

# 2022 BARBECUE HALL OF FAME

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## IMPACT AWARD



## The Unsung Black Barbecue Cooks

### Impact Award

Unfortunately, the names of many barbecue pioneers have been lost to history. By the time of the Civil War, Southerners had been cooking barbecue for more than two centuries, and a great many of these cooks were African-American slaves, who tended the pits at barbecues organized for the white community as well as at events for their own families and friends. After the Civil War, thousands of talented cooks in rural areas and small towns brought delight to generations of hungry Southerners, but their names didn't make it into newspapers and other historical records. We may not know who they were, but we know they were there.

Enslaved pitmasters are the anonymous creators of what many regard as the one true American cuisine, barbecue. A few of them, or their family descendants, may be known to us, but it was their collective toil under the harshest of conditions that established the template for the food we now celebrate. If we are what we eat, then those who make what we eat help define us as a people. The enslaved pitmasters are, in their way, roughly analogous to the unknown soldier. They should be recognized en masse so that their contributions to America are forever remembered and memorialized. This is an idea I've raised with other members of the HoF nearly a year ago. I'm hopeful they, and you, will carry it forward.

They are self-evident. Without enslaved people making smoked meats, there would not be what we today call barbecue.

The Impact Award was created to honor a group of individuals for their "impact" to the world of Barbecue as well providing a platform to recognize groups for their journey and life commitment. This award will also provide the opportunity to continue to educate on the history, legacy and groups of individuals that have worked to create the world of barbecue that we are able to experience today. The group will not be formally inducted into the hall of fame, rather the hall would like this opportunity to award and recognize what this group has done. The legacy award will be a perpetual award, not required to be given each year, but at the discretion of the committee to honor and give to a group.