

Kisha K. Kinard
SweetgrassRoots Farm, Founder & Sweetgrass Basketmaker

Sweetgrass baskets are one of America's oldest crafts of African origin practiced primarily in Mt. Pleasant, SC. Kisha's family is blessed to be a part of this great heritage. Her parents grew up in Wando and Mt. Pleasant, SC and left the south in the 1960s for career opportunities in New York where Kisha and her siblings would be born. In 1978, her family moved back to the Lowcountry so that she and her siblings would grow up knowing their southern roots. Almost immediately, Kisha and her siblings were immersed in their Gullah Geechee heritage, spending summers and weekends on the porches of the matriarchs learning to make well-crafted sweetgrass baskets.

Kisha attended Charleston County schools and graduated from the College of Charleston in 1994 with a B.A. in Spanish. In 1996, she began a career in the insurance industry in Charlotte, NC and lived there until 2014 when she relocated to Wilmington, NC. While attending a local blueberry festival, Kisha struck up a conversation with a stranger who would quickly become her friend and a year later her husband, Charles Kinard, Jr. After their home was severely damaged by Hurricane Florence in 2018, Kisha and Charles decided to follow a divine vision to pursue landownership where they could cultivate and grow sweetgrass to preserve Kisha's heritage. In 2019, they purchased 12 acres in Walterboro, SC and founded SweetgrassRoots, a small farm dedicated to the preservation of sweetgrass basketry and other crafts. On the farm, the Kinards will grow sweetgrass, long leaf pine trees and palm trees, all of



which are used in the craft of sweetgrass basketry. They will expand the farm to grow indigo, cotton, gourds and other plants used in folk art crafts and offer onsite tours and classes.



Kisha and her family continue to produce and sell their sweetgrass baskets. Whenever possible, they travel regionally to conduct lectures and basketmaking workshops. Their lively presentations include an overview of the history of sweetgrass basketry, its significance in American history and its prognosis. Participants often leave with a sweetgrass basket they have made, and a wealth of information!

Kisha's work has been featured in many local and regional publications. She also has the distinguished honor of having one of her baskets presented to the first female President of Liberia, Madame Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2006. In 2019, Kisha was recognized by the Governor of North Carolina for her activism in sweetgrass basketry education and preservation.

Accolades/Affiliations/Past Events:

Founded SweetgrassRoots Farm (2019), NC Governor's Certificate of Appreciation - Craftswoman (2019), Annual African American Heritage Celebration at NC Museum of History (2007-2017), demonstration at Levine Museum (2013), workshop at Historic Rosedale (2011), workshop at Johnson C. Smith University (2010), lecture at Latibah Collard Green Museum (2009), Where Wealth Lies documentary (2006), featured exhibitor at NC Women's Conference (2006).

Contact Information:

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