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| **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  **March 21, 2018** | **CONTACT: Kaisee Riddell**  **859-749-8407**  **kaisee\_riddell@mymail.eku.edu** |

**31st Annual East Kentucky Leadership**

**Conference April 26-27in Hindman, KY**

**HINDMAN, KY—** Celebrating its 31stanniversary, the East Kentucky Leadership Foundation will host its annual conference in Hindman, Kentucky April 26-27, 2018 at the Hindman Settlement School. The event theme is “The New Economy: Building on Our Cultural Heritage.”

The conference will bring together people from all over Eastern Kentucky to network, share ideas and create a unified front to address issues relevant to the region. Along with the annual awards ceremony, which recognizes and rewards those who have shown exemplary leadership in the region, the conference will also offer intensive sessions and breakout sessions with topics relating to the event theme. Any community leader or those aspiring to take on a leadership role in Eastern Kentucky is encouraged to attend.

The keynote speaker for the 2018 East Kentucky Leadership Conference Awards Banquet is Ronni Lundy, esteemed author and editor of traditional American cookbooks. Her book *Victuals: An Appalachian Journey* received the 2017 James Beard Cookbook of the Year Award and International Association of Culinary Professionals 2017 Award for Best American Cookbook.

“The East Kentucky Leadership Conference is a great place for people from all walks of life to come together to learn about important issues in the region, share their own perspectives and help think about solutions,” said Peter Hille, EKLF chair and president of Mountain Association for Community Economic Development. “The Conference isn’t just for elected officials or recognized leaders, it’s for everyone. We call it a leadership conference because everyone can exercise leadership by taking part in building a brighter future for our region.”

Registration will be from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday, April 26th and from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Friday, April 27th -- conference sessions will begin at 1:30 p.m. The awards ceremony will take place Thursday evening. Participants can register online at eklf.org. The cost for registration is $50 for regular registration and $25 for students.

Additional information is available at eklf.org. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. For additional questions, contact Bill Weinberg at [halcyonpapa@gmail.com](mailto:halcyonpapa@gmail.com) or 606-785-0761, or Paul Collins at [pcollins@hollonlaw.com](mailto:pcollins@hollonlaw.com) or 606-439-1302.

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*Founded in 1988, the East Kentucky Leadership Foundation was created to promote leadership in Eastern Kentucky. Now in its 31st year, EKLF continues to encourage leadership development, communication and collaboration throughout the Eastern Kentucky region.*