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Colorado Restaurant Association Announces 2021 Humanitarian and Lifetime Achievement Award Winners

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – October 4, 2021

Denver, CO – The **Colorado Restaurant Association** is pleased to announce the winners of its annual Humanitarian and Lifetime Achievement Awards, as well as a special Chairman’s Award recipient. This prestigious awards program celebrates Coloradans who are devoted to the idea of hospitality and practice it in their daily lives. These individuals are recognized throughout the industry for the significant contributions they have made through their careers in leadership, service, and dedication to the foodservice industry and community. Awards will be presented at the Colorado Restaurant Association’s Board of Directors and Lifetime Achievement Awards Dinner on October 12, 2021, at the Broadmoor Resort in Colorado Springs.

Award Winners

Noel & Tammy Cunningham Humanitarian Award

This award is one of our most prestigious and is named for Noel and Tammy Cunningham, in honor of their significant dedication to serving their community through volunteer work, advocacy, leadership, and philanthropy.

Dana Faulk Query and Dave Query, Big Red F Restaurant Group

Dana Faulk Query and Dave “DQ” Query are the larger-than-life wife-and-husband team behind the popular, Boulder-based Big Red F Restaurant Group (BRF). Dave grew up in Boulder; Dana was born and raised on the bayou in Crowley, Louisiana. Together, they not only lead their 14-restaurant group and the hundreds of team members employed by BRF – Dave as chef and “Chief Pot Stirrer” and Dana as marketing guru and “Creative Cat” – but the Querys are also deeply devoted to supporting the Boulder community and the Colorado restaurant industry at large through charitable events, volunteer work, and the group’s established ethos of giving back. BRF has funneled financial, culinary, and community support to countless Colorado nonprofit organizations, from Imagine! and There with Care to Sophie’s Neighborhood and We Don’t Waste. During the pandemic, BRF was a founding supporter of Feeding the Frontlines Boulder; fed its furloughed staff on a bi-weekly basis to the tune of more than 21,000 family-style meals; and established Big Red F’eeds, through which consumers could donate a box of food for hospital workers and other first responders in Boulder. As the pandemic dragged on, Big Red F’eeds supported a different food bank in every market where there is a BRF location, from Fort Collins and Longmont to Kansas City, Missouri. BRF pays its staff extra and allocates time for them to volunteer in their community, and, since the 1994 founding of the group, there has been a Big Red F Family Fund, led by employees, which provides hardship assistance grants to staff members in need; since March 2020, the Family Fund has distributed \$138,000 to BRF workers impacted by the pandemic. Dana serves on the Board of Directors of the Colorado Restaurant Association, EatDenver, the Boulder Chamber, and Boulder County Farmers Market.

Ryan Lowe, The Ore House Restaurant

Born and raised in Durango, Ryan Lowe has been giving his all to the restaurant industry since his first job as a dishwasher at the Ore House, the restaurant he now owns. There, Lowe is his teams' guiding star and a pillar of his community. He has long maintained a commitment to supporting local culinary artisans and growers at the Ore House through regional and sustainable ingredient sourcing and zero-waste practices. Lowe was a founding force behind Durango's iconic annual Harvest Dinner with Local First, an event that spotlights the talented farmers and ranchers of the Four Corners region. Lowe co-founded the ProStart hospitality education program at Durango High School in 2012 and has since mentored its ProStart students all the way to a national competition win. He is also a committed member and leader of Durango's Sexual Assault Services Organization. During the pandemic, Lowe championed the national Feed the Frontlines program in Durango, delivering to-go meals to seven local hospitals and clinics, all while reimagining the culture within the Ore House into one based on "trust, hard work, accountability, fun, positive vibes, and the idea of filling the cups of others first." Lowe was named the "Young Professional of Durango" in 2017 by the Chamber of Commerce and the Ore House was awarded the "Spirit of Durango" for 2020-2021 for its myriad contributions to the community.

Colorado Foodservice Hall of Fame

The coveted Colorado Foodservice Hall of Fame was established in 1978 to honor those individuals who have served as an inspiration and example through their long careers in service and significant contributions to the restaurant industry.

Jackson Lamb, Metropolitan State University of Denver | Jackson Lamb is a legendary professor in the School of Hospitality at Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU), where he has taught with enthusiasm and passion for the past 15 years, educating future generations of culinary arts and hospitality management professionals. He is a consummate teacher with a particular interest in the effects of volunteerism on culinary skill competencies, customer service concerns in private club environments, and hunger-related issues. Lamb traveled to the Super Bowl for more than a decade to bring MSU students to participate in the annual Taste of the NFL charity event and developed the new urban-agriculture minor and certificate program in the School of Hospitality at MSU. He is also actively engaged with the Colorado ProStart high school hospitality education program and community and serves as a judge for its statewide culinary competition. During the pandemic, he created a series of 46 videos detailing Levels 1 and 2 of the ProStart curricula, which state restaurant associations across the country are using as remote-teaching tools. Lamb has been a board member of We Don't Waste, Food Bank of the Rockies, the Colorado Restaurant Association, the American Culinary Federation, and Colorado Chefs Association and was honored as the 2016 Chef Educator of the Year by the Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education.

