
KINGSFORD® REVEALS THIRD CLASS OF PRESERVE THE PIT® FELLOWS TO CELEBRATE AND INVEST IN FUTURE OF BLACK BARBECUE CULTURE

Third year fellowship cohort includes program's first content creators alongside pitmasters, chefs and entrepreneurs, celebrating professionals across the barbecue industry

OAKLAND, Calif., May 16, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Today, Kingsford announced the 2023 class of **Preserve the Pit®** fellows. The six barbecue professionals chosen from across the industry include pitmasters, caterers, restaurant owners and the program's first digital storytellers.

Each fellow will receive immersive training, the fuel and ingredients to celebrate their selection with a barbecue in their home communities, a grant to help support their business goals and one-on-one mentorship from our network of industry leaders and experts, as they invest in preserving the future of Black barbecue culture.

The new class, along with their **mentor partners**, will come together at this year's Memphis in May World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest in Memphis, Tennessee, where they'll have the chance to share their stories in person, learn from each other's grilling expertise, and further connect over their love for barbecue.

"We are excited to announce our third class of fellows and to celebrate and share their stories with the barbecue community," said Cassandra Lewis, associate director of brand marketing at Kingsford. "The level of passion, pride and commitment to community displayed by these fellows embodies Preserve the Pit. We can't wait to kick off in Memphis and see what they're throwing on the grill."

Introducing the 2023 Class of Preserve the Pit Fellows:

- Ronald Payne – Memphis, Tenn.: Ron is a third generation pitmaster of the Memphis barbecue institution, **Payne's Bar-B-Q**. Since 1972, Payne's has been serving up their signature chopped pork sandwich and famous mustard sauce that attracts barbecue aficionados from across the world. Today, Ron works the pit alongside his mother, Flora Payne, and sister Candice Payne-Parker as they preserve 36 years of history first ignited by his father, mother, and grandmother.
- Caleb & Sabrina Henley – Pilot Point, Texas: Founders of **Yearby's Barbecue & Waterice** who specialize in Halal BBQ, Sabrina and Caleb introduced their hometown flavors of Philly and New Orleans to the folks in Dallas, becoming a local staple. Sabrina, originally from Philadelphia, preserves the city's waterice tradition while her husband and partner Caleb grills up delicious Texas-inspired barbecue. Together they've combined their knowledge, skills and love of food and barbecue to bring their consumers their interpretation of home.

- Darren W. Carter – Euclid, Ohio: Darren and his wife Theresa M. Carter are co-owners of **Carter's BBQ**. A barbecue enthusiast at heart, Darren handles all the smoking while attempting to honor and grow in the craft. Theresa, who comes from a long line of comfort food matriarchs, prepares all the side dishes and keeps the business running behind the scenes. Darren is also the founder of **The Unknowns Black Pitmasters**, a podcast and community, which highlights Black BBQ enthusiasts and pitmasters across America to honor the craft of barbecue past and present.
- Tay Nelson – Fountain Inn, S.C.: Tay Nelson is the owner of **Bobby's BBQ**. He mastered the art of smoking meat through video tutorials and mentorship from esteemed pitmasters. Passionate about Central Texas-style barbecue, Tay and his wife opened Bobby's BBQ in 2018. The menu boasts wood-smoked brisket, pulled pork, ribs, turkey, homemade sausage, and even jackfruit for vegans. Tay's proprietary blend of Bobby's All-Purpose Seasoning perfectly complements the meats and homemade sides and was inspired by his late father and brother, the restaurants namesakes, Bobby Sr. and Jr.
- Deah Berry Mitchell – Dallas: A fifth-generation Texan, historian, and food writer, Deah works diligently to preserve Black cultural heritage and amplify the voices of Black-owned restaurants in her city. Deah contributes to TheNew York Times and Fort Worth Report where her weekly column, **The Dish with Deah**, highlights some of the best barbecue businesses in Dallas and Fort Worth. Deah is currently producing a new series titled, "Soul of a City" that will highlight black owned restaurants across the nation while also completing her PhD. in History at the University of North Texas, where she is focusing on Black Texas Foodways Post-Emancipation and Juneteenth celebratory food traditions.
- Nate Figaro – Knightdale, N.C.: Nate is the owner of **8020 Creole BBQ & Rub**, where he infuses the flavors of his Creole heritage into his signature line of Creole-inspired barbecue rubs and grilled meats. Nate also teaches online cooking classes and hosts pop up cooking events to share his tips, tricks and unique flavor with the community.

Kingsford opened applications for the third year of the Preserve the Pit® fellowship in February 2023, announcing Rasheed Philips as the newest member to join Kingsford and its mentor network including – Kevin Bludso, Dr. Howard Conyers, Amy Mills, Bryan Furman, Rashad Jones, Devita Davison and Pat Neely.

To learn more about Preserve the Pit®, visit **PreserveThePit.com** and follow along on Kingsford's Instagram to keep up with our Fellows and Mentors as they share family traditions, grilling hacks and pro tips to inspire your backyard grilling all season long. Visit **www.kingsford.com** to stay up to date on the latest company news and offerings.

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