



# For Keeps

VOLUME TWENTY-TWO | ISSUE ONE | SPRING 2023

50  
EST  
1973



GIVE A CHEER  
FOR 50 YEARS!

STUDIO ORNAMENT  
SNEAK PEEK

HOW A FEW ARTISTS  
GOT THEIR START





## 50 years old and just getting started

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It all began with a what-if moment. What if we could create ornaments that would bring people together around their Christmas trees every single year, connecting them with love, laughter and shared memories? In 1973, we launched our little what-if idea with the first collection of what would soon become Keepsake Ornaments. They were classic in their design, beautifully crafted and festive. And they were just the start of a tradition that's lasted half a century.

Keeping our history in mind, we decided to kick off our 50th year with another question: Now what? Well, the answer is quite simple. We're going to make ornaments that celebrate all of life's moments. We're going to make ornaments more innovative and more sustainable. Most of all, we're going to make it an amazing year for you, our Keepsake Ornament Club members. Keep your eyes open throughout the year for fun, engaging content, including a dedicated website. Watch for some very special ornament releases, exclusive online events and giveaways.

In other words, prepare for a year of celebration like you've never seen. Because, truth be told, without the support of our Keepsake Ornament Club community, there wouldn't be 50 years to celebrate. We might make the ornaments, but it's your love for what we make and the memories you connect with them that got us here. We believe our greatest what-if moments are still ahead of us. And we can't wait to get started.

► Learn how we're celebrating at  
[Hallmark.com/Keepsake50th](https://Hallmark.com/Keepsake50th)

# Getting to know your Keepsake artists

Discover how these four featured artists found their way to the Keepsake Village.



ORVILLE WILSON

## *From marketer to maker*

Orville Wilson knew he'd work at Hallmark from a very young age.

"When I was little, I was always drawing. I even won a few contests at school. My mother always said I would work at Hallmark one day."

As we all know, Mom knows best, and Orville found his way to the marketing department at Hallmark in 2016, where he spent much of his time designing the *Dream Book*.

It was not long after that Orville's manager said there was an opening in the Keepsake Village.

"I jumped at the opportunity," he says. "I had spent my free time learning to create 3D designs. So I scrambled to pull them all together and even re-rendered a bunch of them to create a portfolio."

That portfolio that got him an interview—and onto the team.



ANITA MARRA ROGERS

## *Sculpting her own path*

"Growing up in Kansas City, I always wanted to work for Hallmark," Anita Marra Rogers says. "Unfortunately, I wasn't good enough at two-dimensional artwork to get in the door."

That's hard to believe, coming from someone who's in her 38th year in the Keepsake Studio.

"But luckily, I met Peter Dutkin, a Keepsake artist at the time. And he looked at my work and told me I had talent."

He showed her around the department, and that's when she spotted a few of the artists sculpting ornament designs.

"It looked like so much fun! I just knew I had to try my hand at it."

With a little encouragement, Anita had found her calling. She assembled a new portfolio filled with 3D artwork. And that's how we ended up with more than 600 of Anita's designs.

### *Imagination over expectation*

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Becoming a Keepsake artist came as a total surprise to Allie Robillard. As a child, she imagined working with animals.

"I always thought I would be a veterinarian when I grew up. Which is hilarious because I'm just not great actually being around animals. I guess I just love the idea of them," Allie says.

It turns out Allie's imagination would be the key to her success.

"Ever since I was a kid, my imagination is the thing I've depended on most," she says. "I was constantly drawing up my own new worlds."

Thankfully, her creative spirit never went away. Instead of following her childhood dream of becoming a vet, she went to art school.

"I specialized in illustration and animation, which led me to the ornament teams at Hallmark."



**ALLIE ROBILLARD**

### *The best Halloween treat ever*

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For as long as he can remember, Matt Johnson has always been interested in art. The older he got, the more he became fascinated by design and architecture.

"I didn't really begin taking formal art classes until I graduated high school," he tells us. "I used to visit my older brother, who is an artist and works in the film industry, while he was in school. Seeing the classes he was taking had a big impact on me."

Following in his brother's footsteps and attending art school led to a job designing for a toy company on the East Coast. But he longed to return to Kansas City. It was after returning home that, on one fateful Halloween night, Matt made a connection with a neighbor working at Hallmark who introduced him to recruiters.

More than 10 years later, Matt's still putting his design skills and imagination to work. Talk about a Halloween treat you'll never forget!



**MATT JOHNSON**

## A ho-ho-whole lot of help

Read how every artist in the Keepsake Village contributed to this year's Santa's Workbench studio ornament.



As part of our big 50th anniversary celebration, the Keepsake Village has been hard at work collaborating to create a very special studio ornament, Santa's Workbench, shown above.

