ABOUT JEFF HENDERSON

California native Jeff Henderson, known as Chef Jeff, is the first African-American executive chef at the Bellagio, well-known television personality, sought-after speaker and New York Times best-selling author.

Jeff started his culinary career in the most unlikely place, prison. When he was released in 1996, he started working for Chef Robert Gadsby as a dishwasher. With his foot in the door, Jeff was determined to make the most of this opportunity. He studied his mentor and worked harder than anyone else in the kitchen. Under Gadsby's tutelage, Jeff soon moved from dishwashing to the prep station, to desserts. Jeff was focused on the job. He was always first in last out. Whenever he got paid, he bought the latest tools and books. Jeff stayed driven, working at Gadsby's restaurant for a year before leaving to make his way through the world of fine-dining including stints as sous chef at the Coronado Island Marriott, and Chef Tournant and Banquet Chef at L.A.'s Hotel Bel-Air.

Hearing about the booming restaurant scene in Las Vegas, he left Los Angeles and headed for Vegas to seek an opportunity to work at one of the top hotels on the strip. He was eventually hired at Caesars Palace and became the first African-American Chef de Cuisine to run restaurants at the hotel. In 2001, the American Tasting Institute named Jeff Las Vegas Chef of the Year. He took advantage of his exposure and started a catering company in Los Angeles called Posh Urban Cuisine. A year later he returned to Las Vegas to work as an executive chef at the world-renowned Bellagio.

In 2007, Harper Collins published Jeff’s memoir Cooked, which landed him on Oprah. Shortly after the show aired, Sony Pictures bought the life rights to his story. At the end of his book tour, things began to take off, which led him to leave his post at the Bellagio to do private chef work, consulting, and public speaking. The same year, he launched a new reality show on Food Network, The Chef Jeff Project, which followed Jeff as he brought a group of disadvantaged young adults to work for his private dining company to teach them cooking and life skills.

Jeff shares his knowledge and excitement for food through his cooking shows and cookbooks. In 2009, Jeff published his first cookbook, Chef Jeff Cooks (Simon & Schuster). In 2011, he released his second cookbook America I AM Pass It Down Cookbook (Hay House/Smiley Books), a collection of recipes that have been passed down to preserve African Americans' food legacy. In 2013, he released his first self-help book If You Can See It, You Can Be It (Hay House/Smiley Books). In 2012, Jeff’s first cooking show Beat The Chefs premiered, followed by Family Style with Chef Jeff. He is currently the host of Flip My Food with Chef Jeff and Family Style with Chef Jeff which airs on the Z Living Network. When Jeff is not behind the stoves, he delivers his inspirational message to corporations, associations and across the country.

Jeff’s story has been featured on Oprah’s Life Class, Good Morning America, Today Show, CNN, ABC World News Tonight. He has also been in several major publications such as USA Today, People Magazine, New York Times, Newsweek and the Washington Post and many others. Jeff resides in Las Vegas with his wife Stacy and their five children.