

# Socks that Tell a Story

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Socks are much more than a highly functional wardrobe essential. They are a canvas where you can showcase your personality, style, what you love, and what you believe in.

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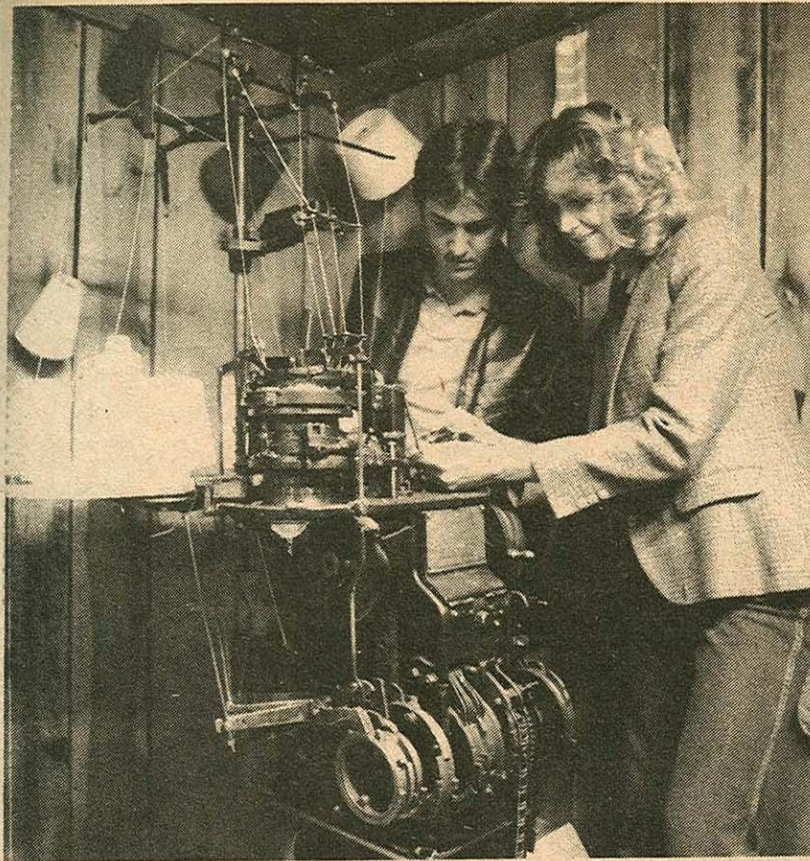
Argyle. Grumpy Cat. Coffee. Polka dots. Bacon.  
**Notre Dame.**



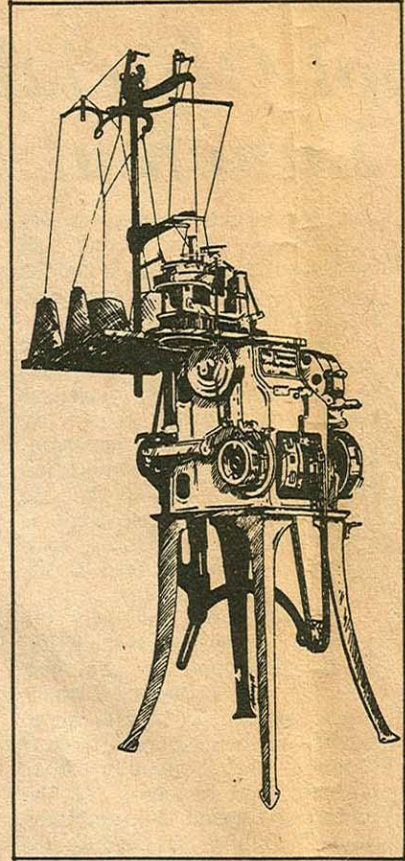
**FBF Originals**, a brand you can find on the tags of many Notre Dame socks, is a successful global manufacturer that helps individuals tell their story. They operate in a 225,000 sq. ft. state of the art facility and distribute their products all over the world. But how they got there is story about overcoming some of life's greatest challenges.

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Sharon Rivenbark was a single mother of 5 children and a school teacher. In 1984, she received devastating news: at the age of 16, her son, Timothy Scott Magnuson, was diagnosed with a brain tumor. After surgery, Sharon was informed that his abilities would diminish over time. Sharon was determined to provide Tim with a safe, secure occupation that would give him a sense of ownership and pride. She purchased an antique knitting machine, and opened the doors to the first For Bare Feet (FBF) sock shop in Nashville, Indiana on April 1, 1984.



**BANNER KNITTER** — Sharon Rivenbark, right, and her son and partner, Tim Magnuson, co-owners of the For Bare Feet shop in the Antique Alley at Nashville, make a pair of socks on the antique Banner Knitting machine the business uses.



**Antique  
Banner Knitting  
Machine**

Tourists visiting Brown County were captivated by the sock machine. One visitor took a particular interest in the socks – Marcie Davis, Indiana University Director of Retail. She requested that Sharon and Tim make FBF socks for the IU Bookstore, and invited Sharon to her first trade show to sell her socks to other colleges and universities. As orders started coming in from colleges nationwide, Sharon and Tim quickly outgrew the little sock shop.

Sadly, Tim passed away in 1987 after a long, hard battle. On the FBF Originals website, the family wrote: “He never lost his sense of humor and ability to laugh while teaching us how to live with dignity, style, and to never give up.”

Sharon and her daughter, Kelly, persevered. They continued to attend apparel, gift and college bookstore trade shows to grow the business, and rented a small warehouse to meet the increasing demand. FBF outgrew the space in 3 months. The company found its permanent home in a larger facility in Brown County and continued to flourish. Kelly successfully procured licenses for the NFL, MLB, NBA NHL, and many colleges/universities including [University of Notre Dame](#). Several family members joined the company in management positions to

help drive the business: Sharon's son-in-law, Dave Baugh; son-in-law, Karl Mills; daughter, Mandy, and her husband, Alan Zellmer; and daughter, Tina, and her husband, Randy Bode.

On the afternoon of September 10, 2011, an air compressor housed on the outside of the FBF facility caught on fire. Flames quickly engulfed the building, traveling through air compression tubes that fed the knitting machines. Manufacturing and finishing equipment, raw materials, and inventory were completely destroyed.



The following Monday, Sharon, Mandy, Tina and Kelly met the entire staff in the parking lot. Instead of focusing on the devastation, they reassured the staff that their jobs were safe and FBF would pull through. Exactly two months later, FBF Originals moved into its current location – a state of the art facility with 225,000 sq. ft. Every employee was able to continue working for the company after the move.





“Ultimately, FBF Originals was a company started on the foundation of a mother’s love for her son and her family. With that love, it has blossomed into a prosperous global company,” the FBF website states. “Even though FBF has moved and is no longer in its founding location, it has brought all the memories and history with it and will continue to honor the legacy of Timothy Scott Magnuson.”

FBF Originals socks are available at [Hammes Notre Dame Bookstore](#) and other major retailers.