

What's My Story

Liz Adams

I was born in Manhattan and grew up in Bayside, New York. My parents were both born in NY City as well; my grandparents had come to the US as immigrants from Eastern Europe in the early 1900's, looking for a better life. I would have happily spent my life in New York City. My husband, William Adams, a native Californian with a newly minted PhD in Mathematics from Columbia University, had other plans. His first academic position was at UC, Berkeley and so our adventures in higher education began. [I was probably the only person to have ever lived in Berkeley that didn't think it was God's gift to the world.] Our final move was to Silver Spring when Bill began teaching at the University of Maryland in College Park.

I went to New York City public school through eighth grade and then was accepted into the High School of Performing Arts for piano and clarinet. My four years there were happy ones except for the yearly "re-audition" to show I was making enough progress to remain. I learned to play bassoon when that position was needed in the orchestra and I graduated as a bassoon major! I next attended Syracuse University where I majored in math. Following graduation, I did a year of grad work at SU in French and then earned a Master's in Education at Yeshiva University. I taught junior high math and French in the NY city public school system prior to my marriage. In San Rafael CA, I again taught junior high math. After being a stay-at-home Mom for ten years, to my daughters Ruth and Sarah, and moving to the DC area, I taught remedial math at American University. While on that campus, I also earned a Master's in Computer Science. I completed my Doctorate in Computer Science at George Washington University. I retired in 2009 after teaching on the staff of AU, Hood College, Stockton College of New Jersey and James Madison University.

The significant milestones in my life all relate to my family: my marriage to my husband and the births of my two daughters. In 1975 our family spent a semester in London where my husband taught at Imperial College. Everyone at the elementary school my daughters attended played the recorder. Each morning I would stand outside the school listening to the fifty or more recorders playing "Morning Is Dawning". My husband, daughter Sarah and I also lived a year in Israel while he taught at the Technion. Sarah attended a famous school named Reali. I attended an Ulpan and learned to speak Hebrew. I also spent that memorable year volunteering at Haifa University teaching computer programming to American students.

Sewing started for me in elementary school making aprons and graduation dresses. My own dress was a horror. Since my mother made all of my clothes until I was ten, I probably learned to use a sewing machine by osmosis. While my grandmothers were incredibly talented at crocheting, I didn't learn from them; I taught myself. My maternal grandmother did teach me how to knit: while in college, I made argyle socks for all my boyfriends. When my daughters were young, I did all kinds of handwork including needlepoint animals and dining room chair seats, cross stitch and both hand and machine embroidery. I took a course in Machine Embroidery with Joy Clucas and a course at the Inner London Education Authority in embroidery and design with Adele Fraser. My first quilt, which is still unfinished, was a spider-web patten sewn onto paper. I love to piece, especially small scrap quilts and wall hangings.

Although I have used mostly traditional patterns for quilts, I enjoy taking classes and learning new techniques. Free motion quilting and quilting with a walking foot are my “growing edge”. Two excellent classes I have taken recently were Free Motion with RaNae Merrill and using a walking foot for quilting with Jaquie Gering. Making quilts for charities is very satisfying for me.

I am currently a member of six quilt guilds! When I taught at James Madison University, I joined the Shenandoah Valley Quilt Guild in Bridgewater, VA; I’m also a member of Bethesda Quilters, NeedleChasers, Nimble Fingers and Friendship Star quilt guilds, all near where I live here in Silver Spring. And, because I spend my summers in Southold, Long Island, I’m a member of the Eastern Long Island Quilt Guild. The absolute *best aspect* about being in all these quilt guilds is the enduring friendships I’ve made. In 2019 I went to Sisters in Oregon with women from the Eastern Long Island guild. With my NeedleChaser friends, I’ve made a variety of items for the quilt show boutiques. The *next best thing* is the inspiration I get from seeing the creativity of other guild members’ work. And the *last best thing* about being in all these guilds has been learning new techniques through the classes that have been offered.