

KINGSFORD® UNVEILS SECOND CLASS OF PRESERVE THE PIT® FELLOWS TO CELEBRATE AND INVEST IN PRESERVING BLACK BARBECUE CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

Second year of Fellowship received more than 2,700 applicants; Fellow cohort includes pitmasters, packagers and farmers, highlighting many aspects of barbecue industry

OAKLAND, Calif. (April 27, 2022) – Today, Kingsford® announced the class of the [Preserve the Pit®](#) Fellows for 2022. The six barbecue and grilling industry professionals will receive immersive training and one-on-one mentorship from industry leaders and a grant to invest in and support their business aspirations, furthering the program’s commitment to honor the history and culture of Black barbecue and invest in its future. Ten additional barbecue professionals will receive grants to support their business goals and community involvement.

On January 31, 2022, Kingsford announced the launch of the second year of the Preserve the Pit Fellowship, receiving over 2,700 applications, almost triple the number of applicants who applied in 2021. Notably Kingsford and its Mentor Network – Kevin Bludso, Dr. Howard Conyers, Devita Davison, Bryan Furman, Rashad Jones, Pat Neely and Amy Mills – doubled their commitment from year one and have expanded the Fellowship from three to six barbecue industry professionals in 2022.

“We are excited to announce our second class of Fellows and celebrate their stories,” said Ram Gopalakrishnan, Marketing Director at Kingsford. “It is truly remarkable how much passion, pride, and community building these Fellows bring to the industry. What’s evident through the sheer number of Fellowship applicants is the power of mentorship within the barbecue community. Kingsford is thrilled to work with our Mentor Network to provide invaluable training and support to these deserving entrepreneurs.”

The 2022 class of the Preserve the Pit Fellows are:

- **Terrance Nicholson – Old Hickory, Tenn.:** Terrance Nicholson is a Nashville-raised barbecue pitmaster. He entered his first competition in 2014, won the pork rib contest and hasn’t looked back since. As he continued to compete, people would taste his food and ask where they could purchase it themselves. That planted the seed to start a catering business alongside his wife and business partner, Dareka, which turned into a food trailer, [Zilla’s Pit BBQ](#). Terrance is passionate about bringing the traditions of his hometown of Brownsville, Tenn. to the masses.
- **Marvin Ross – Summerville, S.C.:** Marvin has been farming since around the age of 10-years-old alongside his grandfather, when he first showed a passion for pigs and other farm animals. Currently, he is the owner of [Peculiar Pig Farm LLC](#) with clients across the barbecue belt states. Most recently, Discovery Channel filmed Marvin for a documentary and he was featured at the 2022 Charleston Food & Wine Festival.
- **Cameron Brooks – Fort Wayne, Ind.:** Cameron Brooks is a fourth generation BBQ business owner, operating his catering business, [Brooks BBQ and Chicken](#). Established by Brooks’ great-grandmother in 1966, Brooks BBQ and Chicken was the first Black-owned barbecue restaurant in Fort Wayne, Ind.. He has rebranded the business and is currently running a food truck and acquired a brick-and-mortar in the Union Street Market at Electric Works which will become its home this fall.
- **Joseph & Laura Payne – Aurora, Ill.:** As the founders of [JP’s Que](#), Joseph and Laura Payne bring their twist to condiments. By combining flavors from their Black and Mexican heritage, their goal is to inspire people to become masters in their kitchens. Joseph spent much of his time watching and learning from his mother in the kitchen from a young age. Likewise, Laura applies the knowledge she gained from the generations of Mexican women around her. Together they’ve combined their knowledge, skills, and love of food and BBQ to bring their consumers their interpretation of home.
- **Donnell Crear – Smyrna, Ga.:** Based just outside of Atlanta, Donnell is the owner/operator of [Sunbelt Packaging Company](#), an artisan foods co-packaging company. They specialize in small batch production of sauces, dressings, marinades, dry mixes, and seasonings for other small businesses

throughout the Southeast. He holds a bachelor's and master's degree in Mechanical Engineering from The Ohio State University.

- **Rashida & Timothy Marshall – Stone Mountain, Ga.:** Rashida and Timothy own and operate [Soul-Pit aka RaRa's Home Cooking and Catering](#), established in 2020. Timothy, the grill master, and their four children, provide their Atlanta community with the best home cooking and BBQ from their family-owned and run business. At Soul-Pit, the family takes pride in their homemade food and cook from the “soul.”

Kingsford is also awarding 10 grants that can be used at the applicant's discretion to support their business aspirations and fuel the future of Black barbecue culture and history. These recipients are:

- Joey Victorian – [Victorian's Barbecue](#) (Houston, Texas)
- Damien Scroggins – [Scroggins Smokehouse Barbecue](#) (San Bernardino, Calif.)
- Eric Murray – Smoke Boys BBQ (Nashville, Tenn.)
- Everit Willie Johnson – Ground Up BBQ and Events (Dowelltown, Tenn.)
- Reginal Johnson – [Smoke City BBQ L.A.](#) (Los Angeles, Calif.)
- Ferdinand Graham – Ferdinand's Custom Smokers (Ocala, Fla.)
- Nate Figaro – [8020 Creole BBQ & Rub L.L.C.](#) (Chattanooga, Tenn.)
- Stanton Johnson – [Salute 'N' Smoke L.L.C.](#) (Kansas City, Mo.)
- Kristopher Manning – [Smokey Joe's BBQ](#) (Ovilla, Texas)
- Xenia Scullark – BBQ Rasta Catering Co. (Ruther Glen, Va.)

To further honor the Black community's contributions to American barbecue and support Preserve the Pit, Kingsford teamed up with artist-activist Brandan "BMike" Odums to create a special edition Preserve the Pit bag available for purchase in Walmart stores nationwide. The bag titled “Pass it On” is inspired by the Black barbecue traditions that have been passed on from generation to generation and in hopes that the traditions continue to burn bright. A portion of the sales will go toward funding Preserve the Pit*.

The art has also been memorialized as a mural at the historic Black-owned Payne's Bar-B-Que in Memphis, Tenn. that all Fellows and Mentors will celebrate while meeting in person during Memphis in May at the World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest.

To learn more about Preserve the Pit, visit [PreserveThePit.com](#). Follow Kingsford on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) and [www.kingsford.com](#) to stay up to date on the latest company news and offerings.

*Kingsford is allocating \$1 from the sale of each limited edition bag from 1/1/22-12/31/22 up to \$750,000, to the Preserve the Pit™ program.

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