

Sulky's 30th Anniversary – Where it all began



This year marks 30 years of [Sulky](#)! We met with Fred and Joyce Drexler, the founding partners, to discuss the history of Sulky and where it all began....



What was your vision for Sulky when you started?

Our vision for Sulky of America when we first began in 1987 was to create a company that would focus on educating consumers and sewing store owners to the joys of Creative Sewing as a fun, interesting and rewarding hobby that they would love to do with our 193 colors of super high quality, silky, shiny, [Sulky 40 wt. Rayon Threads.](#)



The seeds for this educational program were sewn eleven years earlier in 1976 when Joyce first started teaching free-motion embroidery in the sewing store that we owned. Within the first couple of years, as women who took Joyce's class spread the word about how much fun they had in her class, hundreds more flocked to our store to learn this intriguing art form. For most, this led to a life-long passionate pursuit of self expression as a creative hobby.



Before they bought the rights to the name Sulky, their publication was known as Speed Stitch

This was not always the case. I began my career in the Sewing Industry at age 23 in March, 1965 as a Singer Salesman, when the vast majority of women who used a sewing machine did so to save money for the family. However, even then, women were beginning to work in jobs outside their homes in ever increasing numbers.



Joyce Drexler in a Sulky publication

Fast forward to 1969 when I opened my own Singer Sewing Machine Dealership, to 1974 when I met my future wife, Joyce. In 1976 she started teaching in our store and we began to realize that many of these working ladies no longer had the time and/or inclination to sew to save money when they got home. However, they absolutely loved spending their evenings and Saturdays in our store. In 1980 Joyce founded Speed Stitch to teach her methods to store owners and consumers all over the United States and Canada. Finally, in 1987 we partnered with a German thread manufacturer to begin [Sulky of America](#).



Little did we know that what began as a fun-filled, one-day, 6-hour lesson would spawn the Home Embroidery explosion that we have experienced over the last 23 years.

How is that different from what the company has become?

It is interesting to reflect on the difference between what our initial vision for Sulky was compared to what it has become. Our vision for Sulky of America when we first began in 1987 was to create a company that would focus on educating consumers and sewing store owners to the joys of Creative Sewing as a fun, interesting and rewarding hobby that they would love to do with our 193 colors of super high quality,

silky, shiny, [Sulky 40 wt. Rayon Threads.](#)

I believe that by staying true to that vision for the past 30 years we have been able to grow the company far beyond our wildest dreams. Indeed, today in Sewing, Quilting and Craft Stores all over the United States and Canada, and on our website www.sulky.com, millions of Sewers, Quilters and Crafters are able to purchase and enjoy over 4,000 of the highest quality Sulky Products to make their fun, interesting and rewarding hobbies far more enjoyable.



Sulky Solvy back in the day!

The path to get here has been filled with Industry educational milestones including conducting thousands of [Sulky Sew Exciting Seminars](#) in retail stores based on 22 Sulky publications. Sulky has also trained numerous aspiring teachers in the [Sulky Certified Teacher Training program](#), and conducted hands-on “[Embroidery Zen](#)” programs for consumers to learn in-depth how to get the most out of their embroidery machines. We have showcased thousands of works of wearable art during the 10 years of the “Everyone Loves Sulky Challenge”

contest and have made frequent guest appearances on Sulky sponsored PBS [Sewing shows](#).



Currently, Sulky has [6 National Educators](#) teaching five different [“Sew Exciting” seminars](#), which are conducted in retail stores throughout the country. Each year, Sulky educators also teach at more than 25 consumer shows, and Sulky has a very active program that it presents to [Sewing Guilds and Quilting Guilds](#) all across the country.

The digital age...



Fearless Free Motion Stitching taught by Eric Drexler, son of Fred and Joyce

The digital age has ushered in the availability of numerous

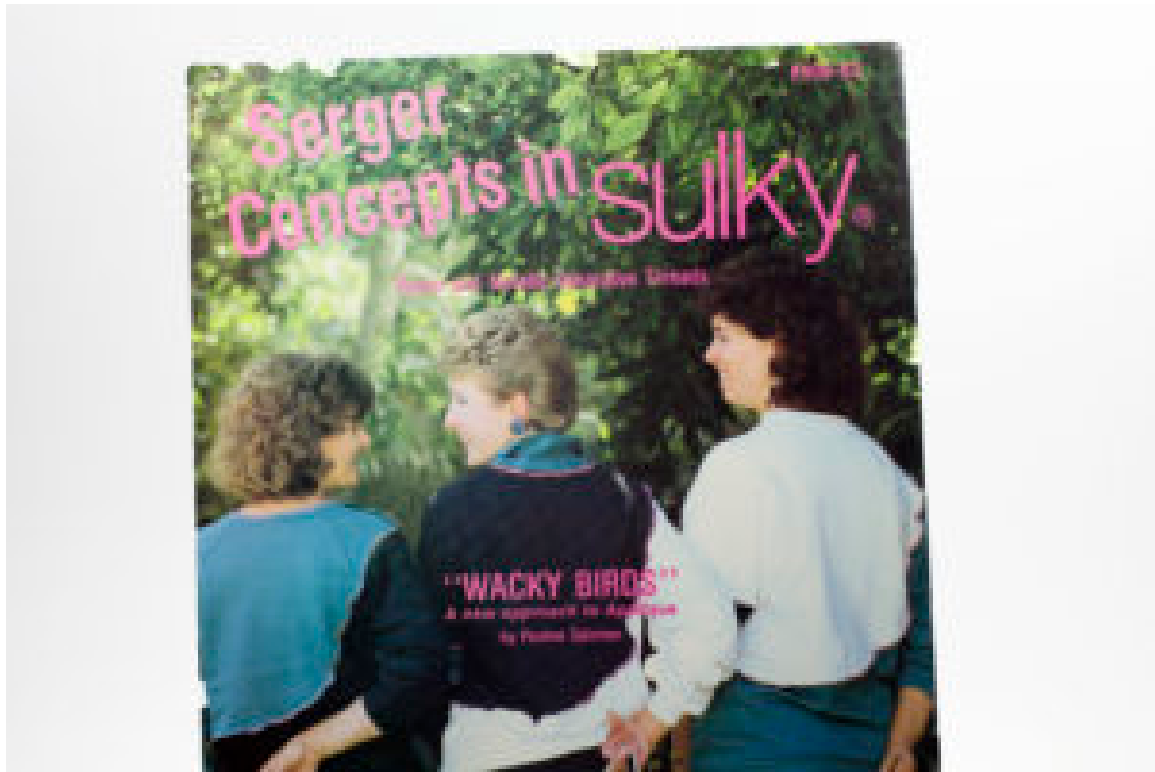
on-line Sulky courses for consumers to broaden their creative knowledge at home, on their own machines, and at their own pace. Free [Sulky Webinars](#) 4 – 6 times per year, along with our involvement on [Twitter](#), [Pinterest](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), and of course, this Blog have helped grow the Sulky community tremendously over the years.

While our vision when we started Sulky of America in 1987 was to grow the company by focusing on education, we never imagined how many rewarding avenues we would be able to open and follow to make this happen.

Do you have a favorite memory from the past 30 years?

I have loads of great memories from the past 30 years but I would like to share one of my favorites today.

A thread manufacturer from Mexico was trying to get Sulky to market his thread a few years ago. After he did a careful study and analysis of both his thread and Sulky thread, he told me, “Fred, you have too much quality in your thread. You don’t need that much quality”. This only reconfirmed my belief that we would always strive to have **“Too Much Quality”**.



Be sure to check out next month's blog on May 30th as we learn more about Sulky's history with Fred and Joyce.