

LEAH CHASE

Below are answers to a Proust questionnaire provided by Leah Lange Chase.

Idea of Perfect Happiness - The Family meal with my large extended Family

Greatest Fear - Death

Living person most admired - The Pope, not the retired one, but the current one, Francis.

Trait I most deplore about myself - My impatient tendency to call a person "a stupid jackass."

What do you consider the most overrated virtue? Of the five top virtues - wisdom, courage, justice, self-mastery, and piety - I would say piety. Although I pray all the time, my fear of God is not found in my religion or my going regularly to Church on Sunday. Some people go more often to church and say and do some of hateful things.

What do you dislike most about your appearance? Everything below the white hairs on my head. I guess my face is alright but I would give anything to have the legs of a young woman.

What or who is the greatest love of your life? My children.

When and where was I happiest? When all the children and their children were around the dinner table listening to family tales and to my husband's wisdom or just hearing him play his horn for them so high that the table's glass candelabra (my favorite candelabra) broke into pieces.

Which talent would you most like to have? The talent to have been right now as we speak the builder of a family group of successful restaurants with daily food menus that I prepare.

What is my current state of mind? Inquiring and always searching for foods to satisfy palates. I love reading cookbooks. I have bookshelves of cookbooks that I will probably give to my grandson Chef Dook, whenever his wife Gretchen builds that bookshelf in his home office.

If I could change one thing, what would it be? Nothing. Not one thing.

If you could change one thing about your family what would it be? That my oldest daughter Emily would be alive to see how well all her children grew up to be.

My greatest achievement is this family legacy, this restaurant, this kitchen where I work every day.

What would I come back as? That's easy to answer - myself, Leah Lange Chase, Dooky's hardworking and prayer-filled wife from Madisonville, Louisiana.

What do I regard as the lowest depth of misery? The lowest depth of misery is not being able to do for others.

What is the quality I most like in a man? Be a man, respect women, care for your children, and teach them right from wrong behaviors.

What is the quality, I most like in a woman? Perseverance, self-confidence - being comfortable in your own skin and identity. I like a woman who keeps her family united and does for the family.

What do you most value in your friends? Being there for each other no matter what happens in life - "a friend in need is a friend indeed."



Leah Chase

Who are your favorite writers? Shakespeare, he was ahead of his times and still is. But I would have to say, Langston Hughes and his poem, Mother to Son..."Life for me ain't been no crystal stair."

Who is your favorite hero of fiction? Some things now said about her may be fictional, but I love Phillis Wheatley.

Who are your heroes in real life? Abraham Lincoln, Haile Selassie, Rose Kennedy, Mother Teresa, Barack Obama, FDR and of course Eleanor, General George Patton.

What is it that I most dislike? Cowardice and lack of faith that God will care and watch over you.

How would like to die? I do not like to die. I want to live until I am 115 years of age and live standing on my own two feet.

What is your motto? Pray, work hard, and do for others.



Leah Lange Chase - at age 92 and Still I Cook

WILD DUCKS AND TURNIPS

The Wild Game Dinner is an annual tradition at Dooky Chase's for local politicians. It started in 1978 when Dutch Morial, the mayor of New Orleans at the time, had these ducks in his freezer. His wife, Sybil, said she wanted them out. So he brought these ducks over to me and figured he would dump them in my lap. We started with forty ducks.

We were about to have the police strike and still, everybody came to the dinner. Even Dutch's worst

enemies came. It got so red hot that I had to leave! Now, every year, the men bring me the games and I cook it the way I please. Anyone can come to the party, but they have to bring some kind of game. We usually have a feel for how many people are going to be there ahead of time. When there is a lot of political upheaval, this is the "in" spot. I provide the meal and they provide the spice. Yes, they do provide the spice!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 wild ducks
- 2 tbsp. chopped garlic
- Salt and black pepper
- ¼ cup flour
- ½ tsp. paprika
- ¼ tsp. garlic powder
- 6 strips bacon
- 3 cups water
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 large turnips, diced
- ½ tsp. white pepper
- 1 tbsp. chopped parsley

DIRECTIONS

Ducks should be picked well; no feathers should be left on the birds. Pass birds over an open flame on stove; this will singe small feathers. Hold birds under running water, rubbing them briskly to remove all small feathers. Wipe ducks dry. Raise the skin on breast of ducks; rub 1 tablespoon of the chopped garlic under duck skin. Mix salt and pepper. Season ducks by rubbing mixture in cavity of ducks and over the entire birds. Mix flour, paprika and garlic powder. Dredge the ducks in the flour mixture. Set birds aside.

Cut bacon in small pieces. In a small Magnalite roaster or Dutch oven, cook bacon pieces until the fat is rendered. Remove cooked bacon from pot. Place prepared ducks in pot, breast side up. Brown ducks on all sides. Add water, onions, remaining garlic and thyme. Cover tightly and let simmer for 1 hour, turning as ducks cook. When ducks are tender, place turnips around ducks. Add white pepper, parsley and bacon pieces. Cover pot and let simmer until turnips are done – about 20 minutes. Yield: 4 servings.