

MEET: JUDY BARLUP

by Jane Reifel

At ASG Conference 2011, more than 20 members of the Greater Seattle Chapter traveled to Los Angeles to celebrate Judy Barlup's induction into the ASG Sewing Hall of Fame.



Judy (center) talks with Jacksonville, Florida Chapter member Catherine Whitt (seated) while other admirers wait to congratulate her at ASG Conference 2011.

The appeal of both the artistic and the technical aspects of sewing contributed to Judy's love of sewing and thus her long and successful career as a teacher of hundreds of aspiring sewers. Beginning at age seven on a Pennsylvania farm, she fashioned an elastic waist skirt from a chicken feed bag. Participation in 4-H and learning from her grandmother prepared Judy so that she was able to assist her high school home ec teacher, especially with maintenance of the sewing machines.

To support herself through college, Judy blocked, sewed, and made buttonholes in sweaters. She earned an undergraduate degree in math, a graduate degree in librarianship, and took sewing classes when available.

For 15 years, Judy worked in a stressful middle management position at a University of Washington library. For stress relief, she took sewing classes at Lake Washington Vocational/Technical College and Seattle Central Community College. Between leaving her management job and applying for a position at Microsoft, she finished her degree in appar-



el design at the Seattle school. Before she completed it, the tailoring teacher at the Lake Washington school retired and Judy was hired to teach tailoring.

A new career was born! She taught Japanese tailoring as well as serger and sewing-related classes. In her 11 years at the college, Judy developed and taught fool-proof techniques that guided students in obtaining quality results efficiently. She loved teaching, because it gave her the opportunity to motivate and build confidence in students, encouraging them while making difficult jobs easier and making it possible for average sewers to get successful results.

Her classes were very popular and soon she was teaching midweek at the college and traveling to teach on long weekends outside of the Seattle area. When her many out-of-town engagements made a teaching schedule difficult, she reluctantly gave up teaching at the college.

Judy continued to travel and participated in consumer shows throughout the U.S. and Canada, plus appearances on HGTV and PBS. In the early 1990s she made a tailoring video, now in DVD format, and established her business: Unique Techniques. She also authored books on Japanese tailoring and pants design and construction. She added a Web site with an online store selling tailoring items, as well as her own books and DVD. Judy exhibited and taught seminars at Sewing & Stitchery Expo in Puyallup,

Washington for 14 years.

Good experiences with teaching at ASG chapters led Judy to initiate the organization of the Greater Seattle Chapter. She served on its board as industry liaison and received an Outstanding Service Award from the chapter. Other activities for Judy include writing articles for *Threads*, participating in the Association of Sewing and Design Professionals, and maintaining a custom pants pattern business.

Classes in her home studio were the final stage of active teaching and very much appreciated by local sewers and an occasional out-of-town fan willing to travel for help.

Judy's enthusiasm and love for teaching, as well as her ability to synthesize the artistic and technical aspects of sewing and convey them to her students with patience and humor, have earned for her the admiration and love of a multitude of sewers whose skills have improved thanks to her expert guidance.



Charter members of the Greater Seattle Chapter (clockwise from lower left): Judy Barlup, Donna Hoover, Molly Wangerin, Erma Smith, Sara Harrison, Shelley Clark, Anne Popowski, Saralyn Stroup, Kate Stenberg, Jane Reifel

Jane Reifel was a founding member of the Great Seattle Chapter and was its first secretary, a position she held for three years. She has also served as the chapter historian (two years) and newsletter editor (three years). She sewed several times a month for about five years at Judy Barlup's home studio where there was lots of laughter, fun, and learning.