

Khawaja, Norma



Pinestraw Basketry

Norma is a member of Louisiana's Tunica-Biloxi tribe, the daughter of late chief Joseph Pierite (of the Tunica and Biloxi tribes) and Rose Jackson Pierite (Choctaw and Biloxi). She learned to weave river cane and honeysuckle baskets from her parents on the reservation. Her mother, in turn, had learned from her own mother Ana Mae Juneau, Norma's sister, and also a basketmaker, commented on the impact of the basketry craft and her tribe, "This is how we made our living. When I was young, our Indian people could not get jobs and we could not go to the white or black schools; they did not have schools for us Indians. We learned to make the baskets for income. Basketmaking has always been a traditional art and craft from among our tribe and other American Indians. For many years, we had many people who learned to do these things. This is no longer the case, and now it is necessary that we be careful that we do not lose these things of our ways." Rose White, another of Norma's sisters, also make baskets and her late brother Joe Pierite made Indian drums.

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