



Kingsford® Celebrates The Culture Of Black Barbecue With Preserve the Pit™

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Initiative Honors Barbecue Traditions Ignited by the Black Community to Fuel Future Generations

OAKLAND, Calif., Jan. 25, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- Kingsford®, a leader in barbecue for more than 100 years, has launched **Preserve the Pit™**, an initiative focused on preserving the cultural history of Black barbecue and investing in its future.



The Black community ignited American barbecue more than 350 years ago, but without the spark of a new generation at the pit, important stories, recipes and techniques risk being extinguished. Kingsford's commitment is to honor the history and culture of Black barbecue in order to pave the way for its future.

"As the modern-day story of barbecue continues to unfold, it's important to celebrate those who have made it what it is today," said Shaunte Mears-Watkins, vice president of strategy and marketing for Kingsford. "The traditions of Black pitmasters helped bring barbecue into the center of American culture, but their contributions are not always

given the spotlight. As a leader in the barbecue industry, Kingsford wants to acknowledge and honor the contributions of the Black community while helping future generations blaze their own trail."

The effort is anchored by the Preserve the Pit Fellowship, which will grant aspiring barbecue professionals an exclusive opportunity for immersive training and one-on-one mentorship with industry leaders throughout 2021. The distinguished Mentor Network includes:

- Kevin Bludso: chef, television personality and owner of Bludso's BBQ, with locations including the flagship Bludso's Bar & Que in Hollywood and a sprawling restaurant and bar called San Antone by Bludso's BBQ in Melbourne, Australia.
- Dr. Howard Conyers: pitmaster and educator on the history of Southern barbecue who will help Kingsford revive stories of Black barbecue and inspire others to make an impact in the barbecue community.
- Devita Davison: executive director of FoodLab, a nonprofit organization that fosters the creation of an equitable local food economy by providing food entrepreneurs with education, peer-to-peer mentoring, and access to market opportunities.
- Bryan Furman: award-winning pitmaster known for locally sourced, fresh Georgia-grown produce with a blend of unique ingredients. Also, soon-to-be owner of Bryan Furman BBQ, which will be opening soon in Atlanta, Georgia.
- Rashad Jones: owner of Big Lee's BBQ food truck, where he's committed to delivering high-quality products and service to his customers. He was inspired to open his own business by his wife's uncle Leon (aka "Big Lee") who had a special talent for and passion for barbecue. Now, Rashad hopes to carry on that passion to inspire others.
- Amy Mills: owner of 17th Street Barbecue and OnCue Consulting, the only barbecue business consultancy in the world, offering seminars and training in the culinary techniques behind great barbecue.

Those interested in the fellowship are invited to review the eligibility requirements and **apply now** through March 1, 2021, with the inaugural class of fellows being announced in April 2021. No purchase is necessary to apply or participate. Kingsford and its Mentor Network will select the 2021 class of fellows based on a variety of factors including, but not limited to, their connection to barbecue, contributions to the legacy of the Black barbecue community and commitments to fueling its future. Through the immersive mentorship process, the Fellows will:

- Learn necessary skills with hands-on and immersive industry training
- Create lasting relationships with key leaders and experts in the industry
- Develop a business plan with help from a network of advisors and other business resources
- Receive capital investment to kick-start their business

"Kingsford and I have a shared passion for the deep-rooted culture of barbecue as well as an understanding for the

impact that the past has had on today," said Dr. Conyers. "I feel confident that the resources and opportunities presented through Preserve the Pit will inspire future generations to pursue barbecue as a career rather than only a passion."

To apply to the Preserve the Pit Fellowship or to learn more about the initiative, 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.

About Kingsford

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