

Clare Gilliland



An autobiographic profile may seem a little weird, but I wanted to share my quilting story with you. If you are a 70+ quilter and you would like to share your quilting journey, please contact [me](#) so that I may interview you. Here is my story.

It is hard to believe, but it has been 50 years since I tackled my first quilting project. I made patchwork pillows for my sofa using the Irish Chain pattern out of a batik fabric that I had made in a class with Kokilam Sobiah, a Celonese artist. This was in Chicago where I had recently moved. However, growing up in Baltimore, Maryland as the youngest of six children, I learned to sew and knit from my older sisters and mother. At the age of five I made lots of clothes for my dolls, and when I was in high school, I made a lot of my clothes. After I married at 18 and had four children, I sewed most of the clothes for my family, but that was back when fabric was a lot cheaper! During this time, I worked full-time and did not have a lot of time for “hobbies”. It wasn’t until my second marriage in 1975 that I took up quilting again and made my first large quilt. The pattern was Aunt Sukey’s Choice, and I made it with cotton dressmaking scraps. My son took this quilt to college and wore it out. However, I do have one picture of this quilt.

At this point in time, I was a “self-taught” quilter and bought a lot of books to teach myself how to quilt. After several job related moves, my husband and I ended up in Rome, Georgia. It was there that I joined the Lavender Mountain Quilt Guild and the Georgia Quilt Council. The first quilting classes I took were at the Council symposiums in Macon and Jekyll Island. In 2000 I won a scholarship to attend classes with Nancy Crow in Paducah and had a retrospective exhibition of my work at the Rome Area Council for the Arts.

I have made many types of quilts: traditional, modern, crazy, and art quilt, but my favorite style is the scrap quilt where I can use lots of fabrics and lots of pieces. It is the mosaic-like effect of the scrap quilt that appeals to me.

After my husband passed away four years ago, I have been able to devote much more of my time to quilt and other art projects. I have also had more time to serve in leadership positions in the Lavender Mountain Quilt Guild and the Georgia Quilt Council. These quilting organizations and their members have been instrumental in teaching and guid-ing me in the art of quilting.

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