

MQA HISTORY ARTICLE NO. 2

MISSISSIPPI QUILT ASSOCIATION, CELEBRATING OUR FIRST 25 YEARS—2000-2008 By Linda Jabour

2000

President, Sue Mitchell, challenged the membership “to stretch yourself as you try a new quilting venture: Develop a new skill, create a new quilt design, improve your quilt stitch, try a new color scheme”. MQA’s documentation project introduced our traveling photographic exhibit with the first exhibit at the Neshoba County Library in Philadelphia entitled ***Unfolding Our Past: Mississippi Quilts-1850 to 1946***. The ***Mississippi Quilts*** book manuscript was delivered to University Press of Mississippi. Publication date set for June 2001. At the June Gathering, the first Leadership planning session met to brain storm ideas to make MQA an even greater organization. MQAlist@egroups.com was launched by Jere’ Funk to keep members informed. The Educational Seminar instructor was Margaret J Miller.

2001

President, Joan Alliston, challenged the membership “to involve new people in our organization...Also involve youth in quilting”. At the February Gathering in Hattiesburg, MQA celebrated our first ten years. The first MQA Leadership Retreat was held at Lake Tiak-O’Khata in March. The guest speakers were Carol Ann Moss and Harriet Laird. The official presentation of ***Mississippi Quilts*** was held at the Old Capital Museum in Jackson on July 15th. Author, Mary Elizabeth Johnson and photographer, J.D. Schwalm were present to sign copies. In the first 6 weeks, the publisher sold 2500 hard and softback copies! Nancy Pearson was the Educational Seminar instructor.

2002

President, Martha Dubard, challenged the membership “to be bold in developing our creativity through infusion of fresh innovative procedures”. Copies of ***Mississippi Quilts***, along with 26 quilts pictured in the book, were featured at the Paducah Rotary Club in April. The second Leadership Retreat was held with the focus on exchanging ideas to help MQA grow and prepare for the future. Guest speaker was Allegra Brigham. The June Gathering changed venues by meeting at the Duncan Gray Center in Canton. The MQA handbook was adopted in June 2002. Karen Stone was the Educational Seminar instructor.

2003

President, Jere’ Funk’s theme—“Past, Present, Future and Lagniappe...to enhance your MQA Experience”. MQA’s bylaws were revised to include two new board members, Publicity Director and Historian. The Educational Seminar instructor was Pat Campbell. Her topic, “Jacobean Applique”. At the Fall Gathering in Biloxi, attendees were privileged to view 3 beautiful quilts assembled to support the “Pascagoula River Basin Project. 44 blocks were submitted by MQA members.

2004

President, Nancy Funderburk’s theme was “The Year to Plan For So Much More”. The June Gathering changed venues again by meeting at Hines Community College, Rankin County Campus in Pearl. Gatherings were held in Madison, Pearl and Greenville. Karen Combs was the Educational Seminar instructor. Her topic, “Patchwork Illusions”.

2005

President, Jerry Ann Dye's theme was "A Journey of Quilts—Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow". The MS Quilt Legacy Committee was appointed to develop guidelines and begin a research project to locate outstanding quilters. Primary considerations were that the quilter be at least 70 years old with a significant body of work to document. Sue Nickels taught "Machine Applique" at the Educational Seminar. The Fall Gathering was cancelled due to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Our Coastal and Southern quilting sisters and vendors suffered and lost so much.

2006

President, Mary Nell Magee challenged the membership to "IMAGINE the possibilities, BELIEVE in your abilities, so you can ACHIEVE your dreams and goals". MQA came together at the Spring Gathering in Rankin County to support our soon to be Hurricane Adoptees by donating fabric, tools, quilting supplies, sewing machines and money to help our sisters return to their love of quilting. Many guilds adopted MQA Hurricane Katrina Survivors and provided additional support to include group quilts.

The Martha Skelton Book Committee was created to document Martha's amazing body of works. Finding a publisher was a challenge due to the publication costs. A special committee was appointed to address fund raising ideas and events. Mary Elizabeth Johnson signed on to write the manuscript. Mary Sorensen was the Educational Seminar teacher.

2007

President, Broach Winsley's message was "GROWTH. Try lots of new things...Grow some more quilting friendships---teach a quilting class." The Quilt Legacy Committee held a documentation training session at the February Gathering. The regional volunteers showed their dedication by reporting to class at 7:45 am! The Martha Skelton Book Committee's goals to assemble a professional team, all with publishing experience, to publish a book on Martha's life and quilts, was slowly becoming a reality. A Gala honoring Martha was held in Vicksburg in May to fund her book. Donations for the silent and live auction were made by members and others. The Educational Seminar teacher was Ann Fahl on "Free Motion Embroidery".

2008

President, Cindy Pannier's theme was to celebrate the incredible "Diversity and variety" of Mississippi quilters from experience level to preferred styles. A book signing event was held June 12th commemorating **Martha Skelton-Master Quilter** in Vicksburg. It documents her life and quilting journey with family photographs and professional pictures of her amazing quilts. It was a joyful celebration of a dear quilter we love and treasure. This incredible project and publication would not be possible had it not been for two dedicated groups of quilters, members of the Martha Skelton Book Committee co-chaired by Cay Jones and Carol Vickers and the Fund Raising Committee co-chaired by Shirley Wiltshire and Bobbie Gray. Every MQA member who had a role in this rewarding project should be proud of this achievement and tribute. Brett Barker was the Educational Seminar Teacher.

2009 to 2016

Stay tuned for the Final installment of "MQA, the First Twenty-Five Years". Special thanks and appreciation to the "Common Thread" editors for publishing MQA's communication life-line, our newsletter during this period---Martha Ginn, Barbara Hutchinson and Leslie Kiger. 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.

