

Memories of Mary-Dick Digges



Mary-Dick Digges

MARY-DICK DIGGES LOVED embroidery and it was a big part of her life. She was a member of The Embroiderers' Guild of America, Inc. since its formation in the 1960s. She served on the National Finance Committee and was chairman of the Master Craftsman committee on crewel embroidery. In 1973 she was the founding president of the Tidewater Virginia Chapter of EGA and served in that capacity for six years. She taught hundreds of people of all ages to embroider. Mary-Dick was the owner and manager of two needlework shops in the Williamsburg Area. Since 1984 she was involved with studying and teaching traditional Japanese

embroidery and traveled regularly to teach in Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and England. Mary-Dick was instrumental in the establishment of the Japanese Embroidery Center in Atlanta and supported it with her time and resources. Mary-Dick was instrumental in the creation and distribution of books on embroidery; she was the publisher-owner of Embroidery Research Press, Inc. in Roswell, GA. She co-authored the book on the embroidery collection of Lady Evelyn Stewart Murray housed in Blair Castle, Perthshire, Scotland, entitled *Lady Evelyn's Needlework Collection*. On April 28, 2001, 100 friends and family from around the world gathered in Williamsburg to attend a tribute celebration to the life and accomplishments of Mary-Dick Digges. Her work in the world of embroidery touched thousands of people, for under her tutelage many would attain the skills they now hold, and with



Jacobean Crewel Embroidery by Mary-Dick Digges

her visionary zeal thousands of others had the opportunity to study the subject.

Every time she taught a class, she insisted upon excellence – excellence in threads and materials, excellence in tools and accessories, and excellence in technique. Upon examining our work, we could **DEPEND** on her to say, "Now, I know you can do that better. Just do thus-and-so, pull it tighter, stroke it..." Then the next thing we would hear is, "(sigh) Take it out and do it again!" What dreaded (but expected) words they were! Then if we had **NOT** corrected our mistakes, we were likely to hear, "I **TOLD** you to do it the other way!" Or, if we were smart, we examined our work before we showed it to her, probably what she hoped would happen. Such self-examination caused us to grow despite ourselves.

Mary-Dick shared most abundantly with all of her students. She shared her knowledge by being available to answer questions and by demonstrating her skill. She unstintingly shared her resources by allowing us to borrow from her extensive library of books and videos. She shared her love by including us in opportunities to study, many times helping needy students with funds for tuition or travel. She never held back from a student, and traveled all over the world to teach long after she should have stopped for health reasons. Her influence in the world of embroidery has been felt in far-off places. We are extremely grateful and appreciative of the time and effort she put into educating others about embroidery. ❖

Judy Jeroy, a past EGA president, lives in Virginia Beach, VA.

Mary-Dick Digges Scholarship Fund

The Mary-Dick Digges Scholarship Fund was established in April 2001 from contributions made in honor of Mary-Dick Digges' lifelong achievements in and contributions to the art of embroidery.

The funds are used for the awarding of scholarships to EGA members for the study of surface embroidery—that is, crewel embroidery, Japanese embroidery, and stumpwork.

Fees for EGA-sponsored and non-EGA-sponsored classes, as well as kit fees, may be supported by the scholarship.

Those wishing to honor Mary-Dick Digges' lifelong efforts in support of embroidery in America may send donations for the Mary-Dick Digges Scholarship Fund to EGA Headquarters.