



For Immediate Release:
December 9, 2020

Contact:
Michael Mitchell 202-826-8168
michael.mitchell3@dc.gov

**OCTFME announces the launch of the Office of Cable
Television, Film, Music and Entertainment DC STAR program
and recognizes Chef Kwame Onwuachi
as its inaugural recipient**



*This James Beard Award winning chef was Esquire Magazine's Chef of the Year
and the author of "Notes from a Young Black Chef."*

Washington, D.C. – The District of Columbia Office of Cable Television, Film, Music, and Entertainment (OCTFME) is pleased announce the launch of the “Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment DC STAR” initiative. OCTFME will highlight the achievements of District of Columbia residents who exemplify excellence in

the area of creativity, education, creative entrepreneurship, economic revitalization of creative businesses, social justice, or racial equity. OCTFME is delighted to recognize Chef Kwame Onwuachi as the inaugural recipient of this distinction.

“It’s an incredible honor to have been chosen as the first ever Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment DC STAR. Throughout my culinary career, I have been able to hone my craft by staying true to who I am and reflecting on my culture for continued inspiration,” said Chef Kwame. ***“Being able to hone and practice my craft in DC is also important to me because it has always been a constant in my life. My grandfather taught at Howard University, so every summer was spent in Southeast. I call DC home and it will forever be an integral part of my culinary journey. I thank OCTFME for naming me the first OCTFME DC STAR and I hope to inspire others to follow their dreams and not let anyone dim their light.”***

KWAME ONWUACHI was born on Long Island and raised in New York City, Nigeria, and Louisiana and currently resides in Washington, DC. He was first exposed to cooking by his mother, in the family’s modest Bronx apartment, and he took that spark of passion and turned it into a career. As a boy Kwame was sent to rural Nigeria by his mother to “learn respect.” Although, the hard-won knowledge Onwuachi gained in Africa was not enough to keep him from the temptation and easy money of the streets when he returned home. However, through food, he broke out of a dangerous downward spiral embarking on a new beginning at the bottom of the culinary food chain as a chef on board a Deepwater Horizon cleanup ship.

Kwame Onwuachi toiled in the bowels of oil cleanup ships and went on to train in the kitchens of the most acclaimed restaurants in the country. He then worked at some of the best restaurants in the world, and appeared as a contestant on Top Chef, Onwuachi has had quite a journey. Kwame Onwuachi is the James Beard Award-winning executive chef formerly of Kith/Kin Restaurant, Esquire Magazine’s Chef of the Year, and author of *“Notes from a Young Black Chef,”* published by Alfred A. Knopf.

Onwuachi trained at the Culinary Institute of America and opened five restaurants before turning thirty. A former Top Chef contestant, he has also been named one of Food & Wine’s Best New Chefs, and a 30 Under 30 honoree by both Zagat and Forbes.

By the time the DC Resident was twenty-seven years old, Kwame Onwuachi had opened—and closed—one of the most talked about restaurants in America. After announcing his departure from Kith/Kin earlier this year, he revealed an incredible new collaboration. A signature Sweetgreen bowl available across the country. Kwame’s collaboration with Sweetgreen is part of the seasonal restaurant chain’s launch of Collections, a new menu format featured on the restaurant’s app and digital platforms. He also teamed with Virginia Ali and honored Ben’s Chili Bowl by creating a never-before-seen meal that was available during October through Resy, as part of the Resy Classics Remix, a nationwide takeout event series.

The incredible story of Kwame’s rise in the culinary world is chronicled in an inspiring memoir; about the intersection of race, fame, and food, *“Notes from a Young Black Chef.”*

In it he shares the remarkable story of his culinary coming-of-age, and chasing your dreams despite the odds, even when things don't turn out as you expected.

Kwame was featured as part of the **2020 Creates Masterclass Series**, a virtual interactive conversation series featuring experienced entrepreneurs to help DC creatives hone skills and navigate changing business landscapes. The series launched June 25, 2020 and includes featured entrepreneurs such as Artist and Activist Raheem DeVaughn, Chefs Kwame Onwuachi and Eric Bruner-Yang, award-winning producer Charneice Fox, and Attorney Lita Rosario. To view Kwame's Masterclass Series please [click here](#).

It was also recently announced that Kwame will be part of Top Chef's special new competition, when the show returns for Season 18 in 2021. For the first time ever in the history of *Top Chef*, the competition will feature an elite rotating judging and dining panel made up of All Star winners and finalists.

In addition to Kwame, the show will also feature Chefs: Richard Blais, Carrie Baird, Nina Compton, Tiffany Derry, Gregory Gourdet, Melissa King, Kristen Kish, Edward Lee, Amar Santana, Dale Talde, and Brooke Williamson. They will be joined by host Padma Lakshmi, head judge Tom Colicchio, and judge Gail Simmons.

Social Media:

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/chefkwameonwuachi/?hl=en>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/chefkwame>

###

OCTFME DC STAR

OCTFME launched the "Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment DC STAR" as a Creative Industry Contributor Spotlight Feature. It highlights and recognizes the achievements of one (1) District resident per quarter who has demonstrated a significant and notable accomplishment in the area of creativity, education, creative entrepreneurship, economic revitalization of the creative businesses, social justice, or racial equity in the District of Columbia.

###

About OCTFME

The Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment (OCTFME) produces and broadcasts programming for the District of Columbia's public, educational, and government access (PEG) cable television channels and digital radio station; regulates the District of Columbia's cable television service providers; provides customer service for cable subscribers; and supports a sustainable film, music, and entertainment creative economy and labor market in the District of Columbia.

OCTFME operates and manages the District's government television access channels: the District

Council Channel (DCC), the District of Columbia Network (DCN), and the District Knowledge Network (DKN). OCTFME's award-winning content provides resourceful information on government activity, education, current events, history, music, arts and entertainment. OCTFME manages and programs DC Radio 96.3 HD4 digital radio station, the District of Columbia's first government radio station in partnership with Howard University's WHUR. It is one of only two full-power, city-managed and programmed radio stations in the country

OCTFME provides production support services that advance film, television, video, entertainment, interactive, multimedia, and digital media content creators. These services include permitting; location scouting; production support; job placement assistance; workforce development; and the DC Film, Television and Entertainment Rebate Fund.

OCTFME supports the creative economy through Mayor Muriel Bowser Presents: 202Creates initiative, administering programs supporting the growth and sustainability of the creative industries in all 8 Wards of the District.

For more information, contact the Office of Cable Television, Film, Music, and Entertainment at (202) 671-0066, visit us online at: entertainment.dc.gov, and follow us on [Facebook.com/entertaindc](https://www.facebook.com/entertaindc), [Instagram.com/entertain_dc](https://www.instagram.com/entertain_dc) and [Twitter.com/entertain_dc](https://twitter.com/entertain_dc).

###