

Tracie McMillan

FULL BIO

Updated July 30, 2014

Since the start of her career in the late 1990s, Tracie McMillan has written about American inequality and food, using a discussion of our meals to plumb the depths of social and economic class in the U.S. She is the author of the award-winning *New York Times* bestseller, [*The American Way of Eating: Undercover at Walmart, Applebee's, Farm Fields and the Dinner Table*](#). The book—McMillan's first—mixes immersive reporting, undercover investigative techniques and “moving first-person narrative” (*Wall Street Journal*), and argues for thinking of fresh, healthy food as a public and social good—a stance that inspired *The New York Times* to call her “a voice the food world needs” and Rush Limbaugh to single her out as an “overeducated” “authoress” and “threat to liberty.” The book has been widely cited, and was used by *Congressional Quarterly* to frame that influential publication's discussion of the 2012 Farm Bill.

In 2013, *The American Way of Eating* was awarded the prestigious [Sidney Hillman Prize for Book Journalism](#) in recognition of her work's commitment to the public interest, and a [Books for a Better Life Award](#), a publishing industry touchstone which recognizes excellence in books that carry uplifting messages. *AWE* was also named a finalist for a Goodreads Reader's Choice Award; an [International Association of Culinary Professionals Food Matters](#) award; an [Investigative Reporters and Editors Award](#); and a [James Beard Journalism Award](#) (considered “the Oscars of the food world”).

McMillan has also won significant acclaim apart from her work as an author. In 2013, McMillan won a [James Beard Journalism Award](#) for a [feature on farm labor](#) she wrote for *The American Prospect*, and in 2012, *Whole Living* magazine named her a “Food Visionary.” Earlier in her career, while a managing editor at the New York City magazine *City Limits*, Tracie won numerous awards and honors for her features on poverty, welfare, child care and food. Her 2005 series, “Getting By,” earned her the James Aronson Award for Social Justice Journalism and a finalist nod for the Livingston Awards, the nation's most prestigious award for young journalists. Her 2004 feature on food access in New York City's poorer corners won the Harry Chapin Media Award and was a finalist for the James Beard Journalism Awards. She has also received an honorable mention in the Casey Medals for Meritorious Journalism. She has received fellowship and grant support from the Fund for Investigative Journalism, the Food and Environmental Reporting Network, the Mesa Refuge, and the Wesleyan Writer's Conference.

Today, McMillan is a sought-after lecturer, speaking across the country about her work and the topics it covers, from farm labor to cooking, America's growing class divide to eating on a budget. She has delivered lectures at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Mississippi at Oxford, and the prestigious Chautauqua Institution; participated in TEDMed and the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance Food Dialogues; and has appeared on national television programs such as “The Rachel Maddow Show,” as well as national radio broadcasts including “Marketplace,” “The Splendid Table,” and “All Things Considered.” As a freelance author, she has written for a range of publications including the *New York Times*, *National Geographic*, the *Washington Post*, the *American Prospect*, *Slate*, *Harper's*, *Saveur* and *Mother Jones*. Her work has also been anthologized and be found in *Best Food Writing 2013*, *The Detroit Anthology*, and *Local Food Environments*.

In 2013, she was named a Knight-Wallace Journalism Fellow at the University of Michigan, a year after she was named a Senior Fellow at the Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism. In the past, she has received support and accolades from the Fund for Investigative Journalism; the Mesa Refuge for Writers; and the Wesleyan Writers Conference. She currently serves on the awards committee for the James Beard Journalism Awards. In 2014, she was named the Koeppel Journalism Fellow at Wesleyan University, where she taught a course on writing about inequality.

Born to a lawn equipment salesman and an English major, McMillan grew up in a rural town of 10,000 between the exurbs of Detroit and the suburbs of Flint. She grew up cooking Tuna Helper and baking pastries from scratch. McMillan's first job in food came at age 14, when she made caramel apples at a local orchard for less than minimum wage; her next job was as an attendant at a Big Boy salad bar. She can frequently be found in Detroit, Michigan and reporting around the U.S., but she has lived in New York City since enrolling at NYU on scholarship in 1994. She now makes her home in Brooklyn, where she has lived, biked and eaten in the same neighborhood since 1997.

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