

LYNDA TELLER PETE



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Weaving legacy...

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Navajo tapestry weaver Lynda Teller Pete was born into the Tábaqhá (Water Edge Clan) and born for the Tó'aheedlínii (Two Waters Flow Together Clan). Her parents were Sam and Ruth Teller. Lynda was raised in Newcomb, New Mexico along with her siblings: two older sisters and two older brothers. On a seasonal basis, the family took up residence behind the Two Grey Hills Trading Post, where her father worked as a Trader for over 35 years. At the trading post, her mother demonstrated weaving and attracted a constant flow of tourists. Indeed, Ruth Teller's rugs were so prized that tourists often purchased them right off the loom. Her father Sam was a strong advocate and marketer for her mother's rugs. Needless to say, as a child, Lynda learned a lot through observation.

Lynda's paternal grandfather, Paul Kent Teller was from Canyon Del Muerto inside Canyon De Chelly, AZ and from him Lynda and her siblings learned the Navajo creation story and how Spider Woman gave the gift of weaving to the Navajo people. Spider Woman is one of the Diyin Dine'e', (Navajo's Holy People). She wove a map of the universe and the patterns of stars in the night sky and she gave the Navajos the gift of weaving. Lynda's grandfather told his grandchildren that when Spider Woman was instructed by the Diyin Dine'e' to weave the map, it was her quest for knowledge, to go beyond her capabilities, talents and stamina to weave the universe and she passed on her knowledge of weaving while doing so. Each weaver has these qualities from her. She is our grandmother, our teacher, guide, and motivator. Spider Woman created some weavers to be fearless; to take on challenges, not only to weave rugs to provide for their families, but also to pass on their weaving knowledge.

Weaving is a legacy in the Teller family. For over five generations, grandmothers, mother, sisters, aunts, and cousins have produced award-winning rugs and are featured in numerous publications. Lynda and her family are known for weaving tapestries in the traditional Two Grey Hills pattern. Identified primarily by a double-diamond layout, intricate geometric design using natural colored, hand-carded and hand-spun wool, these tapestries are easily recognizable and known for their high weft counts. To qualify as a true Two Grey Hills tapestry, the weft count has to be above 80 in a one-inch square measurement. In addition to this fine weave, the family uses a trademark rich brown wool for the inside color field. The Tellers and their extended weaving families, once turned to maternal aunt Margaret Yazzie and her flock of sheep to supply the necessary wool for their tapestries but she is elderly and wool roving is

now purchased from the Two Grey Hills Trading Post and hand spun by Lynda and her sister Barbara.

As the youngest child in a family of weavers, Lynda was raised in an atmosphere that encouraged creativity. Weaving was viewed as a “way of life”. Processing wool, such as skirting raw fleece, carding and combining wool for various shades, spindling fine tapestry weight wool weft and weaving and designing lessons were mandatory. All phases were labor intensive; however, she was given freedom to experiment. For example, she also pursued other art forms, such as beading and sewing. With so many mentors, it is no surprise that Lynda won her first weaving award at the Gallup Inter-Tribal Ceremony at age twelve, in the Juvenile Textiles Category. Garnering other weaving awards, Lynda set aside other forms of artwork while she attended Arizona State University and relied on weaving to pay for tuition and books. Her mother also sold tapestries to offset college costs.

After college, and a 20-year weaving hiatus, working with the Department of Labor, Lynda re-focused on weaving as a priority and won First Place at the Santa Fe Indian Market in the Textile Category in 2004, and in 2006 for Two Grey Hills tapestries. In the following years, Lynda branched out in different Navajo regional styles and learned more about her family’s history of weaving. In 2011 she wove a period tapestry from 1890, a Child’s Blanket that took Best of Division and Best of Classification at Santa Fe Indian Market. In 2013 she took first place at the Santa Fe Indian Market for a Storm Patterned tapestry. Having to purchase vegetal dyed wool from Navajo dyers became an exhaustive procedure because she had to un-spin and re-spin the wool to get the fine tapestry weight. Lynda became immersed in learning how to use natural dye extracts because gathering plants in a heavy populated area in Denver, CO was not feasible. She started vegetal dyeing her hand-spun tapestry weight wool and now she supplies herself and weaving family members with dyed skeins of wool.

Along with her weaving, Lynda collaborates with museums, schools, guilds and other art venues to educate the public about Navajo weaving, the history, and the current state of marketing and the preservation of weaving traditions. Lynda joined with three authors on a book in 2017, *Navajo Textiles: The Crane Collection at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science*. Lynda and Barbara are currently working on a book on Navajo weavers, interviewing their family members and a cross section of weavers, master level, elders, mid-career, male weavers, beginning weavers and weavers on and off the Navajo Nation, part-time and full-time weavers in all age groups. Their second book, *“How To Weave a Navajo Rug and other lessons from Spider Woman”* was released in October 2020.

