

PEGGY HANNUM'S GORGEOUS RUGS

By Mary Lynne Naples
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Margaret "Peggy" Hannum was born in Lancaster, PA in 1934. Like most young girls who were brought up during the Depression and war years, she learned to sew. At first doll clothes were created from sample fabric books that her grandmother had from her own sewing business. When she entered seventh grade her parents purchased a Singer sewing machine for her and she was expected to make her own clothes. Soon she was knitting as well. Peggy was well on her way to a life filled with fiber.

However, rug hooking did not become an important part of that life until 1976. By this time Peggy was a pastor's wife, a full-time

high school English teacher and a mother to three children living in Milford, MA. All three benefited from their mother's sewing skills while growing up. One advantage of living in Massachusetts during the 60s, 70s and 80s was the proximity to textile mills. This became ever so important once she was introduced to rug hooking.

Many times it is because of a friendship we develop a new interest. In Peggy's case it was her friend Lyn Lovell who showed Peggy the rug she was working on during a ski trip both families took to Killington. The women took an afternoon to visit DORR MILL where Lyn pressed Peggy to give rug

hooking a try. To please Lyn, she purchased a small kit to make a cover for a brick doorstep. She worked the pansy pattern on a small hoop and by the time it was completed Peggy was "hooked".

Lyn shared a catalog from HEIRLOOM

Wildwood
Designed by Louise Zeiser Heirloom Rugs

PATTERNS during that trip and when the families returned home, Peggy ordered her own. She has said that it was like the SEARS catalog at Christmas was to her in her youth. It was a vehicle for dreaming about the rugs to come. She would return each day from teaching and reach for the HEIRLOOM catalog. Knowing that she needed a proper teacher she called the nearby **Essex Agricultural School** where adult education classes were offered. Although they had begun their semester, Peggy was able to contact the rug hooking teacher and arrange for a visit to the classroom. That teacher was Meredith LeBeau. Ultimately Meredith permitted Peggy to join the class and despite early misgivings allowed her to start hooking HEIRLOOM's **Irises 38" x 54"**, designed by Louise Zeiser. Irises are not an easy flower to hook but Peggy was persistent not only because she liked irises so much, but that she desired to have rugs to cover the pine floors in her home. Meredith said, "Then irises it shall be." **Irises** was Peggy's first rug and was completed in 1978.

Peggy admits that when she met Meredith LeBeau, it was "the luckiest find in my life. In addition to hooking, she taught me how to be a good rug hooking teacher."





Meredith was a highly acclaimed McGOWN teacher, having studied under Pearl McGOWN and Jane McGOWN Flynn.

Peggy continued to study with Meredith at Essex for the next 17 years which included many lessons about dyeing. She has remarked that the dyeing is far more fun than the hooking. Perhaps it was an early exposure to chemistry in her father's laboratory. During that time Peggy was able to complete one or two rugs a year for her home.

In 1993 both Peggy and her husband, Bob, retired and accepted an appointment as liaison to Jerusalem for the United Methodist Church. There they worked with Jewish, Muslim and Christian groups for peace with justice. During that two-year stint Peggy did not hook but continued her subscriptions to the McGOWN Newsletter and Rug Hooking Magazine.

Returning to the U.S. in 1995 they settled back in Lancaster. While eager to begin hooking again, Peggy noticed an article about a rug hooking retreat in Fort

Washington, PA run by Mina West. This was to be her first workshop. Peggy contacted Mina to register and explained that she would need help choosing a teacher as her knowledge about teachers was limited. After learning that Meredith had been her teacher, Mina placed Peggy in Nancy Blood's class. Undaunted, Peggy arrived with a 7' x 7' Oriental. Through the years since, Nancy became both friend, mentor and teacher.

Soon after, Peggy started Teachers Workshop and was awarded her McGOWN Teachers' certificate in 1999. She also rekindled

the friendship with Lyn and the two went to MARYLAND SHORES together for the next 18 years, each year in Nancy's class. Peggy said that she was fortunate to have Nancy plan a large rug at workshop each year which would take most of a year to complete. That allowed her to be free to concentrate on helping others with their rugs.

During those same 18 years Peggy taught countless students both hooking and dyeing in her home studio. She met with over



Upper left: *The Grand Cat*

Right: *Chinese Butterflies*
31" x 48" Designed by Jane McGOWN Flynn

November and November Detail
39" x 55" Designed by Jane McGOWN Flynn





fifty students in four separate classes each month. In 2005 those students formed their own McGown Chapter, THE CONESTOGA HOOKING GUILD.

One of those students, Nancy Greene writes, "Peggy Hannum was my first fine shading rug hooking teacher. When I made the decision to attempt to learn this type of rug hooking, I was told Peggy lived somewhat close to me and offered classes in her home. I touched base with her at a Woolwrights Hook-in and she let me know she had a space in her class. What began as a foray into a new art form provided me the opportunity to experience the guidance of an immensely talented, kind and gracious lady. Then, after about six months of going to the class, Peggy announced she was going to retire! Eventually I was able to channel my initial reaction of disappointment to one of appreciation. While it was only for a short time, I was able to be a student of hers. What an honor!

"I am lucky enough to continue to see Peggy at guild meetings and rug hooking groups. Always she has a word of encouragement for my work and if something needs to

Left: Silver Compote
27" x 23" Designed by Charlotte Stratton



Unicorn in Captivity
24" x 36"
Designed by Pearl K. McGown

be addressed it is done as a 'gentle suggestion.' From Peggy not only did I learn techniques for the art of fine shading but witnessed her kindness and compassion for others."

For those who have not had the opportunity to know her, Peggy Hannum is a woman who is just as exquisite as her beautifully hooked pieces.

Not satisfied with helping just these students, Peggy reached out to other hookers through the articles that she wrote for the **McGown Newsletter** and **Rug Hooking Magazine**. Since 1998 Peggy has published over 20 articles, rich in technique and advice. Many contain dye formulas. Meanwhile, she taught workshops in the U.S. and Canada.

Queen Mary
38" x 72" Designed by Jane McGown Flynn





Left: Poppy Seed
29" x 43" Designed by Heirloom Rugs

Right: Ming
56" x 34"
Designed by Charlotte Stratton

William's Cat 23" x 34"
Designed by Margaret Hannum

Round: Istanbul
60" Designed by Pearl K. McGown
Teacher: Nancy Blood

Lower Right: Oak Scrollings
23" x 36" Designed by Jane McGown Flynn



When asked what advice she would most like to pass on there were three things.

- It is most important to give credit on the label for any help we get in the creation of our rug.
- Hook what you want to hook.
- Your scissors are your best friend when hooking a fine cut rug.

About two years ago Peggy and Bob moved to a retirement community and she retired from teaching a second time. That did not slow her own hooking

and dyeing though. Presently, she is experimenting with the painterly style of hooking, working on glorious red and yellow sunflowers! Without a dye kitchen, she uses the garage for everything but the processing which happens in her adjacent kitchen (no steps). She is an active member of the CONESTOGA GUILD and THE WOOLWRIGHTS, ATHA Chapter.



To learn more about Peggy and view many more of her rugs please visit her website at www.peggyhannum.com.

