

## MLH Lecture Series

Wednesday February 9, 2022 at 7pm

Karen Donde presents *“The Fascinating Life of Mary Meigs Atwater”*

Widely regarded as the unofficial dean of American handweaving, Mary Meigs Atwater, 1878-1956, did not start weaving until she was 40. Even then, she was not driven by a passion for making cloth. Her interests were more pragmatic. Inspired by handweaving industries in Berea, KY, and others in the South, she saw weaving as a way to help the women of her remote Montana mining community become more productive, as an occupational therapy tool for injured soldiers returning from World War I and as a means of supporting her family after the death of her husband. Beyond weaving, she was an artist, designer, world traveler, adventurer, writer, patriot, political activist, wife, mother and avid fisherman. Karen has long been a fan of Mary’s courage, adventurous spirit, keen observations and contributions to modern American handweaving. She will share some of her favorite stories and quotes from Mary’s autobiography and books.

**Bio:** Karen Donde weaves garments, fashion accessories and home textiles for sale and teaches beginning-advanced weaving classes and assorted workshops for guilds and conferences. Teaching credits include HGA’s Convergence 2012, 2014 and 2016 and 2020, Southeast Fiber Forum, the Mid-Atlantic Fiber Association’s Workshop Weekend, Midwest Weavers Conference, Intermountain Weavers Guild Conference and Florida Tropical Weavers Conference. In Asheville, NC, she has taught at Sutherland Handweaving Studio, Friends & Fiberworks and Local Cloth.

Karen is a juried member of the Southern Highland Craft Guild and graduated in May 2013 from Haywood Community College’s Professional Crafts-Fiber program. An experienced and award-winning writer with a bachelor of journalism degree from the University of Missouri, Donde now writes for and about weavers. She is a contributor to *Handwoven* magazine and other allied publications.



Mary Meigs Atwater at her loom from the book *“Weaving a Life”* used with permission of the author Mary Jo Reiter



Karen Donde