The passing of older sister Rosann Teller Lee in 1996 had a profound effect on the entire weaving family. As her weaving tools were passed on to Lynda and her older sister and Master Weaver, Barbara Teller Ornelas, the need to keep the weaving talents strong in the family, teaching family members all aspects of weaving and the teachings of their paternal grandfather of their history and traditions became a priority. The 6th and the 7th generations of Teller weavers are learning these lessons and now some are producing award-winning tapestries desired by museums and private collectors.

The four values of Hózhó taught to Lynda and her siblings by their grandfather defines their family's way of life, to live in balance and beauty. They do not separate weaving arts from the culture, spirituality, daily life, or their connection to the earth. Weaving is a way for them to live in balance. The four values of a productive Navajo's life include;

- The value that one holds for life itself.
- Life's work—for the Teller family, it is weaving.
- Respect and support of family, extended family, friends, and communal relationships.
- The need for developing, acquiring, and passing on knowledge.

When Navajos live these ideals, they are well balanced and are in Hózhó. It is the last value to which Lynda and Barbara have dedicated a large portion of their professional lives: teaching and educating not just the Navajo people but also all people of diverse nationalities about Navajo weaving. They have traveled extensively across the United States, and Barbara has traveled to other countries as a cultural ambassador for the US State Department. In November 2017, Lynda and Barbara traveled to Peru as representatives of the Navajo Nation as weavers to present at Tinkuy, during their Global Weaving conference.

Although they wove different styles, Lynda's maternal Grandmother, Susie Tom and her paternal grandmother, Nellie Peshlakai Teller made sure their daughters and granddaughters learned the art of weaving. They emphasized many practices, such as respecting the loom; preparing one's own wool by shearing, carding and spinning; the production and proper care of weaving tools; and paying attention to design elements, always emphasizing the importance of intricate patterns and color combinations. They always set high standards. From the age of six, when Lynda was officially introduced to weaving, her mother Ruth Teller, her maternal aunt Margaret Yazzie, and her older sisters, Barbara and Rosann instilled the belief that beauty and harmony should be woven into every rug. Today, Lynda Teller Pete continues to carry on this tradition.

LECTURES, DEMONSTRATIONS & EXHIBITIONS, CLASSES

Idyllwild Arts Summer Program

Native American Arts
Idyllwild, California
Teaching Navajo Weaving I & II
July, 2000 - 2019

New England Weavers Seminar

Smith College, Northampton, MA
Navajo Weaving, Navajo lap spindling
July 2017, July 2019

American Indian Science and Engineering Society

2018 Leadership Summit, San Diego, CA, March 14-17, 2018
Navajo weaving's role in STEM, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
National Conference – Oklahoma City, OK, October 3-7, 2018

Red Stone Glen Fiber Art Center

435 Popp's Ford Road, York Haven, PA
August 31- September 7, 2018 - 2019
2 Navajo weaving classes
2 Navajo warping workshops

Harrisville Retail Yarn Shop

4 Mill Alley, Harrisville, NH
September, 2018, 2019
Navajo weaving class

Indigenous Fashion Week

Toronto, Canada
"Navajo Weaving Workshop"
June 1-3, 2018

Pikes Peak Weaving Guild

1080 E. LaSalle St, Colorado Springs, CO
Navajo Weaving Presentation
November, 2018

Tanner's Indian Arts

Winslow, AZ and Gallup, NM
"Growing up at a Trading Post" presentation
June 2018, 2019

Museum of the West

462 Ute Avenue, Grand Junction, CO
Navajo Weaving presentation
March 2018

Tinkuy 2017

Cusco, Peru
Gathering of Textile Arts, Global Weaving
Conference
Presentation on Navajo Weaving
November 2017

Museum of Indian Arts and Culture

Santa Fe, New Mexico
Trades and Exchange Video Exhibit
December 2017
Navajo weaving workshop & Presentation
August 2015

Loom Dancer Odysseys

Canyon De Chelly, AZ
Navajo weaving class
April 2013 - 2019

Heard Museum – Navajo Nation Museum

Master Teachers Navajo weaving workshop
Navajo Weaving for Navajo participants
March 2017, November 2018, 2019, 2020

Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, Massachusetts, January 2017

Contribution for text labeling on Navajo Textiles on exhibit, curatorial project on a Yei Bi Chei weaving, circa 1930, titled: "Dance Team" with Puebloan influences.

Michigan State University, MSU Museum, East Lansing, MI, September 2016

Exhibition expected opening in 2019. Contributions and partnership for the campus' Center for Digital humanities and Social Sciences (MATRIX) in the areas of the Navajo language and Navajo weaving that will be part of an online and virtual exhibit, to be used for research, education, exhibition, outreach and engagement projects.

