Basket Exhibit

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A new exhibit at the Kentucky Museum pays tribute to the time honored tradition of basket making.

In this week’s View from the Hill, Amy Bingham talks to one basket maker who is about to receive national recognition for her talent.

 “You’ve got to have patience and time, patience and time.”

 “It’s hard work. You’ve got to whittle all this stuff out with just a pocket knife.”

88-year-old Leona Waddell has been making baskets nearly her whole life.

 “I guess how come I get into it, I helped my mom when I was a kid you know.”

 “I’d kindly make them by spurts you know. I’d make a while then be a long time before I’d do it again.”

Waddell’s baskets are part of a new exhibit at the Kentucky Museum.

 “There’s been smaller exhibits about white oak but we tried to make a big one so there’s a lot of baskets we’ve borrowed from a lot of people. Tried to tell this full story of the baskets and celebrate the history and beauty.”

 “Standing the Test of Time: Kentucky’s White Oak Basket Tradition” features many baskets by artists who also have their work on display in the Smithsonian.

 “Traditional arts is sometimes not as flashy but if you look at all these assembled baskets it’s a pretty amazing craft that’s done just with hand tools and lots of ingenuity.”

The community saw that ingenuity up close during basket making demonstrations that helped kick off the exhibit’s opening weekend…..

 “I’d rather show ‘em how than try to tell em how.”

 “I can’t say that there is a secret. Any can do it.”

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

Next week Waddell will be in Washington D.C. to receive the National Heritage lifetime achievement award, the nation’s highest honor in folk and traditional arts.

You can see the white oak basket exhibit for yourself at the Kentucky Museum through January 31st. For information log onto wku-dot-edu forward slash Kentucky museum.

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