

CONTACT: Brenda Edson, Strategic Communications Manager, 434-947-8142
(bedson@randolphcollege.edu)
Beth Knabel, Alumnae Communications Coordinator, 434-947-8288

International Culinary Consultant Receives Randolph College 2008 Alumnae Achievement Award

Lynchburg – **Lorene “Renie” Ferguson Steves**, a 1958 graduate of Randolph-Macon Woman’s College (R-MWC), has been awarded the 2008 Alumnae Achievement Award in recognition for her contributions as a food and wine journalist, cooking school entrepreneur, restaurant critic, and food stylist. Steves received the award Sept. 20, during the 2008 Alumnae Achievement Award dinner held on the college’s Lynchburg campus.

Each year since 1981, R-MWC, now Randolph College, recognizes remarkable alumnae, nominated by their peers, to receive this award. The Alumnae Achievement Award is conferred upon selected alumnae who personify the value of a liberal arts education and who have brought distinction to themselves and the College. Nominations for the Awards come from alumnae, and the recipients are selected by an awards committee that includes administration, faculty, trustee, and alumnae members. Each recipient receives an elegant Tiffany and Company crystal trapezoid on an ebony base that has been engraved with the College seal and their name.

Steves’ education at R-MWC in political science and economics gave her the business background to launch the *French Apron* school of cooking with a partner in 1979. They started by teaching French, Italian, American regional, and Chinese cooking. The courses and enrollment grew to include entertaining lessons including menus, garnishing, presentation and table setting, as well as pairing wine with food. Just two years after its founding in 1981, the school was featured in *Bon Appetit* magazine.

Since 1989 in her current business, *Cuisine Concepts*, www.cuisineconcepts.org, she has consulted with some widely-recognized clients:

- As a food stylist for the Texas Beef Industry Council, Hardee’s Restaurants, Sonic, McDonalds, and the American Ostrich Association.
- As a menu consultant for many non-profit fundraisers in Fort Worth such as National Historic Society, Museum of Science and History, National Victims Society, and Botanical Research Institute of Texas.
- As a food service consultant for the Fort Worth Independent School District and Fort Worth Country Day School .

- And as a freelance wine, food, and travel journalist with weekly columns in the Fort Worth Star Telegram and Fort Worth Business Press, she has published articles in *Cook's Magazine*, *Wine Spectator*, *The Wine News*, *Better Homes and Gardens Holiday Cooking*, and others. Steves has self-published two books, and co-authored the Texas Chapter of Culinaria USA. Together with her husband she has written 900 articles on food, wine, and travel.

Steves thrives on travel — and has visited 57 countries, some destinations several times, to experience first-hand their art, culture, attitudes, lifestyle, and cuisine. To stay fresh in her craft, she takes culinary and journalism education courses each year. Renie has created over 2500 recipes in her 30-year teaching career, some appearing in *Southern Living*, *Cooking Light*, *Bon Appetit*, and *Fine Cooking*.

She chaired the International Association of Culinary Professionals Foundation. During her tenure, the Foundation, now called Culinary Trust, awarded over \$200,000 in grants and scholarships for education in the culinary arts. With the Dallas chapter of the Les Dames d'Escoffier, Renie has, in the past 25 years, helped raise and award over \$1M in scholarships and grants to women in food, wine, and hospitality. She later became International President of all 26 chapters of Les Dames d'Escoffier. www.ldei.org. Steves adores mentoring young people and has helped many find schooling and scholarships. For students with promise and desire, she has helped with introductions to top professionals and with getting jobs.

Randolph College (www.randolphcollege.edu) is a private, coeducational, and nationally-recognized liberal arts and sciences college in Lynchburg, Va. Founded in 1891 as Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Randolph College offers women and men the best features of an honors education with a global perspective.

###