

For more information:
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Hawaii Culinary Education Foundation Program Features James Beard Award Winners Grace Young and Robynne Maii

Nov.20, 2023 —Join James Beard Award Winners Grace Young and Robynne Maii for a program, *Fighting to Preserve and Protect America's Chinatowns*, on Thurs., Jan. 25, 6 p.m. at the Mission Memorial Auditorium, 550 South King Street, Honolulu.

Grace Young will share a firsthand account of how at the start of the pandemic she watched NYC's Chinatown become a ghost town. Stepping away from her 40-year career as a culinary professional she became an unlikely activist advocating for the survival, at first for New York's Chinatown and then for America's Chinatowns. She will be joined in conversation with Chef Robynne Maii, the first woman of Hawaiian ancestry to win the coveted James Beard Award for her restaurant Fête Hawaii. Join these two female Asian American culinary powerhouses as they discuss the importance of preserving America's Chinatowns.

Young is recognized for her video series, Coronavirus: Chinatown Stories. She will be in Honolulu to teach culinary students at Leeward Community College, sponsored by the Hawaii Culinary Education Foundation (HCEF). The public program is co-sponsored by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii, Les Dames d'Escoffier Hawaii, the Mayor's office of Culture and the Arts, and HCEF.

Young was named to Forbes 50 over 50 2023 Impact list, USA Today 2023 Women of the Year honoree and was 2022 Humanitarian of the Year by the James Beard Foundation.

The public program is offered for no fee, but registration is required. Free parking is available at the Civic Center Municipal Parking. The Mission Memorial Auditorium is located on the Honolulu Hale Grounds, 550 South King Street.

To register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/grace-young-tickets-745756155737>

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Grace Young is an award-winning cookbook author, culinary historian, and filmmaker. She is the 2022 recipient of the Julia Child Foundation's [Julia Child Award](#), the James Beard Foundation's [Humanitarian of the Year Award](#) and is a [USA Today](#) 2023 Women of the Year honoree for her work to save America's Chinatowns amid anti-Asian hate during the pandemic. She recently was named to Forbes 50 over 50 list of impactful and influential women. Dubbed the "accidental voice for Chinatown" by [Grub Street](#), Grace's advocacy for Chinatown and AAPI mom and pop businesses has been profiled on [CBS Mornings](#), [All Things Considered](#), [USA Today](#), [PBS Newshour](#), [Washington Post](#), [Wall](#)

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[Street Journal](#), [Smithsonian](#) and [Vogue](#). She has been a fierce advocate for Chinatown, never more so than in her video series [Coronavirus: Chinatown Stories](#), produced in collaboration with videographer [Dan Ahn](#) and Poster House Museum. The series documents the toll of the pandemic on New York City's Chinese community. Grace's impressive and extensive bio www.graceyoung.com/about/

Robynne Maii: Born and raised in Honolulu, Robynne Maii is the chef and owner of award-winning restaurant Fête in Honolulu's Chinatown, along with Heyday at the historic White Sands Hotel. A graduate of Punahou and 'Iolani School, Robynne went on to pursue her culinary and pastry arts degree from Kapi'olani Community College. After earning her master's degree in food studies from New York University, Chef Robynne went on to work at Union Pacific and the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York. Robynne has also worked for *Gourmet Magazine*, Kitchen Arts & Letters Bookstore, and not only established but taught culinary programs at The Art Institute of New York City and CUNY's Kingsborough Community College.

Chef Maii was named the 2022 James Beard Award Foundation Best Chef for the Northwest and Pacific Region on her first nomination. She is the first Hawaii-based recipient to win this award in 19 years and is the first Native Hawaiian woman to win a James Beard Foundation award. www.fetehawaii.com

About the **Hawaii Culinary Education Foundation:** The Hawaii Culinary Education Foundation is dedicated to the development and support of culinary training programs throughout the state of Hawai'i. The Foundation provides financial and professional resources towards activities that enhance the scope of learning by culinary students, professionals, and the public. Visit www.hawaiiculinaryfoundation.org for more information. Celebrating 25 years of culinary education, 1997-2023.

About **Les Dames d'Escoffier:** LDEI Hawaii is a preeminent global professional association for women leaders in the food, beverage and hospitality professions whose mission is to inspire, advance and support women to achieve excellence in leadership and philanthropy. www.ldeihawaii.org

The **Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii** was founded in 1911, initially to provide service to the merchants in Chinatown, and to assist the immigrant population assimilate into their new community. Since those humble beginnings 105 years ago, the Chinese Chamber has grown tremendously and now serves as a leader and an active voice for not only Chinatown but the Chinese community in Hawaii. Today, Chinese Chamber members are active in the community as prominent business, professional and civic leaders who are also patrons and supporters of community efforts and organizations.

The Chinese Chamber's mission is to promote business and economic development, to preserve our rich cultural heritage and to encourage civic responsibility, primarily through education and outreach. www.chinesechamber.com

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