

Anita C. Barber



Anita was born in San Francisco and grew up in the Haight Ashbury district where she lived for 22 years. Since her parents were born in Mexico and came to the US during the Mexican Revolution, she grew up speaking Spanish. In fact, she didn't know how to speak English until she started kindergarten and the nuns taught her the language.

Her mother was a seamstress and her grandmother crocheted so, although Anita wanted to focus on Journalism in high school, her mother forced her to take sewing classes instead. Because of that, she was always the "best dressed" person wherever she worked. She still treasures her mother's machine made cutwork table cloths which her grandmother tatted. She also still has her mother's monogrammed pillow cases and sheets done on her Singer sewing machine.

Anita's first job was at Metropolitan Life Insurance Company where she worked for 11 years. During this time she met her future husband, who was the brother of one of her friends and co-worker. Anita and Frank were married in 1966. Frank worked as an Electrician and rides a Harley Davidson. Their first date was on the motorcycle.

She gave birth to the joy of her life, her son Frankie in 1970. She stopped making clothes for herself and concentrated on dressing the cutest and greatest little boy in the whole world. When Frankie was a year old they moved to Daly City where she still lives with her husband who is now retired. Anita visualizes her son playing by the sewing machine while she sewed, just like she did with her mom when she was a child.

In 1976, she took an art history class and noticed a lady quilting a red, white and blue quilt during the lecture. As a result of Anita's inquiry, the lady, Pauline Gonzales, started teaching a quilting class at Skyline College. Anita took her first class, a sampler quilt, with Pauline. Since then she's made over 500 quilts for family, friends and outreach programs.

One of the first quilts Anita made was for her only sister, Marie Reynoso, incorporating pieces of lace that were their mother's. Marie still cherishes

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this beautiful hand quilted quilt. She has also made an "Elvis" quilt and a "tamale" quilt which is also loved and holds special meaning to Marie.

Sometime in the late 70's her friend, Joanne Watson introduced her to Caroline Lieberman who had an idea to found the San Francisco Quilt Guild. They did along with Joann Campbell and Shirley Towan. Anita was Treasurer on the Board for the first 2 years of the Guild and still attends meetings.

Anita started working for Bonnie Anderson, owner of Elephant Quilts in Pacifica where she took all the classes she could and learned a lot. When Bonnie closed the shop, Anita went to work at Serramonte Ford where she worked a few years. She quit in order to take a quilting class taught by Evie Landis at Canada College. She learned that patchwork making is sharing, knowledge, fabric and experience.

She then started working at Fabric Creations in Millbrae, owned by Linda Brush where she was paid to teach quilting until the store closed.

Anita has demonstrated her administrative skills by working at different times for an eye doctor, a winery and a mortuary.

Since she started quilt making in 1976, most of the gifts she has given have been quilts. She especially likes giving quilts as wedding presents. She has a closet full of about 200 quilts. She likes traditional patterns and does very little handwork because of a bad back and arthritis. She now has her quilts machine-quilted and usually gets her pattern ideas from books.

She has made sample wall quilts for P&B Fabrics, starting when Jennifer Sampou was designing fabric. She also made "wedding quilts" for Mr. Bayer of P&B, used for Jewish ceremonies.

Bonnie Anderson started teaching Anita fast ways of cutting and she attended many of Mary Whitehead's 4 or 5 day "camps" where Mary taught fast assembly methods, and was part of Mary's Me Sew Group.

Anita now belongs to a monthly sewing circle called The Seismic Quilters, because they live on the fault. She also belongs to the Stitch-ins Group, the Big 5 and the Pacifica Quilt Guild.

Anita remembers the time her son, Frankie, had to take a sewing class in middle school. She taught him to make a patchwork quilt at home before class so he would be familiar with a sewing machine. He got an A in class. Now his 2 year old daughter, Elizabeth has use of this quilt. Anita has made countless quilts for special events but especially enjoys the ones she's made for Frankie, his wonderful wife Cathy and of course, her beautiful granddaughter, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth has proven her ability to coordinate colors since she loves to play with all the fabric in Anita's sewing room and Anita can't wait to teach her to use her great grandmother's Singer Sewing Machine which is still in great working condition.

Anita is currently employed at Black Cat Quilts, owned by Gretchen Nelson. Although she doesn't teach professionally anymore, she does share her knowledge with friends and customers. She would like to have more people understand quilters and their quilts. To understand the sharing involved in making quilts for the homeless, shelter quilts for women and children and premie quilts for hospitals.

You make a quilt to keep someone warm.

Spirit created all color; All color goes together,
just some better than others