

# ROOTS: 1994 Set Stage For Hosiery Future

## Was it just 10 years ago?

Global trade agreements, a fiery issue in the 2004 campaigns, had its first shot in 1994 when The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect on January 1 of that year. Ten months later, manufacturing was beginning to trickle into Mexico.

There were other changes that would have an impact on the hosiery industry.

Casual Friday with its relaxed dress code was adopted by thousands of businesses across the United States. Sales of pantyhose immediately



reflected the new lifestyle with dramatic decreases.

Still it was prosperous time for socks producers as brands proliferated and fashion innovations pushed shipments to all-time highs. Real time tech-

nologies were acquired and modernization of knitting operations was in full swing.

Entrepreneurs were announcing start-ups, including Darrell Houston of Houston



Hosiery. The four-years old Hosiery Technology Center was fielding demands for training and help with wastewater problems. Overall, life was good for the estimated 350 U.S. companies.

The Carolina Hosiery Assn. was gearing up for another year with a \$150,000 budget, including dues from 250 mills and suppliers, some \$50,000 in sponsorships, and revenue from major functions that included the annual meeting, Focus marketing conference, Strategic



Planning Retreats, Celebrate Hosiery events for over 1,000 participants, and the Piedmont Fall Dinner Meeting.

Paul Lavitt Mills unveiled the Spring '95 line for 'Round the Clock socks--garden paisley, mini mesh, daisy chain, etc. etc. Other mills were pushing fashions to women turning to wardrobes for casual Fridays.



The Olympics was the theme for the fall dinner meeting which