US Presidential Culinary Museum Chef Stormy Mongiello Connects White House State Dinner to GLOW Academy

Stormy Mongiello connects Sarah Childress Polk, White House State Dinner history and women's leadership with students at Wilmington's GLOW Academy.



Chef Stormy Mongiello speaks at the Glow Girls Academy in Wilmington, NC.

WILMINGTON, NC, UNITED STATES, September 24, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- As President Donald J. Trump and First Lady Melania Trump ENJOYED Chinese President Xi Jinping and Madame Peng Liyuan for a State Dinner at the White House, the United States Presidential Culinary Museum® is connecting the living tradition of presidential hospitality with a leadership lesson delivered to young women at GLOW Academy in Wilmington.

Executive Chef Stormy Mongiello visited the Girls Leadership Academy of Wilmington, joining Chef Lori Eaton to speak with three classes about food, history, service, education, and the many different roads that can lead a young woman into leadership.

> A young woman's beginning does not determine the size of her future. Food, history, and service can open the door to confidence, leadership, and opportunity."
>
> *Chef Stormy Mongiello*

Mongiello began far from a White House dining room. She described growing up on a farm, milking cows, churning butter, and climbing onto a tin roof to turn apple slices drying on a bedsheet while her mother and grandmother called directions from below. She later served six years honorably in the U.S. Navy as a jet engine mechanic on aircraft including F-14 Tomcats, then built a career in human resources, earning bachelor's and MBA degrees, becoming a mother, and ultimately serving as Executive Chef of the United States Presidential

Culinary Museum®.

The history lesson centered on Sarah Childress Polk, wife of President James K. Polk. Sarah studied at the Moravian Female Academy in Salem, North Carolina, and became a politically engaged First Lady. She read and marked newspapers for the President, worked beside him for extraordinarily long 14-hour days, advised him, managed relationships as his chief of Staff, and used White House hospitality as part of the administration's political life.

Her dining-room story particularly resonated with the culinary lesson. Sarah later recalled becoming so absorbed in conversation at White House dinners that she barely noticed the table service. A steward, concerned that she ate too little, sometimes set aside a dish he knew she liked so she might enjoy it afterward.

That bridge between food, conversation and diplomacy is alive again. The White House announced that the State Dinner for President Xi will showcase American ingredients with Chinese influence and begin with Schramsberg Blanc de Noir, recalling the historic 1972 toast shared by President Richard Nixon and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai.

The Nixon connection also appeared on Wilmington television. A WWAY Channel 3 feature airing today highlighted former White House Master Chef Marti Mongiello's work supporting seven U.S. Presidents and revisited one of presidential food history's most memorable combinations: Nixon's taste for cottage cheese with ketchup! See that TV show episode here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86vvyoPaUv4&t=311s

For the museum, the timing creates a natural America 250 story. Presidential tables are not merely places where meals are served. Across generations, they have been places where relationships are built, ideas exchanged, history witnessed, and hospitality becomes part of diplomacy.

GLOW Academy, founded in 2016 and co-founded by Judy Girard, serves girls in grades 6 through 12 through a tuition-free public charter school model built around rigorous college preparation, leadership, and confidence. Its vision is direct: “She Will… Graduate. Go to College. Succeed in Life.” Wednesday's lesson carried the same message: a young woman can begin on a farm, in a classroom, in uniform, in a kitchen, or anywhere else.

Her beginning does not determine the size of her future.

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