

September 5, 2016

Mount Mercy Alumna Has a Recipe for Success

Jacqueline Bamrick was recently named by the American Culinary Federation (ACF) a Fellow in the American Academy of Chefs (AAC), the honor society of the ACF. This prestigious honor has only been bestowed upon 690 of the 30,000 registered Federation members. Of the 690 Fellows, only 36 of them are female and Mount Mercy Academy is proud to call one of these chefs an alumna. Bamrick is a 1982 graduate of Mount Mercy Academy.

Acceptance in the AAC is granted to Chefs that are members in good standing of the ACF, are Certified Executive Chefs and candidates must be nominated by two Academy Fellows. The entire careers of the candidates are evaluated and their work must be documented. In addition, chefs must demonstrate outstanding commitment to the profession.

Bamrick has been a member of the ACF since 1998. She has worked in a variety of positions throughout her successful and award-winning career. She began working at Elegant Affairs Caterers, a family business. This exposure to the food service industry stimulated her interest in the field and inspired her to attend Erie Community College where she earned an Associate's Degree and then she continued on to Buffalo State College for a Bachelor of Science degree. Bamrick began her formal chef training at Transit Valley Country Club, advancing to Executive Sous Chef before moving on to Wegmans Food Market where she worked as a cooking coach and a chef in the Prepared Foods Department. She then held positions at The Buffalo Club and the Garret Club before returning to teach full time at Erie Community College in 2009. Bamrick is an Assistant Professor in the Hospitality Management Department at ECC.

Becoming an Executive Chef is a long, arduous process that requires many hours of work and much sacrifice. Having a degree is just the first step; young chefs must work for approximately five years to begin to advance through the kitchen hierarchy. After five years chefs may advance to higher level positions, eventually leading to the coveted Executive Chef position. The experience gained throughout the early years as a chef result in the development of skills working in a fast paced, high demand field. It also teaches how to lead a team while considering food costs and generating a profit. The field has unlimited possibilities, especially in the Buffalo area where new restaurants seem to be opening every week.

Being an executive chef is difficult for anyone, but it can be even more difficult for a female in what is a predominately male field. Bamrick was fortunate enough when she started out to have had male Executive Chefs who were respectful to her and also served as strong mentors willing to share their time and talents while helping her achieve her career goals. Along the way she learned to develop a "thick skin" that helped her to become a good chef. Bamrick's success was recognized in 2009 when she was awarded the "Chef of the Year" for the Buffalo Chapter of the ACF. Only two other females had been accorded this honor.

Having the opportunity to attend Mount Mercy Academy and thrive in its all-girl environment is something that Bamrick strongly believes was an advantage for her in her chosen career. She learned to recognize her potential and how to strive for her goals through the education she received and the foundation it provided. Bamrick learned that hard work and dedication do pay off and if people keep their vision and faith, success will ensue.

Bamrick enjoys sharing her knowledge and skills with her students. She values the opportunity to be a female role model and mentor and realizes this is an important responsibility. She tries to expose her students to local community events and cooking competitions. These events help to create a network for students which will better their employment opportunities later. As professional chef she relishes the creativity and freedom to develop her own cooking style. Being able to witness the

clienteles' enjoyment of her cooking and seeing the memories and bonds it creates is extremely rewarding.

One of Bamrick's hopes is to inspire more young women to follow her career path. She believes that young women who keep their vision and work hard to achieve their goals can experience the joys of becoming an executive chef. The path may not always be easy or as financially rewarding as one might wish in the beginning, but putting in the time and effort is an essential part of the recipe for cooking success.

Mount Mercy Academy

A Catholic College Preparatory High School for Young Women

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