



## Seamstress vs. Quilter

Timeless Stitches – Quilt Capital of Kansas

Liz Granberg-Jerome

Unlike Sharon who grew up both as a seamstress and a quilter, I was raised in an extended family of seamstresses who made primarily clothing and household items, rather than quilts. Other than an occasion special project like embroidered pillowcases or a crocheted doily, nearly all of our creations were related to clothing. As I came into quilting later in life, it is interesting for me to reflect on the differences from a new point of view.

My focus for 50-plus years was making clothes. I made my own clothes, dresses for my mom and niece, a Pendelton wool shirt for a boyfriend with every single stripe and plaid matching, a strapless prom dress with boning to help keep the shape, and at least two wedding gowns I can recall. There were countless children's outfits, most simple play clothes and a few very special with English smocking or other embellishments. While these all provided a basis of sewing knowledge, none of these truly prepared me for the conversion to quilting in 2006.

I loved shopping for fabrics when I made clothing. There were so many different fabrics available in the fashion fabric stores of decades past. I loved working with corduroy, satin, crepe, eyelet, and more. The thought of only using cottons never even occurred to me. I was adept even before Home Economics classes in 7<sup>th</sup> grade with sewing the curves in princess line bodices, stitching in zippers, and even easing sleeves to be full without any gathers showing. I prided myself on my ability to make nearly anything and even made more than a few commissioned garments. As my granddaughter approached her first day of kindergarten, I planned to make her a darling jumper, top, and leggings; however, that day never came. I had truly burned out on sewing clothes to the point I sent that same fabric and pattern, still uncut, to my cousin for her young granddaughters when my granddaughter graduated from high school. It was time to bless and release that project to someone who might actually make it!

The first quilt I saw made was when my mother decided to make a crib quilt for my first-born. She paired plain colored squares with hand embroidered alphabet motifs on them with gingham squares sewn together in a simple patchwork. She used a thermal blanket instead of batting inside and cut the backing large enough to wrap around to create a self-binding. That particular quilt has literally been loved to



death and its remnants remain in my daughter's cedar chest as a precious treasure. Mom went on to make similar quilts for my son and younger daughter, as well as for my first-born grandson, as well as a couple of doll quilts for the first great-granddaughters.

After Mom died in 2006, I stayed on in California with my 90+ year old father. My sister-in-law and a friend both told me I needed a hobby to stay busy with while being at home with him in case I was needed. Both were already quilters and convinced me I should take it up myself. I had purchased a sewing/embroidery machine and was embarking on a new path in my sewing journey that just happened to dovetail nicely with quilting. With a little practice, I learned quickly how to switch from a 5/8" seam from making clothes to the 1/4" seam of quilting. I learned the names of the units I wanted to use in my new projects and began collecting fabrics on various shop hops that took me to a variety of quilt shops. Since those early days, starting in 2006, I have since made easily 200+ quilts, quilted most of those for myself as well as close to 100 for customers, and have even begun designing quilts myself to create unique projects of my own.

The transition from seamstress to quilter was easy once I started seeing all of the wonderful options and techniques out in the world to pick from. I still on occasion think about making a jacket or something for the grandkids, but then remember that I really did burn out and instead go back to making them a quilt. They won't ever outgrow a quilt! At least I hope not!