

ASG SEWING HALL OF FAME

MEET: CONNIE AMADEN-CRAWFORD

2009 Sewing Hall of Fame Honoree

At ASG Conference 2009, Connie Crawford became the newest inductee into the ASG Sewing Hall of Fame.

Connie has changed the face of pattern fit for countless women, first through her own line of Fashion Patterns by Coni and now as a licensed designer for The McCall Pattern Company under the Butterick brand. Her clothing patterns are true-to-the-body fit for misses' sizes XS–XL and women's sizes XXL–6X.

When most people talk about how they got started sewing, they mention 4-H, or mom-as-mentor, or a beloved teacher. Connie's story is somewhat different. For reasons Connie later discovered as an adult, she was not treated well by either of her parents. At an early age, Connie began cleaning houses for others to earn extra money, and taught herself to sew so she could have a decent wardrobe. She purchased her first sewing machine in early high school with a down payment of \$4. Although her sewing machine collection has grown, she still has—and uses—that first machine today.

After high school, Connie moved to Los Angeles and supported herself as a medical secretary. But she kept sewing. Knowing she wanted more out of life, she took an aptitude test at UCLA—and the results recommended a career in fashion design.

While working as a secretary on weekends, Connie put herself through college, first at Los Angeles Trade Technical College, and later at UCLA for teaching credentials. Her first of many jobs in the fashion industry was as an assistant designer which, she says, was really a patternmaker. Ultimately, she went to work for a very talented gentleman who became her mentor. She stayed at that company five years, filling notebooks



Connie is surprised—and husband Wayne is delighted—when her name is announced as the Sewing Hall of Fame honoree. Below, with ASG Board Chair Joan Schaffner.



with all the things he taught her about design and construction.

Always ambitious, Connie also took on a part-time job teaching sewing at a private girls' school. The curriculum she developed for that class became the basis for the classes she ultimately taught at the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising in Los Angeles. She continued doing freelance work in the fashion industry while, as a divorced mom, raising a small son. When her son Jason was nine, she married Wayne Crawford, a widower with two children. Some life-changing experiences, including surviving the crash of a small private plane and nursing Wayne through several life-threatening illnesses, pushed Connie toward her ultimate goal of being a full-time teacher and mentor.

Today, in addition to her pattern lines, Connie is a nationally-recognized lecturer, fashion specialist, educator, and author of sewing and pattern textbooks. The 5th edition of her first book, "A Guide to Fashion Sewing," is scheduled for release in late 2010. Her other books include "The

Art of Fashion Draping" and "Patternmaking Made Easy." In all, she has written five textbooks and produced five DVDs, appeared on numerous TV sewing shows, and graced the pages of virtually every sewing magazine. She and Wayne travel seven months of the year in the U.S. and Mexico. "Home" during this time is a custom-built 31-foot trailer that goes wherever Connie conducts workshops and seminars for college and university faculty and for her legions of sewing fans.