

My Quilting Bio

Nancy Sharp

I was born and raised in Gary, Indiana. My parents – Eva Johanson and Erik Johanson (same surname) – both emigrated from Sweden as adults. My dad came to America when 25 years old and my mom came when she was 18. They met at a Swedish dance in Chicago; married and settled in Gary, Indiana, where my dad was a carpenter at Gary's US Steel plant. I have always been very proud of my Swedish heritage. At Christmas time, my house is full of all my Swedish decorations, including my full collection of Santa Lucia figures (35), Tomte-gubbar, and Dalahastar.

My husband, Carl, and I met in Chicago. We married and moved to Washington, DC when he was promoted in his job at Food and Drug Administration in 1965. We've been here 56 years !!

As I had already begun to do advocacy work in nephrology (dialysis and transplant) nursing, I was excited to move to Washington, DC to live near the center of power dealing with legislative and regulatory issues in the field of nephrology. But, I so missed my beloved Chicago !!

Our family expands:

We lived on MacArthur Blvd in Washington, DC for the first five years, then bought a house and moved to Bethesda where we lived for 41 years. I became Supervisor of the Clinical Study Unit (nephrology and endocrinology patients) at Georgetown University Hospital. This was 1965 when dialysis was still experimental. All the RNs were pioneers in the specialty of nephrology nursing – again, 56 years ago !!

Kristine and Katherine were born while I worked at Georgetown. Both became very accomplished young women. Kathy has a PhD in public health and is Director of Graduate Studies, School of Public Health, University of Maryland, College Park. Kristine has a Masters in User Experience and Visual Design and works at the Multiple Sclerosis Society office in Denver, Colorado – AND is the mother of my twin grandchildren, Kate and Clint.

Three phases of my professional nursing career:

In Phase I – Clinical Phase (1962-1982) – I was very involved in nephrology nursing; working at Georgetown's Clinical Study Unit; working for State of Maryland as Medicare Surveyor for all dialysis and transplant units in Maryland and in Washington, DC; and National President of American Nephrology Nurses Association.

In Phase II – Political Phase (1982-1997) – I increased my advocacy work via the national nursing organizations by expanding the Amer. Nephrology Nurses Assn's (ANNA) advocacy and public policy work via a large renal coalition. Launched and directed the "Nurse in Washington Internship," a 6-day immersion study, inviting all specialty nurses to Washington, DC to demystify the legislative process. Was Founding Executive Director of American College of Nurse Practitioners (ACNP) in 1993, creating a national coalition-style association for NPs focused solely on health policy.

Finally, in Phase III – Digital Phase (1997-2007) – I was spurred on by the cataclysmic growth of the Internet in 1995 and two landmark legislative markers – "Telecommunications Act of 1996" and the "Comprehensive Telehealth Act of 1997." I focused my energy on promoting telecom technologies for

professional continuing education and telehealth applications, urging clinicians to merge their work environments with their personal electronic practices.

Finally, retirement and quilting:

After a 45 year professional career, I became fully retired in 2007 – but kicking and screaming, because I loved my advocacy work. I was desperate for something to do, and seriously looking for a “hobby” when a friend suggested I take some creative beading classes. I did that, loved it, and stayed with beading for almost two years. When I asked the teacher what else she had taught, she named quilting among her other skills. Quilting !?!?! Wonder if I should try quilting.

The very next day I visited Capital Quilts in Gaithersburg. I entered the shop and found shelves and shelves of glorious colored quilting fabrics, several versions of electronic sewing machines, and – most important – classes for beginners. As a beginner, I took classes, participated in retreats and quilt shows. Also, in the beginning, I made about 10 bed quilts, but then became enthusiastic about making smaller art quilts for the walls, and smaller lap quilts for charity donations.

At my condo in Leisure World in Silver Spring, I hang a different small art quilt on my condo door every few weeks. My neighbors tell me they love my changing art quilt show, so I will continue to do this.

I am currently a member of NeedleChasers, Nimble Fingers, SAQA, MQG, AQS, and two mini-groups originating out of Nimble Fingers guild. I love participating in workshops – including those of quilting “rock stars” such as Kaffe Fassett, Alex Anderson and Ricky Tims, and Jackie Gering, to name a few.

My quilting style continues to evolve – more improv, more architectural, more asynchronous, more modern and minimalist styles. Always exploring and evolving !!

So, upward and onward, to all of us, as we learn to quilt more, and create more !!