

ASG SEWING HALL OF FAME

MEET: JOYCE AND FRED DREXLER 2007 Sewing Hall of Fame Honorees

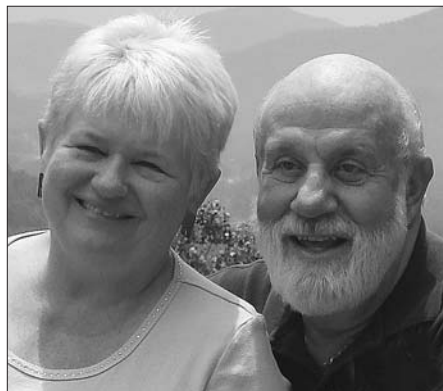
It was a celebratory evening at ASG Conference 2007 when a very deserving duo was inducted into the ASG Sewing Hall of Fame.

Joyce and Fred Drexler, owners of Sulky of America, were honored for their contributions to the sewing community. Since the inception and marketing in the late '70s of Speed Stitch, their first nationally known company, the Drexlers have been a strong influence in the home sewing industry, both in the U.S. and Canada.

Speed Stitch had its genesis in the free-motion embroidery classes Joyce taught at the Drexlers' Singer sewing machine dealership. Her success propelled them into teaching "Speed Stitch Success Seminars" to other Singer dealers, then to market her kits and seminars on a national level. In 1985, Speed Stitch secured the U.S. marketing rights in the home sewing market to a high-quality industrial rayon thread called Sulky. In 1987, Speed Stitch entered into a joint-venture partnership with the German manufacturer of Sulky thread and Sulky of America began marketing Sulky 40 wt. rayon thread on the world's first snap-end spool.

In 1995, Sulky created a contest that invited amateurs and professionals to enter their outstanding creations made using Sulky products. Thus was born the "Everyone Loves Sulky Challenge." For 10 years, consumers and designers entered and won prizes contributed by Sulky and many other sewing industry sponsors, totaling up to \$75,000 each year.

Joyce Drexler has produced 16 educational Sulky publications that have sold well over 500,000 copies. She has designed numerous embroidery cards for Cactus Punch, Amazing Designs, and Great Notions. She makes frequent guest appearances on eight popular PBS sewing shows



which Sulky co-sponsors. In 2000, she received the prestigious Schmetz Golden Needle Award in acknowledgment of her significant contributions toward enhancing the future of the sewing industry.

In 2004, a Category Four storm, Hurricane Charley, hit the west coast of Florida and passed directly over the Florida warehouse of Speed Stitch and the marketing offices of Sulky. Because of the huge amount of damage all over the county, which caused a lack of warehouse and office space in the area, Joyce and Fred had to sell Speed Stitch to another company and set up offices in their Florida home for the nine Sulky marketing people. The Drexlers have been working out of their summer mountain home in North Carolina ever since.

This was an ironic turn of events because in 1992, Fred conceived and spearheaded Operation Mend. This 10-month project, carried out with the help of 60 Port Charlotte Rotarians and their families, invited sewers all over America to "Share their Stash" with Hurricane Andrew victims. Thousands of people did, netting two full semi-trailer loads of sewing machines, fabrics, patterns, and every other imaginable sewing tool and supply.

Everything was sorted and organized in Port Charlotte, then trucked to Homestead, Fla. when local authorities felt the time was right. South Florida ASG chapters assisted in

locating needy victims to receive all of the donated items and helped set up the distribution center in a local church. For his efforts on Operation Mend, Fred was honored with the distinguished award of Rotarian of the Year for the state of Florida.

As they celebrate their 20th anniversary of the founding of Sulky of America and more than 30 married years together, Joyce and Fred continue to maintain their excitement and sense of adventure. Their recent 5,000-mile motorcycle trip across the country attests to their spirit, vitality, and sense of adventure. ASG is proud to join in the celebration by recognizing their accomplishments!