LECTURES, DEMONSTRATIONS & EXHIBITIONS, CLASSES (cont.)

Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, Massachusetts, January 2016

Exhibition: Dancers of the Nightway: Ceremonial Imagery in Navajo Weaving curated by Rebecca and Jean-Paul Valette. Contributions made to text labels and article for the college's blog for the "At the Confluence of Cultures: Native American Craft Artists and the Early Tourist Market. Link to the blog titled "**People will know our names**":

<https://artmuseum.mtholyoke.edu/blog/people-will-know-our-names?bc=node/415>

Intermountain Weavers Conference

Fort Lewis College
Durango, CO
Teaching Navajo Weaving
July 2015, 2017, 2019

San Francisco Fibers

Oakland, CA
Navajo weaving and warping workshops
October 2017, March 2018, 2019

Art in Embassies Exhibition

United States Embassy
Vientiane, Laos
Child's Blanket tapestry
2013-2017 on exhibit

Bert Collin's Art Studio

Ojai, CA
Navajo Weaving, Navajo lap spindling
2010 – 2019

Amerind Foundation/Museum

Dragoon, Arizona
Navajo Weaving Workshops
2 classes a year, 2010 - 2019

Grandma's Spinning Wheel & Yarn Shop

Tucson, AZ
Navajo weaving and warping workshops
March, October 2010-2020

Olympia Weavers Guild

Olympia, WA
Navajo Weaving class
March 2017

Southwest Indian Art Fair

Arizona State Museum, U of A campus
Tucson, AZ. Navajo weaving demonstrations
March 2002 - 2015

Palo Verdes Art Center

Rancho Palos Verdes, CA
Navajo weaving workshop
October 2015

Mariposa Museum

Peterborough, New Hampshire
Teller Family tapestry exhibit and lecture
2014

Rocky Mountain Weaving Guild

TACTile – Denver, CO
Teaching Navajo Weaving I & II
November 2013

Texas Association of Museum Conference

University of Texas, Lubbock, TX
Navajo Weaving – Best Practices, Lecture
April 2014

Texas Tech University Museum

Helen Jones Foundation Grant
Navajo Weaving Workshop
June 2012 - 2013

Griffin Dye Works – Fiber Retreat

Introduction of Navajo Weaving
Navajo weaving mini workshops, lectures
June 2012

Seattle Weaving Guild

Lecture, Demonstrations
Navajo Weaving Workshop
February 2010, 2016

University of Colorado

Natural History Museum, Boulder, CO
Lecture, Navajo Weaving Workshops
October 2010 – May 2011

LECTURES, DEMONSTRATIONS & EXHIBITIONS, CLASSES (cont.)

La Veta School of Arts

Navajo Weaving Workshop

Teaching, Demonstration, Lecture
August 2008

Denver Museum of Nature & Science

Indians of North America K-6th grade
Teacher Workshop
Lecture & Demonstration
February 2007-2010

Denver Art Museum

"Hot Spots" for Docents
Navajo Weaving
Lecture & Demonstration
September 2005-2011

Arizona State Museum

19th Century Blankets,
20th Century Rugs,
21st Century Views
Two Grey Hills Tapestry in
Exhibition Oct. 2004 – May 2005
2006 Web Exhibit <http://www.statemuseum.arizona.edu/exhibits/navajoweave/>

http://www.statemuseum.arizona.edu/exhibits/navajoweave/contemp/teller-ornelas_two_grey_hills.shtml

The Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, DC

Two Grey Hills Tapestry Traditions, March 2005
Tours, Talks & Lecture Series – Rasmuson Theater, Weaving Demonstration - Potomac Lobby

Live Webcast, <http://smithsonian.tv/nmai>

Arizona State Museum

University of Arizona
Southwestern Indian Art Fair
Demonstrations
February, 2001 - 2009

Denver Art Museum

Native American Youth Art Program
Demonstrations in Navajo Weaving
June 2001
Friendship Powwow- weaving activity
September 2001

Hiwan Homestead Museum

"Rugs with Lynda Teller Pete"

Lecture, Demonstration, Exhibition
May – August 2007,
2018 - **Art and Survival: Navajo Weaving and Stories 150 Years after The Long Walk**

Colorado State University

Native American Awareness Week
Office of Women's Programs & Studies
Navajo Weaving Lecture
November 2006

Denver Art Museum

Teacher's Workshop
Navajo Weaving
Lecture & Demonstration
November 2005-2011

Arizona State Museum

Gloria F. Ross Tapestry Center
Navajo Weaving Now!
Symposium for Weavers
Panel Member
April 2005

Idyllwild Arts Summer Program

Native American Arts
Idyllwild, California
Scholarship selections – Navajo students
July, 2002 - 2012

Denver Art Museum

Fred Harvey Exhibit, Navajo Rugs
Demonstration and Lectures
October 1998
Docents, Teacher training
1998-2011

