

DANNY MEYER
Trinity Class of 1980
Doctor of Humane Letters

Born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri, you grew up in a family that relished great food, travel, and hospitality. Yet, when mapping your strategy for your undergraduate education at Trinity College, a career in hospitality was far from being on your radar. A 2012 story about you in *The Trinity Reporter* recounts your interest in contemplating a career in government, which led you to major in political science. It told the tale of how your experiences and passions shifted 'neath the elms and how you believed that Trinity gave you a chance to explore yourself and to start defining success on your own terms. Five years after graduating from Trinity, you met with that success.

It was in 1985 at the age of 27 that you opened your first restaurant, Union Square Cafe in New York City, with hospitality at the heart of your mission as a curious, emerging restaurateur with an unquenchable thirst for learning. Nearly 40 years later, you have parlayed the experience of opening that first restaurant into becoming an internationally recognized, award-winning leader in your field as the founder of Union Square Hospitality Group (USHG).

For four decades, you've pioneered a new era of experiences for your guests, community, suppliers, and investors. Responsible for some of New York's most beloved, popular, and acclaimed restaurants, including Gramercy Tavern and The Modern, you also founded Shake Shack, the modern-day "roadside" burger restaurant with more than 500 locations around the world. Under your leadership, USHG has become renowned for its distinctive and celebrated culture of enlightened hospitality. More recently, you've expanded service to include dining options in museums, sports arenas, and cultural institutions, and you have made visionary investments in blossoming neighborhoods.

Remarkably, you continue to find new ways to serve others by extending your enterprise beyond the walls of your eateries. You have used 40 years of learning, experience, and skill to teach others how to uncover the power of hospitality through innovative consulting, acquisitions, and even investment strategies. Your groundbreaking business book, *Setting the Table*, a *New York Times* bestseller, shares a set of signature business and life principles that translate to a wide range of industries.

You have been recognized for your leadership, achievements, and humanitarianism, including receiving the 2017 Julia Child Award and the 2012 Aspen Institute Preston Robert Tisch Award in Civic Leadership and being named to the 2015 *TIME* "100 Most Influential People" list. You, your restaurants, and your chefs have earned an unprecedented 28 James Beard Awards.

You have served on several boards and committees, including those for Share Our Strength and Madison Square Park Conservancy. In 2021, then-New York Mayor Bill de Blasio named you chair of the Board of Directors of the New York City Economic Development Corporation to help bolster the city's business pandemic recovery.

Trinity has recognized you for giving much of your time, talent, and treasure to your alma mater, including your service on the Board of Trustees. In 1999, you received a 175th Anniversary Award, and in 2000, you were honored with the Gary McQuaid Award. In 2018, you were included on Trinity's Wall of Honor, which recognizes those whose philanthropy has had a profound impact at the College.

In recognition of your investment in and dedication to hospitality and to serving others, your community, and the College, I have the honor of presenting you, Danny Meyer, for the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*.