



Quilting Connects the Generations

Timeless Stitches – Quilt Capital of Kansas

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Quilting is an activity that can be enjoyed by any age group. I taught my daughters, my granddaughters, and, yes, even a grandson to make quilts. Of course, when the grandson was old enough to drive a tractor, that was the end of his quilting. But he does have an appreciation for what goes into making a quilt.

I have several customers who shop with daughters, granddaughters, or grandsons for quilting supplies.

They enjoy each other's company, perhaps have lunch together, and in general have a day out together. Then they share the shopping experience, helping each other choose the fabric for their next projects.

Another way quilting connects multiple generations is when a quilter makes a quilt for a family member. I can't count how many t-shirt quilts we have quilted that were to be graduation or birthday gifts for the quilter's son or daughter, grandson or granddaughter. My own grandchildren have received a quilt from me when they graduate from high school. My younger sister graduated from K-State in 1976, so we (my mother, my older sister, and I) made her a bicentennial quilt for her graduation.

Then there are wedding quilts. Once upon a time every bride was expected to bring at least one quilt to the new household. Sometimes she pieced the top and then the mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and cousins got together to quilt it. Now it seems more common for a mother, aunt, or grandmother to make a quilt for the happy couple. I made an autograph quilt for my granddaughter and her husband. I planned for it to be a surprise and that was the hardest part of making the quilt. From now on if I make a wedding quilt, it will not be a surprise. For one thing it is nice to have their input regarding colors, etc. I was pleased to have the opportunity to quilt a wedding quilt for the daughter of my daughter's childhood best friend! Her grandmother made the top and family members wrote advice on squares of fabric used to make the quilt.

And the baby quilts! Grandmothers and Great-Grandmothers love to make a quilt for the new family member whether it is the first grandchild or the tenth one. My mother made a hand-quilted baby quilt for each of her grandchildren. My daughter let me know that it was expected that I would continue that tradition, so I made eight hand-quilted baby quilts through the years. Same daughter strongly suggested that I also make hand-quilted baby quilts for my niece's children since that niece was my goddaughter. That's three more hand-quilted baby quilts. I didn't have time to make baby quilts for all the nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews as they came along. Instead, a few years ago I started passing down a quilt to each of them. That eventually became my go to wedding gift. I'm very pleased that they all seem to be most appreciative of the quilts and I'm sure that they are pleased to have something to remember me by.

A tradition I started was "New Daddy" quilts. When there is a new baby in the family, a lot of attention is focused on the babe and the new mama; daddy often doesn't get much attention. I make sure that each new

daddy in the family gets a “New Daddy” quilt when his first child is born. After all, he surely gets his turn at rocking an unhappy baby in the middle of the night and now has his own quilt to wrap up in as he cares for the baby.

There are just so many ways that quilts connect generations. I know my great-grandmother through the tiny stitches she put into the hand-quilted quilts that I have that were made by her skillful hands. I have memories of adding some quilting stitches to quilts that my grandmother and my mother made. And there are unfinished quilts that women have left behind and their daughters, granddaughters or nieces choose to finish. Those projects really connect generations!

Remember the 51st Maple Leaf Quilt Show is October 21 and 22 at the Intermediate School. Hope you can come!