



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**INSTITUTE OF CULINARY EDUCATION'S COMMENCEMENT SIGNALS HOPE FOR REVITALIZING  
RESTAURANT & HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY**

***-- Culinary Stars Gail Simmons and Matt Hyland Inspire Recent Graduates --***

**NEW YORK (June 14, 2021)** – The [Institute of Culinary Education](#) (ICE) hosted a virtual bi-coastal commencement for its New York City and Los Angeles campuses on Saturday, June 12. The ceremony celebrated 1,275 graduates entering the hospitality industry from the school's 2019-2021 classes on both coasts, including from ICE's diploma programs in Culinary Arts, Pastry & Baking Arts, Health-Supportive Culinary Arts, Restaurant & Culinary Management, and Hospitality & Hotel Management. ICE's honorary speakers were Gail Simmons and Matt Hyland, both Culinary Arts graduates of the school, who inspired fellow alumni with their experiences in food media and owning and operating a restaurant group, respectively.

"After a trying year for our industry, our [commencement](#) coincided with a clear rebirth for America's restaurants and we are thrilled that once again our graduates have a wide array of opportunities as they enter the industry," said ICE CEO Rick Smilow. "Coming out of the pandemic, it's clear that there is a shortage of culinary and management talent across the nation, and our motivated graduates can be part of the solution to help take on the challenges of our burgeoning industry."

Gail Simmons is a renowned food expert, author and television personality. The celebrity chef and TV star addressed graduates, sharing the story of her journey from food writer for her school newspaper in Canada to renowned expert as a judge on Bravo's "Top Chef," applying her culinary training from ICE.

She offered insight on how ICE's graduates can become a part of the revitalized food world: "As a cheerleader for this industry, I have watched proudly as so many leaders emerged to call for civil and social justice, to demand government support, and to nurture our families and teams in innovative ways like only restaurants can. The industry looks very different now as its proverbial mask is removed, which is where you, our next generation, come in. Restaurant and hospitality work is hard. It requires dedication and sacrifice, skill, patience, and willingness to compromise. Be humble and always be learning. It's a long game and there are few shortcuts. But if there is one thing I am sure of, it's that food transcends borders and has the power to heal. Restaurants are the embodiment of this message and becoming one of us means shouldering that responsibility, as well as reaping the rewards of a life of purpose."

Matt Hyland, chef and owner of Emily and Emmy Squared, with 14 locations on the East Coast, discussed the industry's need for new leaders, like ICE's graduates, saying: "As summer approaches there is a bright side to this grim story. The streets are full of excited people ready to dine again. New leaders are ready to take over an industry that so desperately needs new blood. A fresh start is not only required

but also exciting. This is the beginning of the renaissance for restaurants. New culture, new ideas, new cuisines, and most importantly new leaders like yourselves.”

In addition to Simmons and Hyland, there were two speakers from the graduating classes. Representing New York, Shenarri “Greens” Freeman is a graduate of ICE’s Health-Supportive Culinary Arts program and the executive chef at Cadence, a vegan soul food restaurant featured in the New York Times, Eater, Grub Street and more this year. Representing Los Angeles, Gabriella Russo is a Culinary Arts alum who externed at three-Michelin-starred SingleThread Farms in Sonoma County.

And while rebirth, recovery and opportunity were themes shared by all the speakers, there were also references to traditional career advice. Smilow suggested that graduates be patient and recognize that lifetime learning is a norm in the culinary field. Acknowledging that moving from the classroom to a professional kitchen could be daunting, he advised, “Compare your skills and outlook today to who you were yesterday.”

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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 and the introduction of sommelier training and associate degrees in 2021. 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™.

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