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FOOD, RESTAURANT AND HOSPITALITY CONSULTING

Dear James Beard Foundation Members and Friends:

I am writing today with very exciting news about the Food Studies Collection at the Fales Library, New York University: James Beard's personal papers have just been donated to the Library. Following James' death in 1983 his papers, some 26 cubic feet of materials, were left to the University of Wyoming, which planned to build an archive of American popular culture. At that time, there were no institutions in the United States that were broadly collecting American foodways (the Schlessinger Library at Radcliffe was documenting women in the food world, but not men). The project at the University of Wyoming never materialized as it had been envisioned and the papers they acquired languished.

In 2003 Marion Nestle; Marvin J. Taylor, Director of the Fales Library; and I began to build a major collection of cookbooks and materials related to American foodways with a special focus on New York's defining role in the post-WWII era. The collection at the Fales Library now contains more than 20,000 printed volumes, making it the third largest collection of its kind in the United States. Included among these books is the library of the James Beard Foundation, which they generously donated in 2006. We have also been collecting the archives and personal papers of important individuals and organizations, including the papers of Marion Nestle, Betty Fussell, Cecily Brownstone, Café Nicholson, and Les Dames d'Escoffier of New York. I donated a small collection of Beard's letters and photographs to the collection a couple of years ago. This small gift signaled to the University of Wyoming that NYU is interested in American cooking, and they offered the collection to the Fales Library.

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Additionally, for the past four years, I have cosponsored, along with the Fales Library, and the Steinhardt School of Education Department of Nutrition, Food Studies, & Public Health a series of panels called Critical Topics in Food, programming three events each year. These programs have brought scholars, journalists, chefs, critics, and a host of others from the food world together to talk about current issues in food. The panels have been standing room only, showing the keen interest of both the scholarly and general publics. All the programs are available on the web at:

<http://www.nyu.edu/tv.media/nyutv/media.archive/food.html>

Needless to say, we were honored and delighted to accept James Beard's papers. Beard was, and remains, the father of American cooking and, perhaps more than anyone, he paved the way for Americans to think seriously about what they eat. James was truly the first American "foodie." With this donation we are poised to take the food studies collection at NYU to a new level. James Beard's papers are a rich history of the founding of a serious, American food tradition. In order to make these papers accessible to students, scholars, food writers, and others interested in the history of American foodways, we are planning a series of projects of both a scholarly and a general public interest. These include:

- processing of the James Beard Papers for research
- creating a traveling exhibition about James Beard and American foodways that can be mounted at venues across the U.S.
- continuing and enhancing the Critical Topics in Food programs
- beginning an oral history project to document the lives of major figures in New York food history

- building an endowment to assure the continued growth of the NYU food studies collections

I hope you will consider helping Fales Library accomplish these goals. Your financial support of Fales Library's Food Studies Collection will help preserve and tell the story of American foodways.

You can make a gift by calling NYU Libraries' development office, 212-998-2446, or by mailing a check to:

Marvin Taylor
Director, Fales Library
New York University
70 Washington Square South
New York, NY 10012

Your gift is fully tax-deductible and will make a real difference.

This is an exciting time for all of us who care passionately about the quality and nutritional value of food we eat, the sustainability of agriculture, and the ever-growing American appreciation of food and foodways. I hope you will be able to join me in building this essential research collection at NYU.

Sincerely,

Clark Wolf