serves as a recruiting advisor and judge on Top Chef, Chef Derry’s homage to modern southern cooking. The restaurant was named the #1 hottest restaurant in Dallas.

GEN GRAY was promoted to Chief Operating Officer of US Venues for Topgolf, Top Golf Entertainment Group is considered a pioneer in the sports-entertainment industry with their track record of creativity and infusion of technology and technology. Larkin Sloan’s signature cake at her bakery, Lof622 Cakes, was named best birthday cake of 2021 by D Magazine. One of her cakes was also featured in Martha Stewart Weddings magazine.

Denise Paul Shavandy took the executive chef position at Mushu restaurant, American Revelry. She was also nominated for Fort Worth Culture Map’s Tastemaker Awards, Chef of the Year 2021.

Dena Peterson Shaskan’s store, The Table, was named Best of 2021 Reader’s Pick Grocery Store by Fort Worth Magazine. The Table is a combined retail market and culinary studio dedicated to showcasing a wide variety of rotating products including produce, breads, cheeses, oils, and more.

Tigrid Rda, owner of Demera, a popular Ethiopian restaurant, is on the board of the August issue of Food Industry News. It speaks of Tigrid’s nonprofit which benefits girls and women in her hometown, Tigrai, Ethiopia, who are suffering egregious gender-based violence. Tigrid is raising funds for Hope 4 Tigrai Women through fund-raising dinners.

COLORADO
Kimberly Moyle is the new and first female chef at Denver’s The Denver Palace Hotel and Spa 1892. When chef Moyle was interviewed by Teresa Far- ne-Hickerson for The Gazette, she responded “It was astonishing, I didn’t realize that until I was hired for the position.”

DRAKE

TAYLOR KENNEDY
Kathleen Strobino, co-owner of Trellis Café and owner of Trellis Catering, was recently featured on The Doctors and judge on Top Chef Junior and judge on Top Chef. Tiffany Derry, recently opened a new restaurant concept. Roots Southern Table. Chef Derry’s homage to modern southern cooking. The restaurant was named the #1 hottest restaurant in Dallas.

Jaime Knee was named Best of 2021 Reader’s Pick Social Impact Restaurant by Fort Worth Magazine. The Table is a combined retail market and culinary studio dedicated to showcasing a wide variety of rotating products including produce, breads, cheeses, oils, and more.

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https://www.facebook.com/SorellePie1000

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www.chefdelavigne.com/contact-us

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www.littlegetty.com

www.penguinrandomhouse.com/

www.MYSA.com

www.zspecialtyfood.com

www.Canton11Restaurant.com


CANTON11

SOUTH FLORIDA

Sebastian DeLavigne chef/owner of Moonstruck, known Italian restaurants owners of Moonstruck, husband Toto Schiavone, and Organizational Leadership in March 2021.

www.susigott.com

www.zspecialtyfood.com

www.Canton11Restaurant.com


SACRAMENTO

Amina Harris welcomed her first customers to her new $5 million honey exploration center. The Hive, located in Woodland, CA. It is home to her family’s Z Speciality Food, the 20,000-square-foot production facility features a honey-tasting room, event space and pollinator garden on three acres.

SAN FRANCISCO

Jeanette Ferrary is delighted to announce the publication of Eating Alone: Moments in Time, a photographic exploration of the phenomenon of eating alone and the significance and meaning of nourishing ourselves in today’s world.

SACRAMENTO

Kate Washington’s new book, Already Toasted: Caring and Surviving in America (Beacon Press), earned starred reviews. Washington shares her personal struggle to care for her seriously ill husband while taking a revealing and timely look at the role unpaid family caregivers play in our society.

www.littlegetty.com

www.penguinrandomhouse.com/

www.MYSA.com

www.zspecialtyfood.com

www.Canton11Restaurant.com


SOUTH FLORIDA

Julia Johnston celebrated her twelfth year as a founding member of the Coral Gables Tour. She authored the 2021 chapter, “Basil Fest 2021 with her “Basil for Breakfast” recipe for vegan and gluten free, Mapo Tofu.

PHILADELPHIA

Rita Cinnelli was awarded Ed.D doctorate in Organizational Leadership in March 2021 from Northeastern University located in Boston, Massachusetts.

Clair DiAllo’s husband Toto Schiavone, owners of Moonstruck, which was one of the best known Italian restaurants in northeast Philadelphia since 1979 have sold their other restaurant, Raticc, located in Blue Bell, a suburb of Greater Philadelphia.

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In March 2021—Women’s History Month—LDEI Chapters around the world hosted a series of online events celebrating food, beverage, and hospitality from every perspective. There were cocktail classes, one-on-one conversations with industry all-stars, tasting events, cooking demos, panel discussions and more. All events were open to the public and most had a modest ticket price, with all funds going to local chapter philanthropic programs.

We are excited to start planning our second LDEI Table Talks for March 2022 and with more advance planning, the event will be even bigger and better! Once again, we will have a dedicated website where all chapter events will be posted, and promotion efforts will start as early as January to generate awareness and drive participation. It’s not too early to start thinking about your chapter’s Table Talks event! It can be an industry training or educational event, or a fun and interactive tasting or demo. It could be a celebration of a local tradition or a discussion with a noted author, mentor, expert, or media personality. The sky’s the limit, because as we Dames know, glass ceilings were meant to be shattered.

Information will be coming out this fall with the deadlines and details for submitting event specifics. We are excited about LDEI being part of Women’s History Month globally and can’t wait to see the fascinating menu of Table Talks events for 2022.