

Kathy Goodrich

BY STEPHANIE FINNEGAN

The owner of Market Square has "made-in-America" pride in her shows and in her hardworking team.

Every family has heart-to-heart discussions around their kitchen tables. Many times, the folks struggle to figure out how to pay bills or whether or not to make a crucial house move. For Kathy Goodrich, it was during a conversational pow-wow around her kitchen table that she hatched the idea of her thriving business. Of course, 30 years ago when it was just a notion, Goodrich had no idea if she'd soar or flop. With hard work, determination, and perseverance, she and the Market Square crew have flown, indeed.

The first Market Square show debuted in 1989. Under her stewardship—she is still personally involved in day-to-day operations—her brand has flourished and grown. Celebrating 25 years as a must-attend destination,

the wholesale site is certainly doing something right. "Buyers come to our shows to find something unique that just is not available at the larger gift shows or at warehouses," she says confidently.

One of the hallmarks of the Market Square shows is that Goodrich does not hold them plunk in the middle of a thriving metropolis or a bustling city. Her decision to stage them in a suburban setting rather than a cosmopolitan one is deliberate: "Our hotel rates and restaurants are much cheaper than being in a major city because of that. Buyers from all over the country travel to our February shows looking for American Made and artist-inspired products that do not exhibit at any other trade



Kathy Goodrich, show promoter, owner, and president of Market Square

show. Buyers who come to a Market Square show can find over 150 exhibitors that just can't be seen anywhere else. Also, they have the opportunity to meet the artists who actually create the products."

Market Square does have a deep respect for handmade and handcrafting. In addition to venerating the creative individuals and companies, the show pays a great amount of attention to its attendees—the retailers and shop owners.

"For store owners and buyers, we offer a series of hands-on workshops, educational seminars, and roundtable discussion groups. We are there to help and to assist during our shows. We want to make it a memorable experience."

It is this entwined relationship among show promoter, exhibitors, artisans, and retailers that still gives Goodrich a thrill: "After being in this industry for more than 25 years, the people are still what inspire me the most. It is a sense of family, working together with my team, the exhibitors, and the store owners. We are all working as one to further the success for American artists and designers. That really is, and always has been, my passion." Goodrich has also been able to do good through her show promoting. The events



This Country House display is emblematic of rustic country charm.

have shone the light on a local charity or a regional food bank. Attendees, for example, are requested to bring nonperishable items as donations for the selected helping partnership.

Having been involved in the world of show productions for over 30 years, Goodrich has seen and heard it all. An incident that occurred in 2004 still provides some chuckles and surprises. "First Lady Laura Bush was campaigning for George Bush and they decided to use the expo hall that we were moving into for a campaign rally. Secret Service made us move every car in the parking lot!" After having the entire parking complex cleared, which took more than two hours, there was a single, unidentifiable van left alone. "We could not identify the owner," Goodrich recalls, "so in the end, they towed that van. After several hours, Laura Bush's press secretary went to the parking lot to leave for the day . . . and soon discovered that her van wasn't there!"

Dealing with political luminaries or the customers who make up her database—true VIPs in her world-view—Kathy Goodrich always aims to please!

—Stephanie Finnegan

RIGHT: Longtime exhibitor CTW Home Collection displays a new collection of stylish bags and totes at Market Square. (For more information see ad on page 21)

BELOW: MudWorks Pottery is one of the exhibitors on hand at a Market Square trade show.





FACE THE FACTS

Company: Market Square

Website: www.marketsquashows.com

Telephone: 717-796-2377

Shows Produced: 10 a year

Staff: 5 people, with over 105 combined years with the company

Three Major Market Areas: Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI (Midwest); Royal Plaza Hotel & Trade Center, Marlborough, MA (New England); Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, Oaks, PA (Philadelphia, Valley Forge region)

LEFT: Daniel Lorigan exhibits the hands-on craftsmanship that is evident at the Market Square shows.

BELOW: Briar Patch Apothecary has a quaint and homespun feel to its labels, which is part of its allure.

