Sullivan University students recently returned from the American Culinary Federation’s (ACF) Southeast Regional Student Culinary Competition, where their hard work and dedication earned them five silver medals (no gold medals were awarded this year). Are you wondering what the competition is like? Just imagine demonstrating five different knife cuts on carrots, potatoes, onions, tomatoes and parsley, perfectly filleting a chicken and filleting a fish, perfectly making a quart of pastry cream, peeling and sectioning an orange and using pre-made dough to perfectly line a tart pan. And, not knowing until the moment of competition which item a team member would be demonstrating. Then imagine doing ALL of it within 80 minutes, while being asked questions by the judges. But that’s not all! There is also a four-course meal to be prepared – with 30 minutes in which to set up, 90 minutes to prepare and serve and 30 minutes to break down and clean the station. The competition is a true test of their training and their dedication to practicing their skills. The ACF’s student hot food competitions have garnered a place of prestige among the world’s culinary competitions. These culinarians are raised to a higher level of competition by virtue of personal sacrifice, adventure and achievement. Congratulations!

Vanessa Haden, a 07 Sullivan University graduate, does it rich in Las Vegas.

Jillian Kessler, a ’07 Sullivan University Professional Catering graduate recently participated in The Kitchen Contenders Mystery Catering Challenge. The Mystery Box was the opening night event for the 16th Annual Catersource Conference. The Conference is the largest gathering of caterers in the world. Jillian was held in Las Vegas, Nevada. Jillian is the Off-Premise Event Coordinator for Martyn’s Catering in Boston, Massachusetts was one of three competitors representing the American Caterers Association (ICA) team. Chefs Shane Miller of Mélange Catering in Houston, Texas and Avery Rohmer of RSVP Catering in Santa Clara, California completed the team. Team ICA took the silver medal, finishing close second behind The ACEs of the National Association of Catering Executives team, comprised of Christopher Windus, Executive Chef for Todd English’s Bluezoo; Joe Alfano, Executive Sous Chef for Universal Studios Orlando; and John Walsh, Executive Chef for Chef’s Expressions Catering, Baltimore, Maryland. The teams were judged by off-premise experts from the American Culinary Federation. Team ICA’s winning hors d’oeuvres was Sweet Potato Grissini wrapped with Korean Style Pork Bulgogi with Wax Bean Kimchi. Congratulations Jillian!

Sullivan Professional Catering graduate strikes it rich in Las Vegas

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Sullivan wins five silver medals at Southeast Regional Student Culinary Competition

Team Sullivan wins five silver medals at Southeast Regional Student Culinary Competition

Vanessa Haden, CPC, Baking & Pastry Arts graduate was recently named the 2008 Pastry Chef of the Year by the American Culinary Federation (ACF). She is a finalist for the National Pastry Chef of the Year award and will compete for this title at the ACF’s national convention in July. 2008. “Being recognized and nominated by my fellow colleagues is a great honor,” stated Chef Haden. “Having a passion for my job is wonderful and the award is, I guess you could say, the icing on the cake.” From business to baking! Vanessa discovered a love for baking and pastry when she worked in corporate America. “A rough day at the office guaranteed the flour, sugar and butter would come out when I got home,” Chef Haden recalled. “The trials of the day would fade away as the smells in the kitchen got stronger.” Consistent positive response from her coworkers, family and friends helped encourage her to a pastry career. Enjoyed her student experience Chef Haden toured and was impressed with the reputation, program, facilities, faculty and the numerous opportunities available. “I was able to acquire working knowledge of the science of baking, kitchen skills and organization, plus experience in the industry and confidence in my abilities. I was always so excited to get to school each day and see what was on the agenda,” she said, adding “Not only did I get to learn via lectures and labs, I also had many opportunities to work in the industry, giving me invaluable insight into what was out there, my interests and a chance to network.” Sullivan degree impacted career “People seem to give me more credibility because of my degree.”

Chef Vanessa Haden, CPC, received her Baking & Pastry Arts degree from Sullivan University in 2000.

Sullivan has a far-reaching reputation that has opened up many doors for me. Having a Sullivan Baking & Pastry degree has given me the confidence to pursue my desire to open my own business,” said Chef Haden.

She recently opened The Wedding Cake, and enjoys creating modern, classic, traditional, contemporary, whimsical, unique, custom wedding and specialty cakes. While most of her business comes from the Louisville area, she’s delivered a cake to Chicago and has received requests from as far away as North Carolina and Las Vegas.

Words of advice “Currently students: Take advantage of every opportunity,” she said. “Whether in the classroom, competing on the culinary team, helping with special functions or working in the industry – Learn from it all! Soak it up!” Chef Haden also added to all prospective students, “Take a visit to Sullivan and see their impressive programs in action. If you have a desire to pursue a culinary or baking career, Sullivan will prepare you.”

Editor’s Note: For more information on The Wedding Cake, please visit theweddingcake.net

Vanessa Haden honored as Distinguished Visiting Chef

Candy Wallace, executive director of the American Personal & Private Chef Association (APPCA), was recently recognized by Sullivan’s National Center for Hospitality Studies; Chef Candy Wallace, Executive Director; American Personal & Private Chef Association and Coordinator, Hospitality, Cook, Culinary Arts, Professional Catering during ceremonies honoring Wallace as Sullivan University’s Distinguished Visiting Chef.

Candy Wallace honored as Distinguished Visiting Chef

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