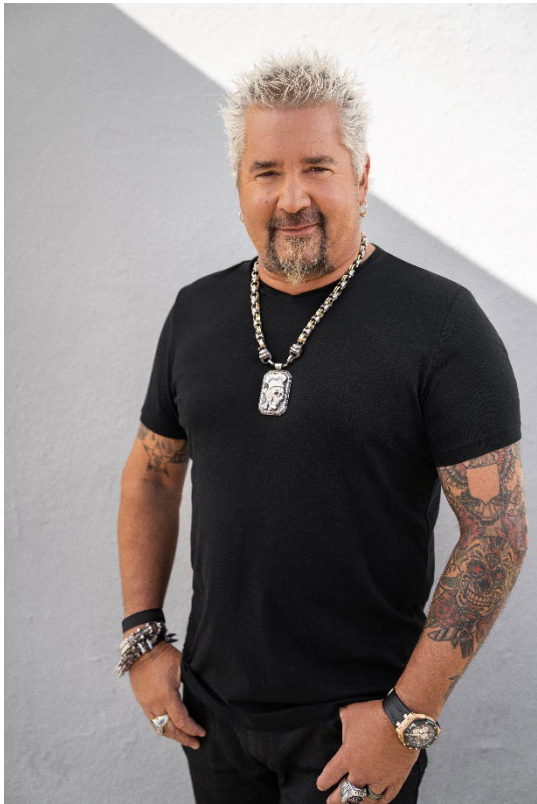


Guy Fieri

A College of the Redwoods Success Story



Although television and media icon Guy Fieri's first introduction to the College of the Redwoods occurred during fifth grade open swim night at the campus pool, he says it was his time as a student there that really made an impact. "CR is a big, small school," he observed. "There is a lot of opportunity." And Fieri didn't hesitate to take advantage of it.

Fieri grew up in the small Victorian village of Ferndale. As a teen, he dreamt of going to France as an exchange student, but his parents insisted, he pass French with a B or better before he could go - even though his school didn't offer the class. Fortunately, College of the Redwoods was nearby and allowed the high school sophomore to enroll. "At the time the campus seemed monstrous, huge," Fieri recalled. The aspiring but unlicensed chef initially caught rides to the class with his mom, "But over Christmas I got my driver's license and was able to drive myself for the 2nd semester," he said, adding that he passed the class with flying colors and headed off to France.

When he returned to the US, Fieri obtained his GED and enrolled again at College of the Redwoods, this time focusing on his undergraduate general education requirements. "Community colleges don't get enough love," Fieri said. "Or the recognition they deserve. College of the Redwoods offered a great beginning to my higher education."

Not surprisingly, the internationally recognized celebrity chef loved his speech class, which was, in fact, the only one where he earned an A. "The teacher was so insightful and made such a big impact on me" he said, adding that CR also offered a great variety of classes plus one-on-one instruction. Fieri transferred from CR to American River College in Sacramento before graduating in 1990 from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas with a Bachelor of Science degree in Hotel Management.

After graduation, Fieri managed several restaurants until 1996, when he and a partner started Johnny Garlics' in Santa Rosa. This became the first of several restaurants Fieri has founded over the years.

Celebrity Stardom

In 2006, Fieri participated in the second season of The Next Food Network Star and won, securing a contract for a career launching six-episode cooking show on Food Network. Fieri has hosted countless successful food and cooking shows since, including Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives, Minute to Win It, the Guy Fieri Roadshow and more.

Over the years, Fieri has used his professional and financial success to support causes important to him. During the Covid-19 pandemic, he partnered with the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation to raise over \$20 million to support unemployed restaurant workers. The Guy Fieri Foundation supports first responders through disaster relief, celebrates local heroes and supports programs for the military and veterans.

Fieri also uses his celebrity platform to express unwavering support for secondary education. "Higher education is a must," he insisted, "And community colleges offer such a great place to start—for young students, single parents and even retirees." Students may not apply everything they learn in class to their job, Fieri said, but believes that college is about more than academics. "As a new college student, you have to learn to work through challenges—manage your schedule and strategize how get through the curriculum. You also have to learn to work in groups and with teachers you don't like. When things get tough, you need to dig hard and deep, sometimes literally late into the night, and coach.

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yourself to do better. “The lessons learned through these experiences, Fieri added, will help students find success in work and in life.

In addition, Fieri stressed, they can enjoy the experience along the way. “Even though I worked hard, attending College of the Redwoods was also a lot of fun. The campus is small enough you get to know most of the students and faculty and there’s a lot of good energy.” Campus sporting events and other activities also help students bond, he pointed out, and helped him form life-long friendships. “If you have the energy and desire to do something positive, something you know will benefit your life,” he asked, “Why not start at College of the Redwoods?”

Call out/text box

“It is only once you’ve visited other colleges that you truly understand what an amazing campus College of the Redwoods has. It is easy to get to, has plenty of parking and is a manageable not-to-big campus. It has beautiful buildings, green lawns, and trees. I remember visiting other school and thinking CR should have won awards for the most beautiful campus:”

~Guy Fieri