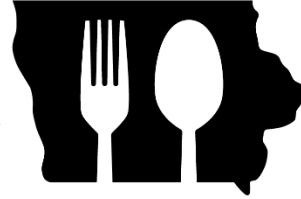


IOWAEATS

food & drink festival



CHEFS PANEL



COLLIN DORSEY
MODERATOR

From southern Illinois to eastern Iowa, the Cedar Valley is now home. With more than a decade of experience, I'm proud to bring you the latest stories that affect you and the lives of those around you on KWWL News at Noon and KWWL News at 5. I've been with KWWL since the spring of 2018.

I was raised in southern Illinois and it's where I started my career. I got my start in news in 2012 at WDQN-AM in Du Quoin, Illinois where I eventually became the news director. I covered city government and courts for the local newspapers: The Pinckneyville Press and the Du Quoin Weekly.

After graduating from Southern Illinois University Carbondale, I went to work for WSIL-TV, the ABC station serving southern Illinois, southeast Missouri and western Kentucky. I was able to tell the stories of the people of the region I grew up in and helped shape who I am as a journalist.



JESSICA BALDUS
CHEF

Jessica is quick to say that initially the “hospitality industry choose her” and that she was drawn in by the people. However, as a business owner she continues to choose hospitality back. Says Jessica, “Making decisions about the food we eat, how and where it’s grown, how and where it’s prepared, and the community and environment it’s consumed in, has a huge effect on everything from personal well-being, to agriculture and the environment, to political policy and societal roles.”

Baldus lives out what she believes and has been honored for her philanthropy, food and community service.

If you want to celebrate with Jessica or any of the other incredible 40 Women to Watch this year, get your tickets for the Grand Tasting Gala and Celebrating Excellence Ceremony at restaurantiowa.com!



GEORGE FORMARO
CHEF

George Formaro is the chef and restaurateur behind some of Des Moines’ most successful eateries – Centro, Django, Malo, South Union Bread Café, Gateway Market & Café and Zombie Burger. He is also the founder of the first artisan bakery in Iowa, South Union Bakery.

Raised in an Italian family on Des Moines’ east side, Formaro knew the power of good food in strengthening bonds among family, friends and business associates. George graduated from East High School in 1986 and attended Des Moines Area Community College’s well-regarded culinary arts program.

A six-time James Beard Award nominee, George never stops developing menus and restaurant concepts in his free time. Chef Formaro also has a keen interest in food history and culture. Thorough his private library of more than 7,000 historic cookbooks, he enjoys exploring forgotten recipes, our shared culinary heritage and the many ways cuisine ties communities together.



LUMARIE RODRIGUEZ
CHEF

Her passion for the kitchen and successful management in the preparation of a variety of tasting dishes; are the mark of this Iowa-based Puerto Rican Chef Lumarie Rodriguez Soto. Her love of baking came at an early age, learned by helping her mother and grandmother in her native Puerto Rico.

Chef Lumarie ventured to other industries obtaining a B.A. in Advertising and Graphic Arts and an M.A. in Human Resources from the University of Puerto Rico, but her love for baking and creativity guided her to attend La Escuela Hotelera de Puerto Rico to hone her skills, extend her knowledge and perfect her craft.

Lumarie owned her patisserie in Puerto Rico for seven years, specializing in luxury wedding cakes and becoming one of the top three bakers on the island. Lumarie loves challenges and innovation, in 2015 she moved to Iowa to accept the challenge of developing a new bakery concept.

Making Waterloo her new home, where she is an active part of the community.

Chef Lumarie is an American Culinary Federation, Certified Executive Pastry Chef, and current board member of the ACF Southwest Chapter and is an avid participant to promote the culinary arts in Iowa.

Lumarie has won multiple awards as a chef for inspiring and unique creations as well as coached the Waterloo Career Center culinary team to achieve victory at the Pro Star competitions hosted by Iowa Restaurant Association.

A Latin American Facebook personality with over 75,000 followers and growing on Instagram, and YouTube. She is passionate about food and leads others into the industry, promoting the culinary arts in Iowa and all over the world and working with the next generation to inspire growth in the culinary arts.

In 2022 she accepted the challenge of being Food and Beverage Director and Executive Chef of the Waterloo Convention Center, bringing her passion, knowledge, and expertise to deliver a unique gastronomic experience.



AARON HALL
BAKER

Aaron Hall, owner of The Local Crumb, began baking in Mount Vernon, IA, while working at The Lincoln Winebar. As he honed his skills as a pizzaiolo, he developed an interest in baking bread. With access to a wood-fired oven, he used the residual heat from the previous night to bake loaves in the early morning. What began as a hobby quickly became a genuine passion for both baking bread and the opportunity to contribute to his community.

Over the years the business has grown from a single oven in his garage, to a small production space in Mount Vernon's community center, to now a retail brick and mortar in Cedar Rapids, IA. The new location (Fancy's Pizza) will operate in partnership with Jesse Sauerbrei, owner of The Lincoln Winebar, and will be the new home of The Local Crumb: bread by day, pizza by night.

In 2022, Aaron received a nomination by the James Beard Foundation for Outstanding Baker.