

MQA HISTORY ARTICLE NO. 1

MISSISSIPPI QUILT ASSOCIATION, CELEBRATING OUR FIRST 25 YEARS By Linda Jabour

1991

A dozen quilters met in October 1990 at Ann Root's Olde Town Stitchery quilt shop in Clinton to discuss the possibility of forming a state quilt organization. They wondered if there would be enough interest to make such an organization possible. The first gathering was held in February 1991 at the Paul B. Johnson State Park to learn, stitch and share. About 180 attended. The **Mississippi Quilt Association** was official with Articles of Incorporation filed. Martha Ginn was elected the first president.

The first edition of "Common Thread", published in May announced plans for the 1991 June Gathering held at the Mississippi Delta Community College in Moorhead. The Fall Gathering was held in Picayune where the bylaws were adopted. Eight regions of the state were defined and Regional Representatives identified.

1992

The June Gathering tradition, with educational workshops, was established. It was held at Christ United Methodist Church in Jackson with MQA members serving as the instructors. The first donation quilt, "Everything Coming Up Roses" project started with 31 members who submitted blocks. 18 blocks were selected. The design, construction and quilting was a team effort involving a year of fun, hard work, shared loved and lasting friendships. Ticket sales would fund MQA's treasury.

1993

Ollie Jean Lane served as our second president with her theme, "Quilt More in '94". The Finance Committee made decision to divide the "Roses" donation quilt proceeds between funds for quilt education and a quilt documentation or search project. The drawing was held at the June Gathering. Funds raised totaled \$4007. By September, MQA's membership was 330.

1994

President, Barbara Newman's theme---"Reach for the Stars". The Educational Seminar was established featuring national teachers. The first seminar instructor was Irma Gail Hatcher. Her topic: Applique. At the June Gathering a quilt documentation and research project was introduced with an "Adoption Tree". It contained 103 stars, each represented a quilt block for volunteers to make plus research history of the block.

1995

President, Evelyn Palmer's focus was on documentation. The Documentation Committee met in November and December in 1994 to make plans for our statewide quilt search. The plan and time-line presented by Carol Vickers, chair, was adopted on January 7th. Funds must be secured. Their goal of 20 Quilt Search Days to be scheduled in different sites around the state. The first "Quilt Search Day" was held in Jackson in August. The project goal was to document between 3500-4000 quilts. There are 2 requirements: that the quilt be completed prior to 1945 and belong to a Mississippi resident. The Fall Gathering in Oxford featured a lecture/demonstration by Martha Skelton and Ann Root on dating old quilts. The "Adopt-a-Block" Project resulted in over 100 blocks made and researched. Plans were made to create an educational slide show. The Educational Seminar instructor was Flavin Glover.

1996

President, Ellen Hall's challenge---"Bend and Stretch". In January 1996, the Board of Directors approved the creation of the Quilt Search Executive Board to oversee the MQA's quilt search project. All documentation funds will be moved to a separate banking account. MQA qualified for tax deductible status under Section 501©3 of IRS Code. The Educational Seminar instructor was Gabrielle Swain.

The June Gathering had a new format featuring Lynn Kough, quilt artist, instructor, and author of "Stretching Tradition" presented an all-day class to 150 attendees auditorium style. Friday night she taught a class entitled "Midnight Madness".

1997

President, Nancy Welsch, challenged our membership to *share*—your talents, your time and your friendship (with other quilters). The Educational Seminar instructor was Dixie Hayward. The Documentation Project report in September CT stated that 1,550 quilts had been documented at 15 sites since 1995.

1998

President, Ella Lucas, challenged members to expand their quilters' friendship circle (when attending our gatherings). The documentation project remains a work in process, currently seeking a publisher and continuing to raise funds to finance the publishing of a book. The "Mississippi Stars" quilt with 56 signatures of our state's well known people was finished and tickets ready to sell to raise funds for documentation. The Educational Seminar instructor was Elly Sienkiewicz.

1999

President, Sandra Plummer, challenged organization to "Go Back to the Basics (of quilting)". The Documentation Project continued to make significant progress by receiving a \$5000 grant from La-Z-Boy Corporation allowing funds to sign a contract with quilt author, Mary Elizabeth Johnson, to write the text of our book. Plans were tentatively set to have a quilt exhibit and book sale at the Rotary Club Show in Paducah in April 2001. Other grants had been submitted to raise funds. The Educational Seminar instructor was Jackie Robinson.

2000 to 2016

Stay tuned for the next installment of "MQA, the First Twenty-Five Years". Special thanks and appreciation to all "Common Thread" editors for publishing MQA's communication life-line, our newsletter. And special thanks to Martha Ginn, who published MQA's Directory for the Board of Directors, Officers, Committee Chairs and Regional Representatives for Jerry Ann Dye, 2005 President. This wonderful tool included a short MQA History time-line.

Linda Jabour