AWARDS

Santa Fe Indian 97th Market

August 18, 19, 2018

First Place – Second Phase tapestry, era of 1870-1890's
18" H X 24.5" W, weft count of 116

Santa Fe Indian 96th Market

August 19, 20, 2017

Second Place – Child's Blanket tapestry in a Woman's Manta Style, era of 1870-1890's
30" H X 34.50" W, weft count of 112

Santa Fe Indian 92nd Market

August 17, 18, 2013

Best of Division – Navajo Storm Pattern Tapestry

1st Place for Navajo Storm Pattern Tapestry in Traditional Category
24" X 16", 116 weft count

Santa Fe Indian 90th Market

August 20, 21, 2011

Best of Classification – Period Piece Child's Blanket

Best of Division – Child's Blanket,

1st Place for Child's Blanket Tapestry in Contemporary Category
27" X 18", 115 weft count

Santa Fe Indian 90th Market

1st Place for Period Piece – in Traditional Miniature Category

Vegetal dyed wool, hand carded & spun

13" X 10" Miniature Men's Serape, 110 weft count

Santa Fe Indian 86th Market

Santa Fe, NM

August 18, 19, 2007

3rd Place for Burntwater Tapestry

9" X 8" Miniature, 112 weft count

Santa Fe Indian 85th Market

Santa Fe, NM

August 19, 20, 2006

1st Place for Two Grey Hills Tapestry

27" X 17", 102 weft count

Santa Fe Indian 84th Market

Santa Fe, NM

August 20, 21, 2005

3rd Place for Two Grey Hills Tapestry

23" X 16", 112 weft count

Santa Fe 83rd Indian Market

Santa Fe, NM

August 21, 22, 2004

1st Place for Two Grey Hills Tapestry

42"x 24", 112 weft count

1st American Indian Celebration

University of San Diego, San Diego, CA

April 20, 21, 2002 **Special Beadwork Award**

By The San Diego Bead Society

"Indian Painted Ponies", appliquéd beads

AWARDS (cont.)

The 42nd Annual Heard Museum Guild

Indian Fair & Market, Phoenix, Arizona

March 4, 5, 2000

Classification III-Cultural Arts

Best of Division

“Navajo Tree of Life”

Appliquéd beaded velvet vest and skirt

The 41st Annual Heard Museum Guild

Indian Fair & Market, Phoenix, Arizona

March 6, 7 1999

Classification III-Cultural Arts

Honorable Mention

“Navajo Rainbow Dreams”

Appliquéd beaded velvet vest

OTHER AWARDS

Denver Museum of Nature and Science

Spring Buffalo Feast – Native American

Resource Group Advisors

Member of the Year, 1997

Denver Museum of Nature and Science

Spring Buffalo Feast 2005

“Heritage Award” for contributions
to the Anthropology Dept.

PUBLICATIONS

How To Weave a Navajo Rug and other lessons from Spider Woman

Authors: Lynda Teller Pete, Barbara Teller Ornelas, Mychal Yellowman, Illustrator

Thrums Publishing, Loveland, CO, release date of October 2020

New Publisher, Schiffer Publishing

Spider Woman’s Children

Authors: Lynda Teller Pete, Barbara Teller Ornelas

Thrums Publishing, Loveland, CO, release date of August 2018

Navajo Textiles: The Crane Collection at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science

Co-authored with Laurie Webster, Louise Striver, D.Y. Begay, Lynda Teller Pete

University Press of Colorado

Navajo and Hopi Art in Arizona

Continuing Traditions by Rory O’Neill Schmitt, PhD

Arcadia Publishing and The History Press

Barbara Teller Ornelas, Michael Teller Ornelas, Lynda Teller Pete, Navajo weavers

February 2016

Native Peoples Magazine, Arts and Lifeways

Urban Arts Scene by Tate Walker

Denver, Lynda Teller Pete

July/August 2014

Southwest Art Magazine, by Active Interest Media, Inc.

Native Arts: “A Navajo Weaver Comes Into Her Own By Staying With Tradition”

By Dottie Indyke

May 2005, Volume 34, Number 12

Native Peoples Arts & Lifeways by Media Concepts Group, Inc.
“Learning by Doing at Idyllwild Arts”
By Wendy Weston (Navajo)
March/April 2005, Volume XVIII, No. 2

BEADWORK by Interweave Press
The Teller Sisters: “A Sisterhood, a Livelihood”
By Jean Campbell
Summer 1999, Volume 2, Number 3

VIDEO LINKS

1. Loom with a view: <https://youtu.be/HkAggO4D8Og>
2. Master Artist Workshop: Navajo Weaving: <https://youtu.be/ZlgY3p2kXVw>
3. Craft in American – Teachers <http://www.craftinamerica.org/episodes/teachers/>