



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**THE INSTITUTE OF CULINARY EDUCATION CELEBRATES A RECORD NUMBER OF GRADUATES IN THIS YEAR'S COMMENCEMENT**

***-- Culinary Icon Jacques Pépin and Chef Antonia Lofaso will inspire the next generation of chefs --***

**NEW YORK (May 10, 2022)** – The [Institute of Culinary Education](#) (ICE) will celebrate the achievements of the 2021-2022 graduating class at commencement ceremonies at its New York City and Los Angeles campuses in the coming weeks. This new generation of chefs, a record number of graduates for ICE, has completed at least one of ICE's diploma programs, including Culinary Arts, Pastry & Baking Arts, Health-Supportive Culinary Arts, Restaurant & Culinary Management and Hospitality & Hotel Management. Honorary speakers include Jacques Pépin and alumni chefs Mary Attea and Shenarri Freeman at the New York City ceremony, and celebrity chef Antonia Lofaso and graduate Michael Kerner at the Los Angeles commencement.

"After hosting a virtual graduation last year, we are thrilled to have students celebrate in person with family, friends and classmates; and have the opportunity to be inspired by iconic chefs and alumni who have already made their mark," said ICE CEO Rick Smilow. "We know the industry is continuing to tackle challenges from the past two years, and I'm excited to see how our graduates navigate, impact and inspire the future of the restaurant and hospitality field."

Speaking at the New York City commencement ceremony is Jacques Pépin, a culinary icon who has influenced multiple aspects of the food industry from restaurants, to food media, culinary texts and education. Pépin was born in France and moved to America in 1959 to work at the original Le Pavillon, a legendary French restaurant in New York at the time. In those early years, his friendship with New York Times food editor Craig Claiborne led to friendships and collaborations with restaurateur Joe Baum, Pierre Franey and Julia Child. In the mid 1970s, Pépin reinvented himself as an educator, author and eventually, a television personality. In total he has written 29 books including his seminal text, "La Technique," and won 16 James Beard Foundation Awards. As a close friend of Julia Child, he starred with her in the award-winning PBS series "Julia and Jacques Cooking at Home". In the culinary school arena, Pépin was one of the founding deans of the French Culinary Institute (FCI) in 1982 and has also taught at Boston University. (FCI merged into ICE in 2020.) In addition to James Beard and Emmy awards, Pépin has won three honors from the French government including the Légion d' honneur.

In addition to Pépin, the New York City ceremony will feature two alumni speakers: Mary Attea, executive chef of The Musket Room and 2011 Culinary Arts graduate, who was recognized by the James Beard Foundation as a semifinalist for Best Chef: New York State in 2022; and Shenarri Freeman, executive chef of Cadence and 2021 Health-Supportive Culinary Arts graduate, who earned acclaim for her vegan soul food restaurant and was recognized by the James Beard Foundation as an Emerging Chef in 2022.

At the Los Angeles ceremony, graduates will hear from Antonia Lofaso. Lofaso owns and operates five highly-respected properties in Los Angeles including DAMA, Black Market, The Local Peasant, The Chestnut Club and Scopa. She has appeared as a host, judge or contestant on many cooking shows including Top Chef, Cutthroat Kitchen, Restaurant Startup, Guy's Grocery Games, Selena + Chef, Restaurant Hustle 2020 (and 2021) and Chance of a Lifetime.

Michael Kerner, the west coast graduate speaker, completed both the Culinary Arts and Restaurant & Culinary Management programs for a dual diploma this year. He is a sous-chef at Kevin Meehan's Michelin-starred Kali Restaurant.

The New York campus graduation will take place in two ceremonies at NYU Skirball Center on May 10 at 9 a.m. and 12 p.m., followed by the Los Angeles campus commencement at Pasadena's Ambassador Auditorium on June 6 at 5:30 p.m.

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### **About the Institute of Culinary Education**

The Institute of Culinary Education (ICE) is one of the largest and most diverse culinary schools in the world with campuses in New York and Los Angeles. Established in 1975, ICE offers award-winning six to 14-month career training programs in Culinary Arts, Pastry & Baking Arts, Health-Supportive Culinary Arts, Restaurant & Culinary Management, and Hospitality & Hotel Management, in addition to professional development in Artisan Bread Baking, The Art of Cake Decorating and Intensive Sommelier Training — with more than 15,000 alumni, many of whom are leaders in the industry. ICE also offers continuing education for culinary professionals, hosts 400 special events each year and is home to one of the world's largest recreational cooking, baking and beverage programs with 26,000 students annually. ICE's 74,000-square-foot, cutting-edge campus in New York City and its 38,000-square-foot Los Angeles campus were designed for inspiration, creativity and community. ICE continues to grow and evolve with the launch of its LA campus in 2018, the addition of the Health Supportive Culinary Arts program in 2019, an agreement with the International Culinary Center in 2020, the introduction of sommelier training and associate degrees in 2021 and the introduction of an Online Culinary Arts program in 2022. Visit us at [ice.edu](http://ice.edu) or join us on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Twitter and YouTube at [@iceculinary](https://www.instagram.com/iceculinary) to find your culinary voice™.

### **CONTACT:**

Stephanie Fraiman  
Public Relations Director  
Institute of Culinary Education  
(212) 847-0703  
[sfraiman@ice.edu](mailto:sfraiman@ice.edu)