

The Chaîne's Philanthropy

The Confrérie de la Chaîne des Rôtisseurs was formed in late 1959 and held its first induction in January 1960. Even before its founding, its members were philanthropic. The first Bailli Délégué/National President, Paul A. Spittler, was a founder of the Culinary Institute of America in 1946, served as its Board Chairman and Director and contributed to it. That spirit of giving and “paying it forward” in the culinary world continues today.

The Chaîne's Board of Directors adopted a Mission Statement in 1999 to amend the precepts previously created and followed. It continues today.

The Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, Bailliage des États-Unis, unites professional and amateur gastronomes in a private, not-for-profit society committed to promoting the culinary arts and those of enology and hospitality through example, education, and camaraderie.

Based on the great traditions and high standards of the medieval French guild of rôtisseurs of “meat roasters,” our confrérie celebrates the pleasures of the table, encourages the development of young professionals by awarding scholarships and sponsoring competitions and, as part of an international organization, fosters friendships among members around the world.

Many good people have worked for the benefit and welfare of others over many years, and the nature of the Chaîne's philanthropy has evolved. Although it dates from the origins of the organization in 1959, it was made more formal with the creation of the Confrérie de la Chaîne des Rôtisseurs Foundation as a California corporation in 1993. It was reincorporated and moved to New Jersey in 2008 and adopted its current Mission Statement in 2012.

To advance public awareness of the U.S. Confrérie de la Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, its history, purpose and programs – through scholarships, charitable giving and educational activities.

In the early years, the Chaîne Board and Members raised funds by various means and, without the formality of an entity, made distributions for scholarships. While Roger Yaseen served as Bailli Délégué, in about 1984, members were given the option to add a contribution to the Chaîne's Educational Fund when paying their dues, based on an idea of Thomas Moore. Roger Yaseen also used other innovative ideas to raise additional funds. In the early years, the funds raised were contributed for “bricks and mortar”. Over time, that changed so that the funding became and now is almost 100% for scholarships supporting the hospitality professionals of the future.

At some point, the Chaîne Education Fund was incorporated and obtained exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. A decision was made to shut it down and the newly formed replacement was dubbed the Confrérie de la Chaîne des Rôtisseurs Foundation, as noted above.

Bailli Délégué Honoraire Thomas Moore came up with the idea of affording members the opportunity to add a contribution to the Chaîne's educational fund in 1984. Bailli Délégué

Honoraire David Wilson borrowed an idea from the Texas Society of CPAs and formalized the contribution mechanism by creating a \$25 “check-off” on members’ dues statements. It remains today, and accounts for about half the money raised annually, with almost 90% of our members contributing. Funds are annually raised through auctions, around 2012 the Foundation Friends Program was born. Other innovative fundraising has occurred over the years. Some examples are listed below:

- In 1991, Howard and Lynne Halpern, Co-Chairs of the March of Dimes, created The Chaîne Dines for Dimes across the country, with involvement of 27 chapters and 97 Chefs’ Dream Dinners, about 1,500 guests, raising about \$143,000. A similar series of dinners was held the following dinner.
- In 1995, at one of the first Chaîne auctions during the Grand Chapitre in Carmel, California, Chambellan and Bailli Honoraire Marty Rakowitz contributed a bottle of 1950 Chateau Latour. Bailli Délégué Honoraire Brooks Firestone acted as auctioneer and at the auction’s conclusion the winning bidder, Bailli Délégué Honoraire Dave Wilson, gave the bottle back to be resold in subsequent years. That went on for about a decade, when Joel Spiro then provided a 1959 Chateau Latour for auction; it, too, was purchased and then given back to the Chaîne to be auctioned many times thereafter. This concept started anew in 2017 with the donation by Ross Griffin of an 1899 Chateau Mouton Rothschild. It was auctioned at the 2017 Grand Chapitre and then returned to be auctioned in later years. Over the course of about 22 years an estimated \$50,000 or more has been raised for the Foundation and its good purposes via the auction of the same bottle of unopened wine(s).
- In 1998 the Sheriff arrived at George Brown’s ranch with blue lights flashing and “arrested” our then Grand Chancellor, Robert Baty. Money was raised for “bail” as members contributed \$100 or \$150 and raised about \$5,000.
- The Hillsborough Bailliage has coordinated cruises for about 17 years, and they and others have obtained donations of cruises that have been auctioned, raising substantial funds.
- During the Grand Chapitre in Honolulu in 2000, then Bailli Délégué Burton Hobson created a Brillat-Savarin concept and raised \$1,000 each from 112 donors to create funds to support an awards program that benefits culinary and hospitality students. That fund continues today.
- During the planning for the San Diego Grand Chapitre, Harold Small arranged for an original painting of a Chaîne dinner to be painted by noted artist Guy Buffet. It was auctioned with the proceeds going to the Foundation. The original painting ended up being given to the organization, and it now hangs in The Chaîne House. The image was used on the menu covers for the gala induction dinner. Giclees were produced and sold with additional funds benefitting the Foundation.
- During the San Diego Grand Chapitre in 2010, Harold Small orchestrated a race of America’s Cup sailboats held on the bay, resulting in about \$6,500 being raised.
- Jan Pozzi created a mosaic table bearing the Chaîne’s logo. It was auctioned to benefit the Foundation and it, too, was given to the organization and is at The Chaîne House.

