

Roots of new Homewood botanical shop in Mississippi farmland

BY ERIC CRUMP

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The “roots” in the name of the new botanical shop, Roots + Fire Water at 1941 Ridge Road, refers to more than just the plants for sale. The roots reach back in time and across the miles to Mississippi.

That’s where the family of mother-daughter co-owners Denise Rhodes of South Holland and Amanda Battles of Glenwood farmed for generations before moving north in the late 1950s.

At a ribbon cutting ceremony on Saturday, July 1, the two explained that their storefront in Homewood would not only serve local customers by selling unique plants and other healthy plant-based products but will serve the ultimate mission of keeping their family farm going.

“Our mission is basically to create healthy homes,” Battles said. “Having plants in the home helps keep your air pure.”

Not only does air quality benefit lungs, but plants help create a serene environment that can help with mental and emotional health, she said.

“You want to make sure (home) is a place where you feel comfortable and calm,” she said. “Our products are there to help you do that.”



Eric Crump/H-F Chronicle

Homewood Mayor Richard Hofeld helps mother-daughter owners Denise Rhodes and Amanda Battles cut the ribbon to mark the opening of their botanical and wellness shop, Roots + Fire Water, on Saturday, July 2. Homewood Trustee Cece Belue, left, and Economic Development Director Angela Mesaros, right, look on.

The fire and water refer to the elements, which are represented in their products.

Battles said in addition to exotic plants, the shop offers Fire Water teas, their own herbal blends; sage to burn; bath salts; essential oils; and liquid vitamins.

“Health and wellness. That’s our whole mission,” Rhodes said.

Mayor Richard Hofeld asked whether the two planned to offer advice to people who have trouble keeping plants alive. Battles said they would. They plan to start

a YouTube channel to post plant advice videos, and also hope to offer workshops, events and retreats.

“This project was started because me and my mom were in the health and wellness business,” Battles said. She is an herbalist, and her mother is a licensed health coach and yogi. But it was the mission to save the family farm that provided the catalyst for the shop.

Rhodes said her parents farmed in Mississippi until about 1959, when they moved to Chicago looking for work. She said her father started out as a janitor with the Chicago housing agency, then became a union pipefitter.

“They lived here for 40 years. Then they went back,” she said.

Her mother passed away not long after returning to Mississippi, but her father is still alive, although he was unable to attend the grand opening for health reasons.

Rhodes and Battles have in mind a beneficial symbiotic relationship between their ancestral land and their suburban wellness shop. The plants they have now are from a distributor, but within a year or two, they hope to sell plants in Homewood that were grown on the Mississippi farm.

The shop is open 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

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