

FOOD: CHEF BEVERLEY KELLMAN IS SERVING UP FOOD GOOD TO THE PVAMU STUDENTS' SOUL

By Jo-Carolyn Goode, www.StyleMagazine.com



Award-winning Chef Beverley Kellman (Photo: Food Network)

Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) students may not know how lucky they are to eat dishes prepared by the award-winning Chef Beverley Kellman. The 2017 Brazos County Chef of the Year and 2019 American Culinary Federation Texas Chef Association Pastry Chef of the Year is highly respected in the culinary field with a resume that reads like a seasoned chef, even though her years are far more youthful. The former Food Network "Cutthroat Kitchen" contestant has cooked everywhere from the greatest place on earth, the Disneyland Hotel at Disneyland, California, to now serving it up on the hill as Sodexo Executive Chef at Prairie View A&M Dining Services.

Houston Style Magazine sat down with Chef Kellman to talk about her culinary journey and how she has evolved the college student's palette to include more than just French fries with everything.

Meet Chef Beverley Kellman

Coming from Barbados to Texas, Beverley Kellman didn't start out in the culinary field. In fact, she had a lengthy career in the corporate world, quite a different background. She has double B.S. degrees in Finance and Real Estate and double MBAs in Leadership & Management and Marketing. She believes in doing things in twos.

For many years, she was an International Flight Attendant for United Airlines and worked in California with the local county government. Although she was good at her job, she still had an ever-nagging pull to pursue her passion of cooking. The opportunity to do so came to her from the love of her children; they were scared for their mom to return to the friendly skies after the tragedy of September 11th. With their concern in mind, Kellman changed careers and quickly enrolled herself in the Riverside Community College Culinary Academy in California, studied hard, and graduated with honors. She gave herself a deadline of five years to become the best of the best as a certified chef. She beat her deadline by one year.

"It's been a nice journey, a lot of hard work,"

said Kellman. "But definitely a lot of fun."

Coming to PVAMU

"Any good chef is a really good cook," said Kellman. Both are needed to serve the over 8,000 students with their very different backgrounds and unique diets. Chef Kellman and her team come to work every day with the goal that every time anyone walks into the dining hall they can find something to eat, especially their number one client - PVAMU students.

In previous semesters before COVID-19, Chef Kellman wanted to tantalize the tastes of both the domestic and international students by offering different menu items through specialty theme nights like Soul food night, Chinese night, Mexican night, BBQ night, etc. One week they did International Week to showcase foods from Africa, South America, North America, Korea, and more. On Thursdays, a different food bar is featured, a potato bar, pasta bar, salad bar, and more. These bars are filled with kale, spinach, romaine lettuce, fettuccine pasta, angel hair pasta, various sauces beyond marinara, sour cream, bacon, and so many other offerings.

As new foods are introduced, two menu items never change. Mondays' menu must include fried chicken and Fridays' menu must have fried fish. (As a PV grad, I can attest to how long Fried Fish Fridays have been a staple for PVAMU Panthers.) However, now the menu is healthier and fancier with the option of baked fish and sides of cabbage, black-eyed peas, and mac-n-cheese.

Even the ordinary breakfast menu has been revamped with expanded food offerings to create a personalized breakfast that is as healthy, or not, as the students want. The basic omelet may be cooked-to-order with eggs, egg whites, or tofu. Students can make their breakfast plate colorful with the addition of fresh fruits like strawberries, blueberries, honeydew, cantaloupe, and watermelon.

"When I get in my car and turn my car on or lay in my bed, they (students) are paying my bills for me so they have to be treated respectfully with kindness and understanding," said Chef Kellman, who has such

a rapport with students that they can stop her at any time in the dining hall to make food requests and she gets it for them. She thinks students deserve quality food that they enjoy since the money they are paying for college goes towards more than education. It covers their food too. She said students get loans so when they are paying them back that accumulated interest is for food too. "No one wants to pay interest, especially interest on something they didn't enjoy."

Beyond the students, Chef Kellman is called to cook for President Ruth Simmons. Anytime she gets that call, she knows that President Simmons favors salmon. A usual favorite is salmon with a nice sauce complimented by baby carrots and asparagus. When Texas Southern University President Dr. Lesia L. Crumpton-Young visits PVAMU, Chef Kellman knows meat is off the menu and seafood is on. Dr. Crumpton-Young is a pescatarian.

Cooking That Gives Back

When not in the Panthers' purple and gold kitchen, Chef Kellman is in community kitchens throughout the Houston area tapping the interest of high school children, introducing them to the culinary arts. Also, she cares for the community by performing food demonstrations at various hospital events to promote nutritional health.

Chef Kellman has embodied the way of the Panther by being a productive citizen. The students, faculty, and staff at Prairie View A&M University are fortunate to have such a wonderful all-around person ensuring that their bellies are more than full and their bodies are nourished as well. Good food is good health.

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