Christina Gumbiner, Steamboat Ski Resort Corporation | For almost 30 years, Christina Gumbiner has led culinary programming for the Steamboat Ski Resort Corporation, currently as its Director of Mountain Food & Beverage Operations. She has worked in the hospitality

industry for the duration of her career, with a focus on ski resorts since 1989. Gumbiner is an insightful and visionary leader, with a keen eye for implementing trends. Thanks to her creative culinary chops, Steamboat launched its infamous “Taco Beast” in 2018, a modified Prinoth snow groomer equipped as a mobile food unit that roams the slopes of the resort serving street tacos, salsas, and Mexican sodas and beers. During the pandemic, the Taco Beast and a new, delivery-focused “Pizza Ranger,” also the brainchild of Gumbiner, were deployed to feed resort guests from various mountain locations, allowing food service and social distancing requirements to creatively coexist. Gumbiner and her food-and-beverage team also do great work on behalf of area non-profit organizations, including Horizons and LiftUp of Routt County via the Food Recovery Network, which provides resources to those facing food insecurity. When ski-area operations ceased in March 2020, Gumbiner and her team redirected food to furloughed staff and community members who were struggling to make ends meet.

Bart Bortles, Woody’s Wood-Fired Pizza | Bart Bortles has been a leader of the Colorado foodservice scene since the 1960s. His storied career began when he took over as managing partner at the Catacombs Restaurant and Bar inside the Hotel Boulderado, which holds Boulder’s first liquor license. Bortles later purchased the Hotel Boulderado with partners, and ultimately opened and operated several restaurants across Colorado, including Bart’s Restaurant in Louisville; seven Woody’s Wood-Fired Pizza locations, plus one in Moab called Zac; the Rialto in Denver; and the Table Mountain Inn in Golden. In 2000, Bortles sold his interest in every restaurant but one: the original and now, the only, Woody’s Wood-Fired Pizza in Golden. Currently in its 28th year of business, family-owned and operated Woody’s is the top grossing single-unit pizzeria in Colorado and the fifth nationwide. Woody’s has won numerous awards for business ethics, environmental stewardship and sustainability, and its community-focused efforts, which include contributions to the Golden Backpack Program, the Colorado School of Mines Athletic Program, Wounded Warriors, and countless others. Bortles’ son, Jon, has been leading the team at Woody’s since 2015, but Bart Bortles’ philosophy – “more than just great pizza” – shines through Woody’s operations and outreach every day.

Elizabeth Contos, Pete’s Restaurants | Elizabeth Contos, known by all as Liz, has been the quiet, steady, behind-the-scenes owner/operator of the beloved Pete’s Restaurants empire since its start almost 60 years ago. In 1962, when Liz was 19 years old, she and her husband, 2006 Foodservice Hall of Fame inductee Pete Contos, then 25, bought the Satire Lounge on East Colfax Avenue, running it for more than 25 years before opening Pete’s Kitchen next door. The couple would eventually own numerous bars and restaurants that became as synonymous with Denver as Colfax itself. If Pete was known for his gregarious and generous personality, Liz is a legend for her unassuming demeanor and wise head for business, having managed the financial operations of all 10 Contos family restaurants – four of which are still open and operating -- for almost six decades. Today, at 80 years old, Liz still works full time, managing Pete’s Kitchen, Pete’s Satire Lounge, Pete’s Central One, and Pete’s University Park Cafe with two generations of her family. She is a dedicated, resilient, and passionate professional who has helped change the face of Denver dining through her family’s iconic restaurants.

The Chairman's Award

The Chairman's Award is discretionary and given out by the current Chairman of the CRA's Board of Directors to a leader in the CRA community who has made a significant and meaningful impact in support of the work of the association and on behalf of the industry as a whole.

Dave Woodruff, El Moro Spirits & Tavern | As President of the active Durango chapter of the CRA and an enthusiastic booster for the Colorado foodservice industry, Dave Woodruff has gone above and beyond for his community and the restaurant industry over the past 18 months. He has been a leader on the La Plata County Economic Recovery Task Force, spearheading the Restaurant and Retail Sector of that organization to determine how the community could support businesses and individuals through the pandemic crisis. Woodruff was a representative on the five-person policy team that developed the 5 Star State Certification Program for his county; he helped author the 5 Star training manual for restaurants, too. He worked with the Durango Business Improvement District and Animas Surgical Hospital to organize restaurant vaccination clinics, focusing on Spanish-speaking and immigrant populations, and worked with area medical centers to host flu vaccine clinics for restaurant workers. Moreover, Woodruff is a passionate supporter of the CRA's mission to help Colorado restaurants thrive, communicating and collaborating with State legislators regularly to provide industry perspective on advocacy issues. He was also a masterful communicator during the pandemic, sharing CRA information with the Durango community and beyond and letting the CRA know when there was news coming out of La Plata County. Woodruff serves on the Visit Durango Marketing Committee; is a restaurant liaison to the Durango Hotel & Lodging Association; a founding Board member of In the Weeds, a Durango-based nonprofit that provides support and mental health resources for members of the restaurant industry; curriculum committee advisor for Leadership La Plata; restaurant advisor for Homegrown Talent Initiative; and business advisor for the R.O.A.R. Coalition. Woodruff is also a Bar Smarts advanced graduate and a certified Cicerone.

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About the Colorado Restaurant Association

The Colorado Restaurant Association (CRA) is dedicated to the enhancement and success of Colorado's foodservice industry. Founded in 1933, the CRA is the leading trade organization for the state's dynamic restaurant scene. The CRA represents, educates, and promotes a \$14 billion industry comprised of more than 12,000 eating and drinking establishments and 260,000 workers. corerestaurant.org.