As you know, these studio-created ornaments are a team effort. With the merging of so many details and artistic styles, along with the number of design decisions to be made, these studio pieces take time to develop. This one, for example, was started in July of 2021 when Tom Best created the initial concept.

Anita Marra Rogers, the lead artist for the piece, was responsible for taking the idea and determining which elements would be designed by which artist based on their specialties.

"Each artist in the Keepsake Studio had a part in it, so I wanted to make sure a little of everyone's personality or styling came through," she tells us. From traditional sculptors to artists who create computer renderings, Anita wanted to bring together all the aspects of the studio.

Hearing her talk about the process might make your head spin. But, thankfully, she had Art Director Kurt Gaulke to help determine how each part of the ornament's intricate design could work together in harmony.

"After the concept was chosen," Anita says, "Robert Hurlburt crafted the structure of the whole thing, and Tracy Larsen was assigned to sculpt Santa in the same styling he has used for past club-exclusive ornaments."

Tom Best chimed in to say that "the basic idea of Santa at his workshop drafting table came from Kurt, our art director, along with Jim Tronoski."

And if you're thinking the idea seems like the perfect fit for a 50th anniversary piece, you'd be right. The assortment of toys and ornaments displayed across his desk were all meticulously designed by artists throughout the studio.

"Every item at his drafting table is a nod to past ornaments throughout Keepsake Ornament history," Tom adds.

While discussing this undertaking, Anita let us in on a sneak peek you won't want to miss.

"On top of Santa's desk, you'll find some drawings he's been working on for future products," she says.

That's right. You won't just have an amazing ornament created by the entire Keepsake Studio, you'll also get a glimpse of ornaments yet to come.

# A true labor of love

Joanne Wright shares the inspiration behind  
#6 in the Christmas Angels series.

The one question people always have for Keepsake artists is how they come up with the ideas for their ornaments. And you'll find that no two answers are the same. Some artists are inspired by hobbies, trends or nature. Others simply dig deep into their imaginations. For Joanne Wright, inspiration for the latest ornament in her Christmas Angels series came from a beloved family member.

**“My daughter-in-law Jill is beautiful and full of grace, so that is why I thought she'd be the perfect model.”**

Joanne mentioned how excited her daughter-in-law was about the prospect. Who wouldn't be?

“She was so thrilled when I asked her if she would pose for me,” Joanne continues. “She even helped me brainstorm around the story that the finished ornament would bring.”

The sixth ornament in her Christmas Angels series, which will be available for purchase at Ornament Premiere in July, is as elegant as it is endearing. Working with her editor, Lindsay Evans, Joanne chose to have the angel holding a poinsettia.

“Poinsettias symbolize the Christmas season and the miracles it celebrates,” Joanne says. “They also mean joy, cheer and success, which all represent Jill.”

Her process always begins with sketches, drawings and working with her model to ensure the proportions and gestures feel perfect. That's when the sculpting begins—using a proprietary wax created here at Hallmark. Once the sculpted piece is approved and molded, she begins to paint and add attachments.

One such addition to this ornament was the message “Christmas is a season of love and good cheer” on the bottom of the ornament. We couldn't think of a better sentiment to add to such a beautiful story.



# The stuff dreams are made of

See your exclusive Dream Box ornaments.

Your Dream Box will be arriving before you know it. And for our 50th anniversary, we're going all out!

Just take a look at these three exclusive ornaments that will be included. The Santa ornament comes with a tiny yarn ornament he can hold—which is a nod to some of our very first Keepsake Ornaments.

The treasure chest ornament is filled with replicas of ornaments past, which is a beautiful reminder

of the joy we all experience unpacking our decorations each Christmas. There is even extra space to perfectly fit the miniature bird ornament you'll be receiving in the Dream Box.

While that's all we can share for now, keep your eyes open for more Dream Box sneak peeks as we get closer to its exciting release!



Behind the scenes of your 2023 *Dream Book*.

We know you're all excited to get your hands on the newest *Dream Book*. A team of photographers, designers, stylists, art directors, writers, editors, and so many others have been hard at work for the past several months planning it, writing it and getting it ready to print. Filled with more than 70

unique photographs, the *Dream Book* is sure to bring a smile to your face and give you the cozy feeling of being at home creating memories with the ones you love. Take a look at the images below to get an idea of the work it takes to bring your *Dream Book* to life.



## Save the date

**Dream Box** | Begins shipping in April

**Ornament Premiere** | July 15–23, Early Shopping July 14

**50th Anniversary In-Store Celebration** | July 15

**Ornament Debut** | October 14–22, Early Shopping October 13

**Member-Exclusive 50th Anniversary Virtual Event** | August 2023