

# Sally Melville

Sally Melville was a little girl in Brownies when she picked up a piece of pink yarn and learned to knit a square. These days you will find the Waterloo resident teaching knitting in Greece, or speaking at conferences across North America.

The professional knitter's early passion has taken her all over the world and inspired her to write several books on the ancient craft. While Melville's technical skills are impeccable, it is the heart and soul of knitting - the process, not the product - that motivates her to teach others.



"When you're knitting, you get into this wonderful frame of mind where you are going with the flow. I want the *Knitting Experience* to be simple enough but attractive enough that everybody will want to get into that state of mind; a place where you have no sense of time, where life feels quite magical."

Melville plans to write five books in the *Knitting Experience* series. So far she has written *The Knit Stitch* (2002) and *The Purl Stitch: Becoming Intuitive* (2003). She has also written *Color: The Power and the Glory* (2005) and *Sally Melville Styles* (1998).

Her knitting books have sold more than 100,000 copies and when *The Purl Stitch* came out it became the top-selling craft book in the United States, according to the distributor.

Melville helped start the K-W Knitters' Guild in 1985 and knew that she had tapped into something powerful when 140 people showed up for the first meeting. The guild, which is the largest in Canada, "benefits from her enthusiasm and energy and in large part it bears her stamp," said fellow knitter Debbie New. The guild's Sally Melville Award is handed out each year to the knitter who has most inspired its members.

Melville said that forming the guild was one of the most important developments in her career. The organization established a community which invites teachers in to provide inspiration to local knitters. She was the folk artist-in-residence at the Region's Joseph Schneider Haus in 2003.

She knit her way through high school and university and there was really only one time in her life – two years after the death of her husband – when she could not knit. "I couldn't design because I couldn't see colours and had no energy."

Sally Melville had taught Women in Literature at the University of Waterloo and was teaching study skills, when she was widowed early with two young teenagers. She was then offered a permanent position at the University of Waterloo, but felt it was not the right time for a full-time job. Instead she began researching her first knitting book and eventually wrote a book she would not have written if it weren't for the loss she suffered.

When asked once who she would like to meet in knitting heaven, Melville said, “Eleanor Roosevelt. Not only was she a knitter but she was a rare and precious soul.”

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