

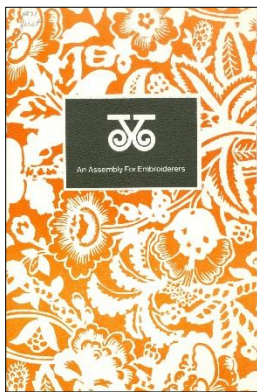


# National Academy of Needlearts

## *A Concise History*

**1969** – [Mildred Davis](#), nationally known needleartist and author of several books on embroidery, is approached by the Valentine Museum in Richmond, VA to help its new Textile Resource and Research Center (TRRC) sponsor “groups of embroiderers for seminars”. For that purpose, Mildred started giving embroidery-related lectures and programs to women’s groups across the southern US, promoting the idea.

**1970** – While in Memphis, Davis meets Mrs. William (Margaret) Morgan, then president of the Mid-South chapter of EGA. Morgan suggested “Assembly of Embroiderers” as the title of the seminar, which was endorsed by the TRRC. Planning began that fall, with Morgan as the first Chair of the Assembly.



**1971** – The first Assembly for Embroiderers is held at the Jefferson Hotel in Richmond. This was largely a seminar for stitchers. Davis’ “teacher discussion group” was one choice offered; it was dedicated to discussing communication between teacher and student.

**1973** – With Assembly number three, a “Teacher Clinic” is offered; it was the beginning of the TRRC teacher training program that later evolved into [NAN’s Teachers’ Certification program](#).

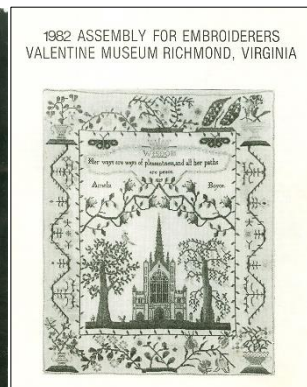
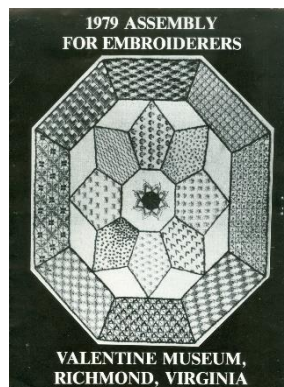
**1976** – For the first time, a Teacher Certification workshop is held prior to Assembly classes.

**1977** – The TRRC establishes its [Honors program](#).

**1979** – The first Honors presentations are given as part of Assembly.

**1980** – With so many students in the Teachers’ Certification program, Counselors - graduates of the program who counsel, mentor, and advise - were added to help with their questions and needs.

**1984** – [Kathleen Mackie](#) offers a mini workshop on judging at Assembly.





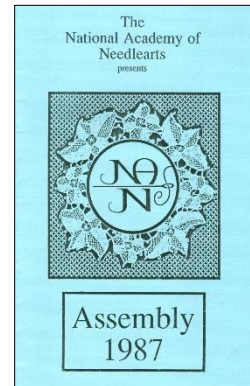
**1985** – This was the last Assembly sponsored by the Valentine Museum as its objectives had diverged from the embroidery certification programs established more than a decade earlier and they wanted to focus resources elsewhere.

[Joyce Lukomski](#), [Betsy Robb](#), [Fay Andrews](#) and [Peg LaFlam](#) establish the **National Academy of Needlearts (NAN)** to run the programs previously supported by the Valentine. Peg Laflam designs the NAN pin to replace the Valentine pin, and it is still in use today.

**1986** – The first [NAN Assembly](#) is held at the John Marshall Hotel in Richmond. In 1988 Assembly moved to Williamsburg to the Ft. Magruder Hotel, then to the Patrick Henry in 1989.

The [NAN Judges' Certification Program](#) is unveiled at Assembly with a full workshop by Kathleen Mackie.

The first issue of NAN's quarterly newsletter is published. The original title of the publication was *Anthology*, but is changed to [NANthology](#) in 1992.



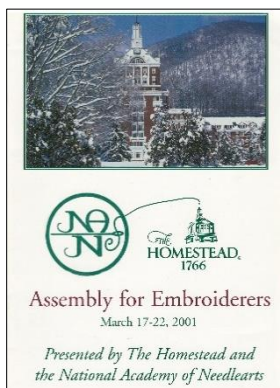
**1990** – [Jody Adams](#) is approached by a former director of Callaway Gardens who had moved to The Greenbrier in West Virginia. He was seeking business for the resort's low (i.e., not golf) season; The Greenbrier became home to NAN Assembly through 1998.

**1992** – Initiated by [Dolores Andrew](#), then Director of Judges' Certification, NAN establishes a judged exhibition held in conjunction with Assembly.

**1994** – The [NAN Permanent Collection](#) is moved from the Valentine to the [Gregg Museum of Art and Design at North Carolina State University](#).

**1995** – [Sue Dawson](#), Director of Judges' Certification and Administrator of the exhibition held with Assembly, names the exhibition *The Exemplary*.

The prestigious [NAN Lifetime Achievement Award](#) is established. The first recipients were [Louise Downing](#) and Betsy Robb.



**2001** – NAN Assembly is invited to move its operations to the Homestead Resort in Hot Springs, VA.

**2002-2009** – NAN Assembly moves to Kansas City, MO, to the Fairmont Hotel. This move was spearheaded by [Connie Lynn Borserine](#).

**2002** – NAN establishes its [Master Judge Program](#).

**2005** – NAN establishes its [Teacher cum Laude program](#).

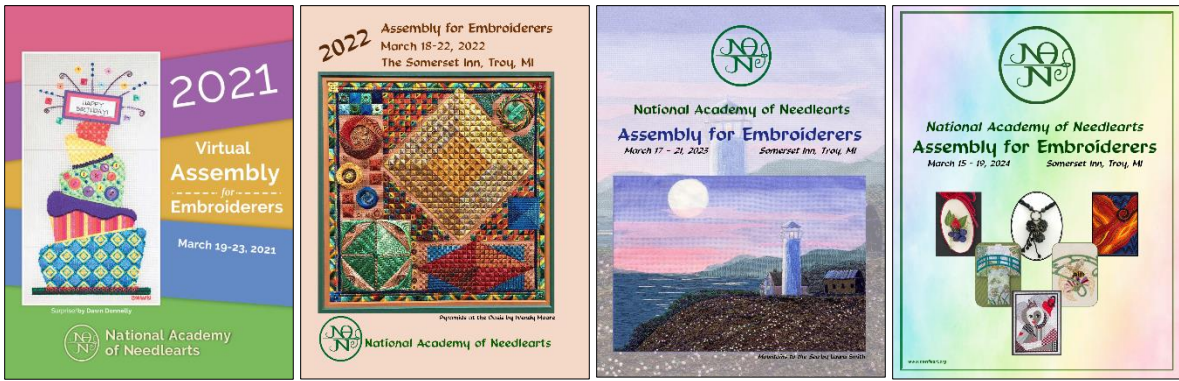
**2010-2011** – NAN Assembly is held at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs CO. This move was spearheaded by [Caela Tyler](#).

**2013** – NAN Assembly moves to the Somerset Inn in Troy, MI, a move initiated by [Gail Sirna](#) and [Shay Pendray](#). As of 2024, NAN Assembly continues to meet at this venue.

**2020** – NAN Assembly is cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**2021** – NAN Assembly and *The Exemplary* are held online, again due to the pandemic.





Additions and corrections to this timeline are encouraged.  
Please email them to [webmaster@needleart.org](mailto:webmaster@needleart.org).