

# ASG SEWING HALL OF FAME

## MEET: SHIRLEY ADAMS

The Saturday night dinner gala at ASG Conference 2010 was a well deserved, two-fold celebration for Shirley Adams. Conference attendees and fellow instructors gathered to honor Shirley on her retirement from a career in the sewing industry and to welcome her as the newest inductee in ASG's Sewing Hall of Fame.

After graduating from Indiana University, Shirley gravitated to Ball State University where she created a four-year degree program in Fashion Merchandising and Clothing and Textiles. During this time, she also completed two more degrees—one from Ball State and one from Butler University.

In the late 1980s, Shirley retired from teaching when she and her husband John moved to Cleveland. But she got restless and soon began working with the local PBS station on a weekly program called "The Needle and I" and a series of 15-minute sewing demos called "And Sew On." In 1990, she and John moved back to the Indianapolis area and her long-running, self-financed television series, "The Sewing Connection," was born. It ran for 17 seasons on PBS in the U.S. and on the Knowledge Network in Canada, as well as in Australia. Shirley carefully planned each segment so it was shot in one take, 28.6 minutes from beginning to end. She shot a whole year's worth of shows in 4½ days, seven shows per day. "That," says Shirley, "is why my hair looked the same every time!" And she personally made every sample and every garment featured on the show.



Shirley (center) with husband John and daughter-in-law Rebecca Adams, who prepared a Shirley Adams retrospective video for the Hall of Fame dinner

After 221 shows (available today on DVDs), Shirley retired again, ostensibly to spend more time with her two children and three grandchildren. That retirement, she says, "lasted about a week!" People began calling and asking about the show and the patterns she used. The result was her Alternatives pattern collection—"where an engineer's mind meets an artist's soul." Shirley designed and drafted the patterns, wrote her books and instructions longhand, and did her own sketches. Her daughter-in-law Becky, who runs the office and is the company's computer whiz, assembled the pieces and supervised the printing. Husband John, an accountant by profession, is her business manager.

With John at her side, Shirley has traveled the U.S., Canada, and Australia, presenting seminars and workshops to thousands of sewers. She has also written articles for both *Threads* magazine and *ASG Notions*. In fact,

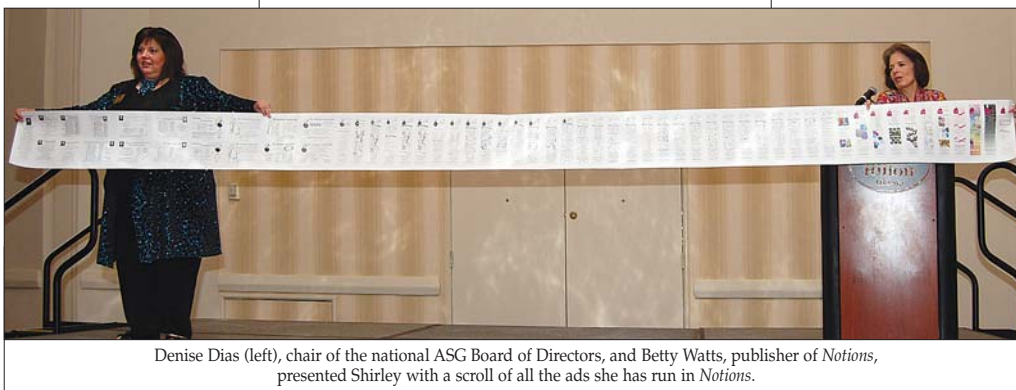
Shirley and ASG have long had a special relationship. ASG was born in her backyard: Indianapolis was one of ASG's first two chapters and Shirley was one of its most enthusiastic supporters. Over the years, Shirley has presented programs to over 100 ASG chapters, has been both an instructor and an exhibitor at many ASG conferences, and has been a loyal *Notions* advertiser since its very first issue, Spring 1994. "We've always left every ASG stop with smiles on our faces," says Shirley. "Sewers, and ASG members especially, are the nicest people in the world."

In her latest "retirement," Shirley is embarking on a new venture called Fiberdance. Her framed abstracts and wearables will be available in galleries and at art shows. Check out [www.shirleyadamsfiberdance.com](http://www.shirleyadamsfiberdance.com) for more information.



Shirley's booth at ASG Conference in Atlanta featured over 200 model garments and a banner that read, "Thanks For A Lovely Ride."

Shirley closed her remarks at ASG Conference 2010 with some advice she recently gave her granddaughter: "Follow your heart and you'll never work a day in your life. That's exactly how it has always been for me."



Denise Dias (left), chair of the national ASG Board of Directors, and Betty Watts, publisher of *Notions*, presented Shirley with a scroll of all the ads she has run in *Notions*.