

Roy Kady Biography

If there is a “man for all seasons” among contemporary Diné (Navajo), Roy Kady might be that man. Kady is a well-established sheep herder and a male weaver residing in the community of Goats Spring on the outskirts of Teec Nos Pos, Arizona, and a sort of Mecca for sheep herders and Diné (Navajo) weavers. Roy was born at Shiprock Hospital, in New Mexico and raised in the small sheep-herding community of Goats Spring, AZ.

His mother, Mary K. Clah, is a Master Agro-Pastoralist and Weaver and the main teacher of Diné culture to her children. At her side, six children were taught cooking, herbalist, vegetal dying, and beading as they watched her weave. The children also herded sheep with their mother and taught them about the values of life and its giver, to forever cherish it, to keep it close to their hearts and to pass on the valuable teachings to the next generation.

Serious sheep herding and weaving/fiber arts reappeared for Roy in 1985. Traditional designs are important to him, and he considers each rug a story and expression of feeling and inspirations. Time spent after his sheep and at the loom is spiritual for Roy, who weaves only when he feels inspired the rest of the time he is herding his sheep. He wants his rugs “to teach the beauty of the universe and the cosmos.” and also to enrich the next generation about the importance of sheep herding, weaving and traditional/cultural preservation. Roy also says “In the Diné tradition we treat the land and its creatures with the upmost respect. Because we all need to eat and when we take from the land we do so in a responsible sustainable way that has been passed down from generation to generation by our elders and told to us in our creation stories.”

Roy is “Diné first” but able to comfortably combine both cultures. He continues building his flock of the cherished sacred Navajo-Churro sheep and is an avid environmentalist as the scared songs of creation depicts. “Pastures must be rotated, we must return to our agro-pastoral ways,” he stresses. Some years ago, his elders declared him a Master Weaver and a Leader with a Blessing Way ceremony for beauty, balance and harmony. Roy feels he has a gift for teaching and loves a classroom of young people or elders. He is comfortable in front of large crowds or in the solitude of herding sheep. He wants his Diné people to retain their trusted traditional ways and balance it with modern influences, also to know the creation stories and sing the scared songs again. “The world seems far less threatening when you know who you are,” he says. Roy’s outlook is broad and contemporary, the old and new woven into the fabric of his 44 years and going. “The Navajo rug is no longer just a blanket for wearing or a cover for the floor. It is now an art form to grace your wall,” Roy says proudly. Each rug he sells represents a piece of his thought and soul. “I hope my buyers will feel and sense the essence of happiness when they see me and my weavings.”

