



## Fireproof: Memoir of a Chef

### Curtis Duffy

World-renowned Michelin-starred chef and co-owner of Ever restaurant and After bar in Chicago.

### Heidi Stevens

Chicago-based writer and Director of External Affairs for the University of Chicago's TMW Center for Early Learning + Public Health.

**Thursday, October 9, 2025, 12:00 PM**

**Register: [www.bit.ly/CDuffyFANWebinar](http://www.bit.ly/CDuffyFANWebinar)**

**BONUS BOOK GIVEAWAY, sponsored by FAN!**

**Details on Zoom registration page.**



This event is #freeandopentothepublic and will be recorded.

Suitable for youth 12+

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: CURTIS DUFFY – ON ZOOM**

**CONTACT:** Lonnie Stonitsch, Executive Director of FAN, [lonnie@familyactionnetwork.net](mailto:lonnie@familyactionnetwork.net)

Thursday, October 9, 2025, **12:00 PM CT**, **Fireproof: Memoir of a Chef**, a FAN webinar featuring Curtis Duffy in conversation with Heidi Stevens. **REGISTER:** [www.bit.ly/CDuffyFANWebinar](http://www.bit.ly/CDuffyFANWebinar)

**BONUS BOOK GIVEAWAY!** FAN is giving away copies of *Fireproof* to randomly selected Zoom attendees. Details on the webinar registration page.

*Fireproof: Memoir of a Chef* charts chef Curtis Duffy's rise, despite a childhood and adolescence rife with trauma, to being mentored by and recognized among the world's top chefs. Amid family chaos in rural Ohio, a young Duffy found refuge first in a high school home economics class, then at one of Columbus's best restaurants, where he honed his skills. His passion ignited, Duffy was determined to leave Ohio and break the Duffy family curse.

But the tragic deaths of Duffy's parents when he was only 19 jeopardized his promising professional career. Summoning extraordinary fortitude and resilience, Duffy ate pain, graduated culinary school, and moved to Chicago to work in chef Charlie Trotter's namesake restaurant, a hotbed of talent that produced prominent alumni such as Grant Achatz, Graham Elliot, and Homaro Cantu. Inspired by stellar peers and staging for Thomas Keller at the French Laundry, Duffy's drive only grew.

Duffy's laser-focused ambition cost him a marriage, and Grace restaurant. Grace earned three Michelin stars four years in a row, solidifying Duffy's place as one of the world's greatest culinary artists. But in a heartbreaking act of defiance, Duffy walked out after disputes with Grace's owner.

Undeterred, Duffy created Ever restaurant—a launch nearly derailed by the pandemic. He persisted where many others would have resigned their craft, and Ever earned two Michelin stars from 2021-2024. Duffy was ranked one of the "50 Most Powerful People in American Fine Dining" in 2024 by the Robb Report.

Duffy will be in conversation with **Heidi Stevens**, Director of External Affairs for the University of Chicago's TMW Center for Early Learning + Public Health, and creative director for Parent Nation, an initiative of the TMW Center. Stevens has been a FAN board member since 2021.

This event suitable for youth 12+. It will be recorded and available on FAN's website and YouTube channel.

**Sponsored by FAN**, in partnership with The Avery Coonley School, Avoca D37, Baker Demonstration School, Beacon Academy, Bennett Day School, Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School, Brickton Montessori School, British International School of Chicago, Catherine Cook School, Compass Health Center, Evanston Township HS D202, The Family Institute at Northwestern University, Family Service Center, The Frances Xavier Warde School, Francis W. Parker School, Glencoe D35, Glenview Public Library, Gorton Center, Hyde Park Day School, Illinois Student Assistance Commission, Kenilworth D38, Lake Bluff D65, Lake Forest Community High School D115, Latin School of Chicago, Leo Catholic High School, Libertyville D70, Lycée Français de Chicago, North Shore Country Day, Northwestern University Office of Neighborhood and Community Relations, Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy, Pope John XXIII School, Regina Dominican High School, Resurrection College Prep High School, Rogers Park Montessori School, Roycemore School, Sacred Heart Schools, Santa Clara University School of Law, Science & Arts Academy, The Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School, Stevenson High School D125, Township High School D113, Township High School D214, TrueNorth Educational Cooperative #804, Wilmette Public Library, Woodlands Academy, Youth & Opportunity United.