



## **SEAN SHERMAN NAMED 2023 JULIA CHILD AWARD RECIPIENT BY THE JULIA CHILD FOUNDATION**

*9th Annual Award Presented in Association with  
the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History*

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 13, 2022)** – Today, Chef [Sean Sherman](#), award-winning cookbook author, activist and founder of [North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems](#) (NATIFS) was named recipient of the prestigious ninth annual Julia Child Award. The award is accompanied by a \$50,000 grant from The Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts that will go to Sherman's non-profit organization, NATIFS, and support the Indigenous Food Lab, a professional kitchen and training center, expanding access to Indigenous foods. Sherman will be formally presented with the award on October 24th at a gala to be held in Minneapolis. Proceeds from the event will support the ongoing care and preservation of Julia Child's kitchen and the Smithsonian Food History Project at the National Museum of American History.

"Sean Sherman continues to dedicate his career to preserving Native American cuisine and creating a holistic, open-sourced system where others can expand on his work," said Eric W. Spivey, Chairman of The Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts. "His unwavering commitment to Indigenous food systems has already reshaped the culinary landscape and played a pivotal role in fostering Native food sovereignty. Sean and Julia share a dedication to education and a commitment to inspire change. We are thrilled to honor Sean as this year's Julia Child Award recipient."

"I saw the impact that food can have on the world through Julia and I'm excited to continue her legacy through my work," said Sean Sherman. "With the generous grant from the Foundation, I look forward to continuing my efforts to develop educational materials and programs for Native communities and fostering the rich heritage that is an essential part of American culinary history and life."

As the first Native American chef to receive the Julia Child Award, Sean Sherman, an Oglala Lakota tribe member, has been selected by the Julia Child Award's independent jury for his outstanding achievements as a chef, educator, author and activist in preserving and celebrating Indigenous food systems. Sherman has devoted his career to reclaiming and honoring the rich culinary heritage of Indigenous communities around the world, as well as sharing his knowledge with home cooks across the U.S. Throughout his career, Sherman has received three James

Beard Awards, including Best American Cookbook, Best New Restaurant in America for Minnesota's first full-service Indigenous restaurant, Owamni by The Sioux Chef, and the Leadership Award, on top of numerous other national accolades. Sherman was recently named one of the [Time 100 Most Influential People of 2023](#).

Raised in South Dakota on the Pine Ridge Reservation, Sherman discovered his passion for cooking at the age of 13. With limited TV options, through PBS he found inspiration watching Julia Child's *The French Chef*. This helped ignite his desire to explore his Indigenous culinary heritage and pursue a career in food. Throughout his journey, Sherman has dedicated himself to developing approachable Native recipes for home cooks, akin to Julia's efforts to popularize French cuisine in America.

In Minneapolis' thriving food scene, where global flavors and diverse cooking styles are celebrated, Sherman, a seasoned chef, noticed a significant absence. He discovered that neither the local cuisine nor the broader North American food landscape adequately represented the Indigenous heritage of the land or its native people. Extensive research revealed a stark reality: Native American restaurants were virtually non-existent, and traditional foodways had been largely erased from the culinary map.

Driven by a desire to reconnect with his ancestral roots, Sherman embarked on a transformative quest, delving into the culinary practices of his direct ancestors. Inspired by the enduring traditions he observed among Indigenous communities in Mexico—utilizing clay grills, practicing corn cultivation and sourcing ingredients from the surrounding environment—Sherman was compelled to reclaim not only the cooking methods of his own forebears but also the vanishing wisdom of marginalized Indigenous populations across North America and around the world.

Through his extensive engagement with tribal communities, academic institutions, culinary leaders and thought pioneers, Sherman has cultivated extensive connections, both locally and globally. He has encountered varying levels of Indigenous food knowledge, highlighting the need for widespread change throughout the United States. Utilizing speaking engagements, community dinners, culinary classes, social media, his non-profit organization NATIFS, and the Indigenous Food Lab, Sherman works to directly influence and empower these communities.

The Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts is one of the leading grant-giving private foundations dedicated solely to supporting the field of gastronomy and the culinary arts. The Foundation established the Julia Child Award in 2015 to foster Julia's legacy, while also honoring an individual (or team) who has made a profound and significant difference in the way America cooks, eats and drinks.

To date, the Foundation has awarded more than \$3 million to culinary-focused non-profit organizations across the country including almost \$500,000 in Julia Child Award grants. Previous award recipients include Grace Young, Toni Tipton-Martin, Danielle Nierenberg, José Andrés, Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger, Danny Meyer, Rick Bayless and Jacques Pépin.

To learn more about the Foundation and its work, visit [juliachildfoundation.org](http://juliachildfoundation.org). To learn more about the Julia Child Award, including past recipients, visit [juliachildaward.com](http://juliachildaward.com).

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### **About The Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts**

The Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts was created by Julia in 1995 and became operational in 2004. Its mission is to honor and further Julia's legacy, which centers on the importance of understanding where food comes from, what makes for good food, and the value of cooking. Headquartered in Santa Barbara, California, the Foundation is a non-profit organization that makes grants to support research in culinary history, scholarships for professional culinary training, food writing and media, as well as professional development and food literacy programs. Since becoming operational, the Foundation has made more than \$3 million in grants to other nonprofits. For more information, visit: [juliachildfoundation.org](http://juliachildfoundation.org).

### **About Food History at the National Museum of American History**

Through research, programs, and collections, the Smithsonian Food History Project at the National Museum of American History welcomes everyone to participate in exploring the history and ongoing significance of food cultures in the United States. By engaging in activities and conversations about food history, Museum audiences will gain a greater understanding of the roles they play, individually and collectively, in shaping the future of food production, distribution, and consumption. In addition to its foundational exhibition, "FOOD: Transforming the American Table," the Museum has developed a diverse menu of programs and demonstrations that bring audiences together, virtually and in person, for relevant discussions that start with history and expand to the present and future of American food. As the home of Julia Child's kitchen for more than 20 years, the National Museum of American History is committed to examining the impact of food, drink and agriculture on American history. Join us around the table and learn more at <http://s.si.edu/FoodHistory> and <http://americanhistory.si.edu>.