

Silver Stitcher

Jean Bray



Jean Bray has been a member of the Georgia Quilt Council for 17 years. She was born and raised in Wadley, GA, a small rural town, 60 miles south of Augusta. Wadley was named for the President of the Central Railroad of GA. Back in the day, in addition to freight trains, it ran passenger service between Savannah and Atlanta. Local folks would take the train up to Atlanta to shop at Rich's Department store. The

town was situated right near Hwy. 1, the main road between Maine and Florida, and was a popular stop for tourists en-route. Her family were land owners and cotton farmers. She attended the local school where she learned to love to read. Her graduating class was the first class in Georgia to go through the 12 year system. Upon graduating she headed for business school in Atlanta where she studied to be a secretary. When she had completed her program the school business office gave her two referrals for job interviews. One was the Tucker Wayne Advertising Agency and the other was a small law firm. Since the law office was closer she went there first, and was hired after the first interview. From there she went on to work at the prestigious law firm of King & Spaulding where she was employed for 33 years. She often wonders what her life would have been like if she had gone to the ad agency first, the road not taken. Her employment at King & Spaulding, who represented Jimmy Carter, took her to Washington DC when he was inaugurated and later to visit the White House, where in addition to meeting Jimmy and Roselyn she met the performers in the USO Tribute to Bob Hope that was filmed at the Kennedy Center. Among the performers was Bob Hope, Lucille Ball, and Pearl Bailey.

Jean is married to Larry Bray, a retired naval officer. They had eight children, his, hers and theirs and a slew of grandkids. There were no quilters in her family. Her mother never sewed but her aunt was a seamstress and made all of Jean's clothes when she was growing up. She always saved the scraps and would give them to Jean's mother who in turn would take them to a pair of maiden sisters who did quilt and would make quilts for the family. So she always got to sleep under quilts when she was little and learned to love them. They had so many that in the summer time when the weather didn't require a lot on the beds her mother would place the quilts between the mattress and bed springs for storage.

In her 20's she clipped and saved quilt patterns from the Farm Market Bulletin. When she became pregnant and was not working she got out these saved patterns and taught herself to quilt but made pillows not bed quilts. She did not have access to batting so she just used flannel in them. Over the years she did lots of embroidery and made kits and taught herself to crochet, but it wasn't until she retired that she got seriously interested in quilting. Before leaving Atlanta a friend who was in the Yellow Daisy Guild suggested that she join the Georgia Quilt Council so when she moved to Rome in 1997 she joined the Council and Lavender Mountain Quilt Guild so she could become a better quilter. She loves to take classes and attend retreats to learn more and to meet interesting people. Jean likes to work on folk art designs, red work, applique, and creates a lot of her own original designs. She has exhibited her quilts in the annual Lavender Mountain show, and the Coosa Valley fair where she has won two 1st place and one 2nd place ribbons. Her crazy quilt was in the GQC traveling exhibit of crazy quilts several years ago. She likes to do hand work but would like to learn to do more on her machine, a Singer Featherweight. Whatever approach she takes you can count on the piece being a reflection of her unique personality.