



Karen Thompson, Founder, Cotton Company

By Taylor Jackson

Karen Thompson, a longtime local business owner, began her journey in 1988 when she opened her first store, Lace Silhouettes Lingerie. Today, she has grown that business to six retail brands brought to life across nine stores in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. One of her iconic retail brands, Cotton Company, is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. The clothing store has grown to be known for its multigenerational shopping and expert stylists. There are currently two Cotton Company stores located in Bucks County, PA and Cape May, NJ. Thompson sat down with me to reflect on the beloved brand's 30-year journey.

When and where did you open your first Cotton Company store?

I opened my first Cotton Company store in

Local Business, Cotton Company Celebrates 30 Years

Peddler's Village in the fall of 1993. I remember I was 8 months pregnant at the time with my second son, Colin. My first son, Kerry, was only 12 months old, too. It was a crazy, but fun time! I kept thinking to myself "I can do this...I have a great team...and the support of my husband, Dave."

Why did you decide to open Cotton Company?

I noticed that many guests were looking for cotton pajamas at my other store, Lace Silhouettes Lingerie, which at the time, had been open in Peddler's Village for three and a half years. I was inspired by my guests to open a store that sold all things cotton.

How long after your first Cotton Company store in Peddler's Village did you open your second location in Cape May, NJ?

I opened my second Cotton Company location in Cape May four years later in 1997. The store actually started as a shop inside Congress Hall prior to its restoration. Fun fact: the store's entrance was

where the famous Blue Pig Tavern is today. Eventually, I moved the store to the Washington Street Mall where it remains today.

How has Cotton Company evolved over the last 30 years?

It has been quite the transition over the years. I first started with anything cotton—pajamas, towels, sheets, clothing and gifts. I soon realized that clothing was what our guests were responding to most, and so I focused the re-branding there. I contribute most of the change and direction to my talented team of retailers—my stylists, managers and buyers. My team really listens to what our guests want, and we always try to make it happen.

What has been your favorite part of the journey?

30 years has gone by so quickly...I have loved having Cotton Company. It has contributed to so many fashion shows, fund-raising events, local town traditions and girlfriend shopping days! We have been known and voted the best clothing store in the region both in Peddler's Village and Cape May. Our guests love the store and the personal, knowledgeable service that you can't find anywhere else. My favorite part of the journey, simply put, is following it with my team and every guest who walks in the door.

Do you have any exciting future plans for Cotton Company?



The outside of Cotton Company after the blizzard of 1996

We continue to look at locations to expand. We love towns that our guests love to vacation in! So hopefully Key West, Florida—someday! Unless, of course, you'd like to make a suggestion.



Cotton Company today, 2023



Karen Thompson getting ready for Apple Festival in Peddler's Village in November 1995

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