

How Two Women and a Quilt Fueled a Technological Revolution and a Billion-Dollar Global Industry

Meredith Schroeder, Risk-Taking Entrepreneur, Unleashed a Global Pastime

PADUCAH, KY, UNITED STATES, September 10, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Who knew that a niche industry like machine quilting could generate a market valued at \$ 2.5 billion in 2024? And it is forecasted to reach \$3.8 billion by 2033, according to [verifiedmarketreports.com](https://www.verifiedmarketreports.com). How did quilting go from a low-tech craft comprised of stitches made by hand to a high-tech, machine-driven global industry?

It can all be traced to two women in Kentucky. Back in 1989, Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry entered her quilt Corona II: Solar Eclipse in the American Quilter's Society Quilt Contest in Paducah, Kentucky. She made it on her Bernina 1030 sewing machine. Meredith Schroeder, the founder of the American Quilter's Society, said she'll never forget when the judges chose it as Best of Show at the American Quilter's Society Quilt Show. It was the first time that a machine-quilted entry had ever been considered for the coveted award. As the head of the world's largest quilt membership organization, she knew that it would be a highly controversial decision, but she also knew it was the right decision, as the quilt was a showstopper.

When Caryl received the Best of Show Award, it resonated throughout the entire industry, establishing machine quilting as a legitimate art form. The ingenuity and innovation from one quilt and one woman's brave decision paved the way for millions of machine quilting artists. They unleashed a technological revolution in the manufacturing of sewing machines that continues to reverberate throughout the world.

"Today, the time-honored tradition of quilt making has evolved from its soul of hand quilting to machine quilting with extensive technology. From free-motion quilting on a domestic machine to the stitch regulation and full automated longarm quilting system, quilters pay tribute to each quilt made by completing it with purpose and care. From pioneers like Caryl Bryer in 1989 to the multitude of quilting categories, quilt making has evolved," said Jonathan Karlen, Business Manager at Bernina USA.

Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry's controversial machine-made quilt, Corona II: Solar Eclipse, went on to be voted one of the 100 Best Quilts of the 20th Century. It is now part of the National Quilt Museum Collection in Paducah, Kentucky. It is on display in the magnificent exhibition "A Life in

Color — 50 Years of Art Quilts," which comprises 67 of her quilts on view through October 7th.

The National Quilt Museum is located at 215 Jefferson Street in Paducah, Kentucky, and is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets may be purchased online or upon arrival. Complimentary parking is available onsite. Admission is \$15 for adults, \$13 for seniors (62 and older) and military personnel, \$5 for students, and complimentary for children under 12 accompanied by a paying adult and members. For tickets and additional information, visit quiltmuseum.org or call 270-442-8856.

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About The National Quilt Museum

The National Quilt Museum (NQM) is America's premier Quilt Museum, having received the National Designation by a congressional declaration in 2008. The museum collects and presents the finest work made by today's quilters in America and worldwide. It provides national-class cultural services to diverse communities, both near and far, through exhibitions, educational programs, support of artists, and tourism development. The museum includes multiple galleries and an on-site gift shop.

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The National Quilt Museum

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