- In about 2011 Foundation Chair Shelly Margolis, with assistance from Cindy Eisenmenger, created a Foundation Friends Program involving annual contributions (a la the Brillat-Savarin Fondateurs). The Foundation Friends annually contribute about \$50,000.
- Thousands of dollars have been raised by the Chaîne's Naples Bailliage and distributed for culinary scholarships in that area of Florida. San Diego Bailliage Members Michelle Metter and Ken Loyst through their San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival have raised and given away more than \$70,000 in Chaîne scholarships in the past half dozen years. The Myrtle Beach Bailliage created a fund-raising event for the local culinary school. It has now grown to a community event with more than 150 people attending and more than \$60,000 being annually raised. Similar examples exist in other communities where the Chaîne has Bailliages.
- Foundation Chair John Burson arranged for a private Foundation to provide matching donations over a period of years that resulted in garnering more Foundation Friends as well as the funds provided by it.
- Foundation Chair John Burson created an endowment concept for the Foundation in about 2016 with Dominick and Marie Addario, John and Barbara Burson, and Irwin and Barbara Weinberg as the first to create endowments of at least \$10,000. By the end of 2017 there were 5 endowment funds totaling more than \$150,000, including one bearing the name of Executive Director Honoraire Clyde Braunstein in honor of his 22 years of service to the Chaîne.
- With the leadership and guidance of Foundation Chair John Burson and Bailli Délégué Harold Small, a legacy program has been created to benefit the Foundation. The first funding is from the estate of Jerome Adner, and more from the estate of Kaye Rahn. Additional legacy gifts are being sought to enhance and grow this fund.
- Napa-Sonoma Bailli Honoraire Gene Daly in a three-year period raised \$70,000, which was distributed for scholarships in memory of and honoring Peter Mondavi Sr. and Jess Jackson. This, too, happened as a part of the Foundation.
- Many of our local Bailliages have raised and distributed funds for scholarship assistance and in other ways. The Atlanta Bailliage at one dinner raised \$46,000 for a Meals on Wheels program. Another example is \$5,100 recently raised by the San Francisco Bailliage to benefit a Culinary Arts at Transition Program through the West Contra Costa Unified School District, referred to as "Possibilities". It focuses on students with moderate to severe disabilities, including intellectual disabilities and autism so these young people have an opportunity to learn the skills necessary to live independently. Local Bailliages do events and distribute funds every year, and they may equal or exceed the amount the Chaîne's Foundation has distributed.
- The Foundation's endowment is growing, and over time it will produce significant income while retaining principal.
- The next new opportunity will be funding from an annual dinner cohosted with the American Academy of Chefs and American Culinary Federation, because of the work of Chaîne members Burt Cutino, Mark Wright, Harold Small and Rico DiFronzo, the first of which will be held on July 14, 2017 in New Orleans in honor of the tricentennial of that great city.

So where have these funds gone; what has been done? For many years the Foundation has distributed scholarship funds at the schools where our regional and young chefs competitions have been conducted, about \$70,000 per year spread over about 10 different institutions each year. And, while the Foundation today has more than \$600,000 in assets, it has raised and distributed more than \$4,000,000. That is in addition to the funds raised and distributed by local Bailliages, and the aggregate total of those funds may be greater in amount. Students of more than 100 universities, vocational schools and programs have received the benefit of scholarship assistance over the years, all because of the Chaîne, its members, and the Foundation. Among the larger beneficiaries and some of the most recent to have received scholarships for students have included the following:

- Culinary Institute of America – about \$1,000,000
- Johnson & Wales – about \$800,000
- American Culinary Federation Education Foundation, Inc. – about \$250,000
- University of California Davis, Enology program – about \$50,000
- Kendall College, Chicago, Illinois – about \$12,000
- Orange Coast College – about \$24,000
- Horry Georgetown Tech College – about \$5,000
- Kapiolani Community College – about \$8,000
- American Academy of Culinary Arts – about \$7,000
- University of Nevada Las Vegas – about \$5,000
- Metro State University – about \$5,000

The Foundation has had only six Chairs since its creation in 1993, including:

David A. Wilson	2002-2004
Burton H. Hobson	2004-2005
John F. Burris	2005-2008
Stephen J. Gerkin	2008-2011
Sheldon Margolis	2011-2014
John H. Burson	2014-current

Many others have assisted the Chaîne Foundation and its beneficiaries, as Trustees or otherwise, and they are too many to name here. Their efforts have been and are much appreciated.

Today, thanks to the generosity of our members and the commitment of those who have served and who serve today in our leadership, the Chaîne Foundation “lives a life that matters.” Some have said that “camaraderie is the heart of the Chaîne, but it is the Foundation that is its soul.” Its legacy will last far longer than will any one of us.