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SOUTHERN CULINARY LEGACY FINDS A HOME IN NEW ORLEANS

SoFAB CookBook Collection Will Be Housed at New Orleans Public Library

(NEW ORLEANS, Dec. 16, 2009) – The Southern Food and Beverage Museum and the New Orleans Public Library have joined together to create a publicly available collection of cookbooks and culinary writings to be known as the “SoFAB Culinary Collection at NOPL.”

The non-circulating collection will initially open at the Main Branch of the NOPL in a separate area. The collection consists of approximately 5,000 volumes.

“New Orleans, of all places, deserves a world class collection of cookbooks,” says Rica Trigs, chief operating officer of the NOPL. “This collection will be a valuable resource for researchers and scholars delving into the culinary history, as well as cooks who want to track down a long-lost recipe. We are pleased to make this collection available to the public.”

The books can serve as a resource for students from the Institute for the Study of Culinary Cultures at Dillard University, the culinary students at Delgado and Nunez Community Colleges, high school programs such as the one at NOCCA, students at UNO and the Chef John Folse Culinary Institute at Nicholls State University.

“Students of the culinary arts will benefit greatly from this collection,” says Triggs. “It’s a huge resource to the City of New Orleans. Music, food and architecture is what we celebrate.”

The SoFAB collection was created from tragedy, says Liz Williams, president of the Southern Food and Beverage Museum.

“The original collection of about 2,000 books, as well as the computer that held all of the collection information, was lost during Hurricane Katrina,” she says. “We had to start all over again. So we did. We put out a call for help in recovering the drowned heritage, and the world responded: over 5,000 volumes of culinary history, cookbooks and reference books came in to the SoFAB collection, so many that they overwhelmed the museum’s own space.”

“The collection is important,” she says, “because food plays a central role in the life of the city. This collection adds an intellectual component to the city’s food heritage. It represents the nourishment of the mind, as well as the body.”

“These books are every bit as precious as photo albums and heirloom furniture,” she says. “They serve as replacements of family recipes and dog-eared cookbooks that have been passed down through the generations.”

The volumes consist of hardback cookbooks as well as smaller spiral bound books created by church groups and non-profit organizations. The museum continues to collect more books to create a comprehensive collection that represents the national and international scope of food, cooking and the culinary arts.

Those who are interested in donating cookbooks should contact the Southern Food and Beverage Museum at (504) 569-0405.

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The Southern Food and Beverage Museum is a nonprofit living history organization dedicated to the discovery, understanding and celebration of the food, drink and the related culture of the American South. It opened in June 2008 at the Riverwalk Marketplace in New Orleans. The museum hosts special exhibits, demonstrations, lectures and tastings that showcase the food and drink of the South. It cooperates with local and regional museums, restaurants, theaters, academic institutions and artists to present richly-textured experiences in multiple venues. www.southernfood.org.

The New Orleans Public Library inspires the individual and enriches the community through access to information, resources, technology and programming that is delivered by knowledgeable and creative staff. NOPL is New Orleans' gateway for information through education, communication, culture and recreational enrichment -- by utilizing the fundamentals of sight, sound, and taste. The **New Orleans Public Library** leads the recovery and the economic redevelopment of our community, fosters the future aspirations of every individual, and protects the intellectual freedom and democratic dreams of all. Neworleanspubliclibrary.org