

McFadden, Mary L.

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Founding member of the SFQG

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1) Tell us a little about yourself, education, work, and family.

I was born and raised in SF and went to nursing school. I worked in Europe and traveled for a year where I met my husband while traveling and we married a year later. We lived in NY for a year and returned to SF where we raised 10 children.

2) Describe your work experiences.

I worked in my husband's medical office for more than 35 years.

3) Where have you lived and has it influenced your life?

I lived in SF for almost all of my life and it's a wonderful place to be.

4) What other events have influenced the direction of your life?

Growing up with 5 brothers influenced my decision to have a large family and obviously having a large family has influenced many decisions in my life.

5) Describe your earliest memories of quilts and/or quiltmaking, other sewing or needlework experiences...person or people who influenced your quilting.

I've always enjoyed needlework from childhood taught to me by my mother. An aunt taught me how to knit. I taught myself to sewing and first got into quilting when my 9th child was 2 months old.

6) When did you make your first quilt?

In 1970, I went to a class on quilting at St. Paul's High School taught by Alice Zwank. I attended with my good friend Rosina Michna (also a member). My first quilts during that class were a Sunbonnet Sue and Grandmother's flower garden, neither of which I've completed yet. Though I've started many other projects. Mostly made children's and quilts.

7) Describe your favorite quilts...the type of patterns and designs you use...any special techniques...why and for whom the quilts were made?

I like traditional quilt patterns like log cabin, Sunbonnet Sue and Grandmother's fan. The most interesting quilt I did was for a baby with a Chinese mother and Irish father with shamrock fabric and the Chinese symbol for double happiness appliquéd in the center. Most of the quilts I've made have been children's quilts.

8) Have you ever used quiltmaking to help you through a difficult time in your life?

Needlework has always been relaxing and a creative outlet.

9) Throughout your quilting experience how many quilts have you made? Do you make quilts for others...or family...to celebrate events?

I've started many and finished some. Mainly I've made quilts and other projects for family and friends.

10) Do you donate or sell your quilts? Please explain.

Give away to family and friends.

11) Is your home decorated with quilts? Do you receive or collect quilts that others have made...do you share blocks...exchange fabric... Please explain.

I have many quilts and quilt related art around the house. My friends and I often exchange portions of our stashes.

12) Do you select fabric for a particular project or because you like it?

Definitely because I like the fabric and then I'll look for a project for it.

13) Have you participated in group quilt making activities?

I've taken many classes on different subjects and I meet regularly with fellow founding members Beryl Curry and Mary Herlihy over the years to quilt together.

14) Have you taken quilt making classes...if yes, from what teachers...what techniques did you learn about?

Alice Zwank was the first and I've taken various classes over many years including from Caroline Lieberman and Eleanor Peace Bailey on doll making and a few classes at the San Rafael quilt shop.

15) Do you teach quilt related classes..? Where do you teach...in a shop...books, etc.

Don't teach, except my daughters and now my granddaughter.

16) Do you enter quilts that you have made in quilt shows...or display them in public - at guilds...museum...galleries...fairs...public buildings, etc.?

Don't enter

17) What specific ribbons, awards, or prizes have your quilts earned?

None

18) What other public recognition, received for your quilting, would you like to share?

None

19) Have you written articles...patterns...or books relating to quilting? Please explain.

None

20) Do you have any advice for future quiltmakers?

Pick out a quilt pattern that you like and that is fun to do, you'll enjoy it more and be more likely to finish.