In July 1999, the American Culinary Federation (ACF) was celebrating its annual convention, and we were having a rehearsal for the opening ceremony. The newly-formed U.S. Culinary Olympic Team was to be individually introduced, Chef Darrin Aoyama had earned a spot on the Team as its pastry chef. However, the professional Master of Ceremonies (MC) simply could not pronounce Darrin’s last name “Aaah-Ooo-Yamma” . . . I repeated, over and over . . . “Aaah-Ooo-Yamma” . . . You guessed it – they drafted me to be MC and Darrin and I became good friends.

Darrin Aoyama, born and raised in Southern California, has a very diverse background that began in the medical and health care field. He earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from the University of Southern California in 1990 and today is still a Registered Nurse and a Public Health Certified Nurse. When he realized his passion was not in healthcare, he is still today a Registered Nurse and a Public Health Certified Nurse. When he realized his passion was not in healthcare, he is still today a Registered Nurse and a Public Health Certified Nurse.

In the process of working with him, I always had to keep my wits about me. The last thing on my mind was losing my temper. I was 18, fresh out of high school, and had this great opportunity to keep doing what I was doing. But I was happy. I was happy.

One day, I was meeting with the people who were going to be in the convention, and we were having a rehearsal for the opening ceremony. The newly-formed U.S. Culinary Olympic Team was to be individually introduced, Chef Darrin Aoyama had earned a spot on the Team as its pastry chef. However, the professional Master of Ceremonies (MC) simply could not pronounce Darrin’s last name “Aaah-Ooo-Yamma” . . . I repeated, over and over . . . “Aaah-Ooo-Yamma” . . . You guessed it – they drafted me to be MC and Darrin and I became good friends.

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