

Memories of *Margaret Rhodes*

by Beatrice Walroth and Donna Hamilton
KINGSTON HEIRLOOM QUILTERS

A guiding light for the KINGSTON HEIRLOOM QUILTERS of Kingston, Ontario has been dimmed with the passing of long time teacher and mentor, Margaret Rhodes. Though in her ninety-fifth year, she still maintained an active involvement with the group until December 2009.

Margaret's quilting history began in 1950 at her local church. As this pastime became a passion, she joined other groups as well, where she connected with lifelong friend and colleague, Diane Berry. In the mid 70's they put together a series of classes on the finer points of traditional quilt making. So popular were these classes that the students, having found a group of kindred spirits, were loath to see them end. Thus in 1979, the KINGSTON HEIRLOOM QUILTERS was formed; not as a guild, but as a working group dedicated to keeping the traditional methods of quilt making alive. Involvement with this ever enlarging group soon took precedence and the classes were discontinued, though Margaret never ceased to teach. She was a fount of knowledge and wisdom who challenged us with gentle guidance and good humour to do things correctly and do them well. The kudos earned by this group and its members over the past three decades are a reflection of her influence. In May 2009, Margaret saw us win first prize in the *Canadian National Juried Show* in the Traditional Wall Quilt category for our completely hand-stitched quilt, *Autumn Splendour*. She has taught us well.

Margaret, herself an avid collector of antique quilts, was instrumental in the formation of the Heritage Quilt Collection housed in Kingston, Ontario, at the Queen's University Agnes Etherington Art Centre. Disturbed that local quilts were being

picked up and removed from the area, Margaret, with the backing of the Kingston Heirloom Quilters, approached the director of the Art Centre. Her idea was warmly received and she and two quilting friends set about the happy task of gathering quilts for the collection. The quilts have travelled across North America, and have proved to be one of the more popular shows from the Centre.

Margaret was happy when the quilts were shown, but was especially pleased when quilts and paintings hung side by side at the Agnes, providing evidence for Margaret's strong conviction that quilting is absolutely an art, rather than a craft. She, with the help of the KINGSTON HEIRLOOM QUILTERS, was also behind the making of a catalogue for the Heritage Quilt Collection. To date, three quilts made by the KINGSTON HEIRLOOM QUILTERS have been donated to that collection.

Margaret was a committed member of the small group of KINGSTON HEIRLOOM QUILTERS who appliquéd the Quilt of Belonging blocks onto the huge bengaline panels. (Visit www.quiltofbelonging.ca to learn about this quilt.) What a job that was! It was fun, but it wasn't easy! Visit our web page at www.quiltskingston.org/khq to hear our story.

Margaret challenges us yet. She was a long time friend and fan of noted Ontario quilt designers, Nina Cotton and her mother, Ada



Margaret holding Margaret's Basket and in front of one of her quilts.

Torrance. Margaret had taken over the task of having their "One Hundred Years of Fashion" designs incorporated into a quilt. The KINGSTON HEIRLOOM QUILTERS are up to the challenge. We have this project well underway and will finish it on her behalf.

Margaret Rhodes passed away peacefully at St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital on Thursday, January 14, 2010. We were truly blessed by knowing Margaret. We, the KINGSTON HEIRLOOM QUILTERS, will miss Margaret, her knowledge and advice, her jokes, her smiles, and her cookies. She loved the process of making a quilt and shared this love with many of us. The KINGSTON HEIRLOOM QUILTERS are her quilting legacy. May we keep her memory alive by sharing our love of quilts and the process of making them with other quilters.

And we will do what she would have wanted. We will quilt away the day together. Thank you, Margaret!



Margaret working on the *Quilt of Belonging*.

KINGSTON HEIRLOOM QUILTERS *Autumn Splendour* Quilt that placed first in the Traditional Wall Quilt category in 2009 National Juried Show.

Margaret's quilt, *Margaret's Basket*.



Margaret's Favourite Pattern

THE KINGSTON HEIRLOOM QUILTERS would like to share one of Margaret's favourite patterns with you. Many years ago we made an appliquéd sampler where we each made our own appliquéd block. Margaret designed an original basket and placed some flowers in it. We loved the basket so much; we decided to make a whole quilt containing blocks with her basket and each member adding her own flowers. The result was the quilt *Margaret's Basket*.

The quilt was juried into several major quilt shows, including that of the *American Quilter's Society* in Paducah, KY, and was subsequently featured in their book *Borders and Finishing Touches* published in 1988. In her honour, we give you the basket pattern to be filled with flowers. We hope you have as much fun as we did, making this lovely block and turning it into a quilt.

Margaret's Basket Block

Original design by Margaret Rhodes

The flowers can be made using your scraps. Margaret suggested that you change the flowers, if you wish; add your favourites. For each 14-inch block cut:

- * 1 dark basket
- * 1 dark handle
- * 6 green leaves
- * Flowers from your scraps
- * 10 inches of 1/2-inch bias for stems, or if you'd rather, embroider them.



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