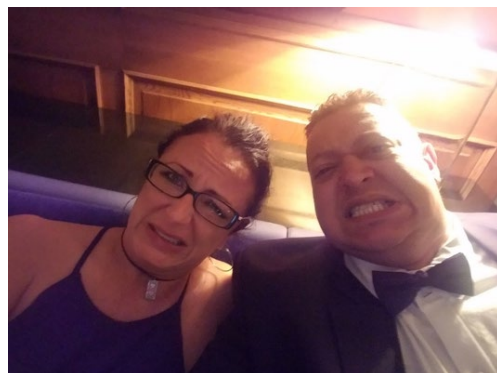


Julie and Jerry McDonald Culinology® Scholarship

The Julie and Jerry McDonald Culinology Scholarship was established to support and inspire the next generation of diverse people of color and/or female leaders in the food industry. Through this annual scholarship, Julie and Jerry McDonald seek to create meaningful opportunities for women and people of color pursuing careers in Culinology by helping reduce financial barriers and recognizing outstanding potential within the profession. The scholarship is intended to honor women and people of color who demonstrate academic achievement, professional promise, and a passion for advancing the food industry through the unique blend of culinary arts and food science that defines Culinology.



A **\$5,000 scholarship** will be awarded and presented at [RCA Annual Conference and Culinology Expo](#), March 23-25, 2027 in Dallas, Texas. Up to \$2,500 (or half of your scholarship monies) may be used as a travel stipend to attend the 2027 RCA Annual Conference. This opportunity allows you to meet and learn from industry professionals and make career-long connections as you begin your professional journey. If the winner chooses to attend conference, they will receive funds in the form of a reimbursable stipend.

Eligibility

- Candidate must be, or become, an RCA student member. Non-members can [join RCA as a student member for \\$35](#).
- Candidate must be a person of color and/or female.
- Candidate must be currently enrolled in an [RCA-approved Culinology program](#).

Materials Required to Complete this Application

- **Academic transcripts** (can be unofficial) and credits earned covering the most recently completed semester/quarter in your RCA-approved Culinology program.
- **Letter(s) of reference** (3 maximum) from an educator, supervisor, professional contact, or other non-family member who can speak to your experience and interest in Culinology.
- **Essay (950 words or less/~ 3 pages)** describing your educational journey, career aspirations, and commitment to the food industry.

Scholarship Funds: Recipient will receive scholarship funds via deposit at their institution's Financial Aid Office. Acceptable uses include books and supplies, lab fees and tuition expenses. Recipient must provide the address of the scholarship office or financial aid office and all relevant details.

Expenses Eligible for Reimbursement: If the recipient chooses to attend the 2027 RCA Annual Conference, registration and travel-related expenses are eligible for reimbursement up to \$2,500, including but not limited to:

- RCA conference registration (\$170 student rate)

- Round trip airfare to and from Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) or Dallas Love Field (DAL)
- Transportation to and from the Dallas airport and conference hotel (Uber, Taxi, Lyft)
- Lodging at the Sheraton Dallas Hotel (approx. 3 days, 4 nights)
- Meals (approx. 2 lunches and 2 dinners; other meals are provided as part of conference registration)

Essay Requirements

Applicants should provide a brief personal essay (950 words or less/~3 pages) that addresses the following topics:

- The one thing you think is most important for us to know about you, related to the industry or not.
- A brief Current academic status, achievements, and accomplishments.
- Professional goals and long-term career aspirations within the food industry.
- Passion for Culinology and the food profession.
- The experiences, influences, or motivations that inspired you to pursue a career in the food industry.
- How receiving this scholarship will support your educational and professional development.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- Academic performance and commitment to educational excellence.
- Demonstrated leadership, initiative, and involvement in culinary, food science, or related activities.
- Clarity of professional goals and potential for future contributions to the food industry.
- Quality, thoughtfulness, and authenticity of the personal essay.
- Commitment to advancing diversity, inclusion, and innovation within the profession.

Application Timeline

Application Opens: Thursday, October 1, 2026

Application Closes: Sunday, December 20, 2026

Applicants Notified: Friday, January 29, 2027

RCA Annual Conference: March 23-25, 2027

About the Culinology Scholarship Foundation

This scholarship is administered by the [Culinology Scholarship Foundation](#) (CSF). CSF is the charitable and educational arm of the Research Chefs Association. The foundation's mission is to provide scholarships and educational opportunities for individuals pursuing careers in Culinology, culinary arts, and food science. Our work is funded through donations from generous supporters of the CSF mission.