



NEWS RELEASE For Immediate Release, May 1, 2020

Contact: Mary Coppola

mcoppola@unitedfresh.org

202-303-3425

United Fresh Names 2020 Produce Excellence in Foodservice Award Winners

Honoring The Essential Workers of the Foodservice Supply Chain

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 1, 2020) – Nine of the country's most innovative chefs and foodservice professionals representing an array of culinary styles and backgrounds will be honored the week of June 15 during United Fresh LIVE!, as part of the United Fresh Produce Excellence in Foodservice Award Program.

The program honors chefs and their companies for their creativity in highlighting fresh produce on their menus, introducing diners to new flavors, and presenting creative ways to enjoy fresh produce. This year, the program also allows us a special way to praise their dedication to feeding their patrons. The coronavirus pandemic has devastated foodservice channels in unimaginable ways, and these chefs, among thousands across the country, have demonstrated fortitude and creativity as they have been forced to innovate their models to operate in this unprecedented environment.

“It’s always a privilege for us to recognize culinary stars who are creating Instagram-worthy dishes that thrill customers and lead to a renewed interest and excitement for fresh produce,” said Tom Stenzel, President & CEO, United Fresh Produce Association. “We are in awe of what this year’s winners have done for their concepts and their communities during this crisis. Whether changing menus overnight, donating meals to frontline workers or banding together to support fellow culinarians in their communities, these chefs and foodservice operations are doing amazing things under incredible circumstances.”

The 2020 Produce Excellence in Foodservice Award winners are:

- **Business in Industry:**
 - Chef Michael Smith, Executive Chef, Company Kitchen, Omaha, NE
- **Casual & Family Dining Restaurants:**
 - Chef Travis Peters, Executive Chef, The Parish, Tucson, AZ
- **Colleges & Universities:**
 - Chef Joey Bishop & Al Ferrone, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
- **Fine Dining Restaurants:**
 - Chef Morales, Executive Chef & Owner, Katchka, Portland, OR
- **Hospitals & Healthcare:**
 - Chef Laura Gomez, Executive Chef, The Stratford, Carmel, IN
- **Hotels & Resorts:**
 - Chef Daniel Bruce, The Boston Harbor Hotel, Boston, MA
- **K-12 School Foodservice:**

- Chef Mike Yip, District Chef, Union Public Schools, Tulsa, OK
- **Quick Service Restaurants:**
 - Marissa Thiry, Nutrition Specialist, Taco Bell, Irvine, CA
- **Supermarkets & Retail Operators:**
 - Chef Randy Weed, Vice President Culinary, Plum Market, Farmington Hills, MI

These winners were selected from nominations submitted by produce companies and foodservice operations across North America. United Fresh coordinated a review of each nominee's incorporation of fresh produce into menu development, use of food safety protocols for proper produce storage and handling, leadership in produce-related community service and special events, and recognition by their company and industry peers.

“We’re thrilled to support this excellent program for the industry and honor leading chefs and foodservice professionals who are elevating the profile, and increasing the consumption of, fresh produce,” said Steve Grinstead, Chief Executive Officer, FreshEdge™. “We are proud to support and recognize these nine winners for the important role that they play in showcasing our industry and introducing their customers to a variety of fruit and vegetable concepts.”

All winners will be honored during the Retail-Foodservice Celebration at United Fresh LIVE! on Thursday, June 18, and will participate and education and networking events throughout the week. We invite all of their corporate team executives and members, peers and family and friends to also join in the celebration through [United Fresh LIVE!](#), a virtual event platform where the Retail-Foodservice Celebration will be hosted in real time and further available on-demand.

To register for FREE for United Fresh LIVE! visit www.unitedfreshlive.org.

For more information about the Produce Excellence in Foodservice Awards Program, contact Miriam Wolk, Vice President, Member Services, at 202-303-3410 or mwolk@unitedfresh.org.

###

About United Fresh Produce Association

Founded in 1904, the United Fresh Produce Association brings together companies across every segment of the fresh produce supply chain, including growers, shippers, fresh cut processors, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, foodservice operators, industry suppliers and allied associations. We empower industry leaders to shape sound government policy. We deliver the resources and expertise companies need to succeed in managing complex business and technical issues. We provide the training and development individuals need to advance their careers in produce. Through these endeavors, we unite our industry with a common purpose – to build long-term value for our members and grow produce consumption.

About FreshEdge™

FreshEdge embodies a novel approach to fresh food distribution—combining leading regional produce distributors who can deliver tailored customer service with an extensive selection of fresh produce, proteins, fresh-cut produce, prepared foods and specialty items to meet the ever-changing consumer demand for fresh, local, innovative cuisine. The FreshEdge family of brands delivers freshness across its product portfolio to Midwest and Southern-based foodservice, retail and schools. For more information, visit www.freshedgefoods.com.