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## 'I'm hungry': MasterChef winner Gerron Hurt's catchphrase isn't just about food

Kirby Adams, Louisville Courier Journal Published 7:33 a.m. ET Sept. 25, 2019 | Updated 9:46 a.m. ET Sept. 25, 2019

So what's cookin' with [Louisville's most famous home cook](https://www.courierjournal.com/story/entertainment/television/2018/07/20/masterchef-gerron-hurt-louisville-native/796592002/) (/story/entertainment/television/2018/07/20/masterchef-gerron-hurt-louisville-native/796592002/)?

We caught up with Gerron Hurt, the [winner of Season 9 of FOX's "MasterChef"](https://www.courierjournal.com/story/entertainment/television/2018/09/19/masterchef-gerron-hurt-louisville-native-season-nine/1356047002/) (/story/entertainment/television/2018/09/19/masterchef-gerron-hurt-louisville-native-season-nine/1356047002/) as he made a stop in his hometown last week.

Seems life is sizzlin' for the [26-year-old newlywed](https://www.courierjournal.com/story/entertainment/television/2019/07/03/louisville-native-fox-masterchef-winner-gerron-hurt-get-married/1528328001/) (/story/entertainment/television/2019/07/03/louisville-native-fox-masterchef-winner-gerron-hurt-get-married/1528328001/) who has set out on a new career path since winning the popular national cooking competition.

"Raise your hand if you've ever made Chess pie before," Hurt called out to the 32 members of a cooking class at [Cooking at Millie's](https://cookingatmillies.com/) (<https://cookingatmillies.com/>), 340 W Chestnut St., "I will wait until you all have your cooking utensils out so we can all move through this together."

The former school teacher turned celebrity chef grew up in Louisville's Newburg neighborhood and now lives in Nashville. His return to his old stomping grounds was the result of popular demand from fans of "MasterChef," Western Kentucky University graduates and a Fern Creek High School teacher.

"We had been getting so many requests for cooking classes that we set one up, and it sold out so quickly we added a second," Hurt told The Courier Journal. "I am truly blessed that people in my hometown are so interested in learning to cook and want to learn from me."

Teaching comes easily to Hurt who worked as a high school English teacher in Tennessee before winning the title of Master Chef and the show's \$250,000 grand prize in 2018.

**You may like:** [Wedding bells ring on an all-new 'MasterChef' featuring Louisville chef Gerron Hurt \(/story/entertainment/television/2019/07/03/louisville-native-fox-masterchef-winner-gerron-hurt-gets-married/1528328001/\)](#)

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**Chef Gerron Hurt provides meal preparation instruction during a cooking demonstration at the Cooking@Millie's group cooking class. Hurt was the season 9 winner of MasterChef. Aug. 18, 2019 (Photo: Sam Upshaw Jr./Courier Journal)**

In the well-lit demonstration kitchen at Cooking at Millies, Hurt got busy leading his adult cooking students through the best practices for baking a pie crust. At the same time, his new bride, Brandi Beckman, checked in a final few students and orchestrated the sale of merchandise including cutting boards and T-shirts with the slogan "I'm Hungry."

"That saying became my catchphrase on 'MasterChef,'" Hurt explained to the class. "It meant I was hungry to do well with each culinary challenge, and also I was hungry to feed my soul and ambition."

Beckman and Hurt were married by "MasterChef" host Gordon Ramsey on Season 10 of the popular show. The newlyweds met while attending WKU, and several former students from the university showed up to take Hurt's cooking class. A teacher from his Louisville high school also signed up for the lessons.

"I didn't actually teach Gerron while he was at Fern Creek, but we're all so proud of him there," said Barbara Grumblatt, a teacher at Hurt's alma mater. "When I heard he was offering a cooking class, I had to be sure I got a spot."

The menu for the evening included fried green tomatoes with Cajun remoulade sauce, 35-day dry-aged Ribeye steak with herbs, a butter bath and red wine reduction, five cheese Mac N' Cheese and a family Chess pie recipe.

Seated by herself at one of the cooking stations near that back of the room, a well-dressed woman quietly leaned over and told The Courier Journal she knew the secret to Hurt's Chess pie recipe — because she'd taught him how to make it in the first place.

"It's cornmeal that holds the pie together," whispered Elizabeth Caples, Hurt's grandmother. But what she really wanted to talk about was not the dessert recipe but how proud she is of her grandson.

"When Gerron was growing up, he would sit and watch cooking shows with his mom, but we never ever imagined he'd end up one," Caples said of the chef. "And then he wins 'MasterChef.' Look at him up there. He's so happy, and I am so proud."

**You may like:** [Louisville's Gerron Hurt wins 'MasterChef' with southern-inspired dishes \(/story/entertainment/television/2018/09/19/masterchef-gerron-hurt-wins-louisville-native-season-nine/1356047002/\)](https://www.courier-journal.com/story/entertainment/television/2018/09/19/masterchef-gerron-hurt-wins-louisville-native-season-nine/1356047002/)

Turns out that's not all Caples has to be proud of. Hurt and Beckman are currently working on a "secret project" that will allow a larger number of his to enjoy his soulful home cooking. They plan to announce the project to the public next month.

As the room full of cooking students pressed their crusts into silver-colored pie tins, Hurt talked about his Louisville roots and how they allowed him to compete on a national culinary cooking show.

"I knew I had a gift for taking basic recipes inspired by family and elevating them to restaurant quality," he told the room.

"And one thing you can remember when you go back to your own kitchens is advice I got from Gordon Ramsey: 'never continue to work with a mistake. Sometimes you just have to start over.'"

Which is exactly what Hurt seems to be doing today. Not that teaching was a mistake, he says, but pursuing his passion for cooking means his career is now off in a whole new direction — and he appears to be cooking up a storm.

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## 10 things to know about Gerron Hurt

**Hometown:** Louisville

**Age:** 26

**High School:** Fern Creek High School

**University:** Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky

**Culinary influences:** Mom (Michelle Hurt) and grandmother (Elizabeth Caples)

**Relationship status:** Married his college sweetheart Brandi Beckham — twice. Celebrity chef Gordon Ramsey married the couple on a Season 10 episode of "MasterChef." They were married a second time in front of their Kentucky family and friends at an August 2019 ceremony in Louisville.

**The judge who chose Gerron for his "MasterChef" team:** Restaurateur Joe Bastianich

**Best piece of advice during the "MasterChef" competition:** Chef Gordon Ramsay told Hurt, "Never continue working with a mistake. If there is a mistake on the table and you continue on with that mistake, you will do nothing but run yourself down, you will fail," Ramsay said, adding, "If you catch that mistake right when it happens and you come up with a plan to change it, then you can be successful."

**Does he have the cellphone numbers for the "MasterChef" judges?** Yes

**Future plans:** A big professional announcement is planned for October. All Hurt and Beckman will say at this point is that its a culinary dream come true.

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