

Date: October 3, 2012  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**6th ANNUAL GRACE AWARDS FINALISTS ANNOUNCED**  
***Jason Shaw of Georgia Olive Farms Named***  
***Innovator Award Finalist***

**Atlanta, GA (October 3, 2012)** — The Georgia Restaurant Association (GRA) recently revealed the finalists for the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Georgia Restaurant Association Crystal of Excellence (GRACE) Awards. These finalists are peer-nominated and the winners will be announced November 11<sup>th</sup> at the GRACE Awards Gala to be held at the Loews Atlanta Hotel. Jenn Hobby Rivera of Q100's The Bert Show will serve as Mistress of Ceremonies. The GRA will also honor this year's Lifetime Achievement Award Winner, Mr. Herman J. Russell of Concessions International and Pashcal's Restaurant.

Innovator Award Finalist, Jason Shaw, along with his brother Sam Shaw and his cousin Kevin Shaw, created the Georgia Olive Farms (GOF) in 2009. GOF is an agricultural cooperative that became the leading East Coast producer and marketer of olive trees and Georgia Olive Farms own Extra-Virgin Olive Oil. In 2011, Georgia Olive Farms conducted the first commercial harvest of olives east of the Mississippi River since the late 1800s. The olives harvested are pressed into extra virgin olive oil which is marketed under the Georgia Olive Farms label.

GOF is working with other producers to provide sustainable, locally produced olive oil to east coast consumers. The efforts of Georgia Olive Farms should result in a significantly reduced carbon foot print for olive oil consumed on the east coast. Each year, Georgia Olive Farms will be the first to harvest olives in the United States and can provide the freshest olive oil to U.S. consumers, especially on the east coast.

"We are proud of our initial success and we are proud of the large amount of support we've received from many of the top chefs in the south. There is a huge market for local, sustainably grown olives and olive oil on the East Coast that is fresh, flavorful, and healthy," said Shaw, who also serves as State Representative for Georgia House District 176 (Berrien, Clinch, Lanier and Lowndes counties).

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The GRACE Awards features environmentally sensitive printing, sustainable décor, and locally sourced food & beverage. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to long-term partner, the Atlanta Community Food Bank (ACFB). In addition, this year GRA Chair Patrick Cuccaro, of Affairs to Remember Caterers, will honor ACFB's very own Janice Reece with the 2012 Chairman's Award. To learn more about the GRACE Awards, visit [www.garestaurants.org/GRACE](http://www.garestaurants.org/GRACE).

## **2012 GRACE AWARDS FINALISTS**

### **Restaurateur of the Year**

Tad and Nancy Mitchell, Six Feet Under Pub & Fish House

Dave Snyder, Halyards, Tramici

Jay Swift, 4<sup>th</sup> & Swift

### **Industry Partner of the Year**

Dennis Carpenter, Heartland Payment Systems

Perry McGuire, Smith, Gambrell & Russell, LLP

Lorraine White, M-PASS, Inc.

### **Distinguished Service Award**

Debby Cannon, Georgia State University

Jo Ann Herold and Kate Atwood, Arby's Foundation

Guy Thomson, Pitty Pat's Porch, Proof of the Pudding

### **The Innovator Award**

Linton Hopkins, H&F Bottle Shop, H&F Bread Co.

John Pinkerton, Moon River Brewing

Jason Shaw, Georgia Olive Farms

### **Lifetime Achievement Award Winner**

Herman J. Russell, Concessions International and Paschal's

### **Chairman's Award Winner**

Janice Reece, Atlanta Community Food Bank

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**About the Georgia Restaurant Association**

The GRA's mission is to serve as the voice for Georgia's Restaurants in Advocacy, Education and Awareness. The GRA is sanctioned by the National Restaurant Association (NRA) to operate Georgia's only not-for-profit representing the state's foodservice industry. From large chains to start-ups, the GRA helps make Georgia a better place for restaurants to do business and helps make restaurants better for Georgia.

**About the GRACE Awards**

The GRACE Awards is the Georgia Restaurant Association's annual black-tie gala event honoring Georgia's Restaurant Industry. The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual GRACE Awards will take place on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at the Loews Atlanta Hotel. The GRACE awards are peer-nominated and honor the top finalists in the following categories: Restaurateur of the Year, Industry Partner of the Year, Distinguished Service Award and the Innovator Award. The winners are announced at the event, and are presented with crystal works of art created by renowned local artist Hans-Godo Frabel.

The GRACE Awards gala uses environmentally sensitive printing, sustainable decor and locally sourced food & beverage. Also, a portion of the proceeds from this event will go to benefit the Atlanta Community Food Bank. The Atlanta Community Food Bank's mission is to fight hunger by engaging, educating, and empowering the community.

For more information, ticket reservations, and/or sponsorship opportunities, visit the website at [www.garestaurants.org/GRACE](http://www.garestaurants.org/GRACE).

For media inquiries, please contact Kelly Hornbuckle, GRA Director of Marketing, at 404.723.5428 or [Kelly@garestaurants.org](mailto:Kelly@garestaurants.org).

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