

# San Francisco Quilters Guild's History, 1981 and Beyond

By Jeanie Low, SFQG Historian

Our guild's anniversary is in October. On January 17, 2017, we celebrated our 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a Buffet Dinner at our meeting site. Speakers were Gloria Miller, Charter Member, Past President and present Treasurer and Joe Cunningham, quilt artist. We honored our Presidents with a "Rollcall of Presidents" and introduced Charter Members who were present. Currently, we have 219 members who represent the diversity and various professions in the San Francisco Bayarea.

The San Francisco Quilters' Guild (SFQG) was formed as a not-for-profit organization in 1981 by our founders Caroline Lieberman, Anita Barber, Joanne Campbell, Judy Cauthen, Lorna Barish, Shirley Towan and Joanne Watson. Our first meeting site was St. Aidan's Episcopal Church in Diamond Heights. Over sixty members who joined on October 5, 1981 were designated Charter Members. We've been fortunate to have 30 Presidents, with some of whom served more than one term, together with their Boards to lead our guild into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our website is at: [www.sfquiltersguild.org](http://www.sfquiltersguild.org)

Our Bylaws, adopted on September 21, 1981 state that "The purpose of this organization is to provide an atmosphere of fellowship for anyone interested in the arts and crafts of quilting and related arts by: 1) Sharing of skills and knowledge in the field of quilting. 2) Providing instruction to further the education, knowledge and skills in quilting through lectures, workshops, seminars and travel. 3) Establishing a library resource books, patterns and templates. 4) Providing on going information on quilting events. 5) Contributing to community education and appreciation of the art of quilting."

Our newsletter, Quilters Cables and the friendship blocks were started in 1981. Our logo was designed by Nora O'Neil in 1982. The first opportunity quilt was "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" with Tony Bennett signing one of the blocks.

In 1987, we had a Golden Gate Bridge quilt block contest and made a quilt to celebrate the bridge's fiftieth anniversary. The quilt was presented to the Golden Gate Bridge District Office. The final entry blocks selected came from as far away as Japan, Washington, Pennsylvania and California. Blocks used in the GGB quilt included a few of our guild members : Marina Salume [First Prize], Karren Elsbernd, Susan Schwarting, Lyn Piercy, Phyllis Schaefer, Maria Torres, and Celia LoPinto. Commemorative postcards were made of the quilt. The extra blocks were made into quilts are raffled off.

Our first quilt show "Treasure Chest of Quilts" was held on

March 12 & 13, 1983 at Ft. Mason. Our latest show, the 17<sup>th</sup> - "QUILT SF 2017" was held at the Event Center at St. Mary's Cathedral on March 24 & 25<sup>th</sup>.

In March, 1986, members of our guild made 20 small quilts that created the "Big Quilt", a sixteen foot square quilt used in the play "Quilters" staged at San Francisco State University. The quilts were raffled off after the show.

Our efforts to preserve California quilt history include staffing the "CHQP Days - Quilts Made in or Brought to California Before 1945" at the De Young Museum, October 25, 1986. 99 quilts were dated and registered. Once again, our volunteers staffed CHQP's Oral Interview Days held on September 27, 1997 and November 8 and 9, 2003. We continue in this endeavor to collect the Quiltmaker Stories from our Members.

Our Members are never too busy to help others less fortunate through our Community Outreach program. Over the years, you've made countless quilts for the recipients of various not-for-profit organizations :The list is endless and include Epiphany Center for Families in Recovery, Nineteenth Avenue Healthcare Center, The Riley Center, Asian Women's Shelter, Clara House, Casa de la Madres, and Ronald McDonald House. In 1996, a group designed and created a quilt for the Marian Residence for Women for St. Anthony Foundation.

Our guild has become the envy of visitors and home to many of us. Our circulating library is a real gem with Library of Congress numbers. . Before moving away, Alex Zaremska, Librarian especially expanded the LC number to include the many facets of quilting. Our "Show and Tell" are extra special as we encourage each other to create with fabric.

Let's continue the tradition and introduce ourselves to the new faces at guild meetings. If you want to make new friends, use your skills or acquire new ones, get involved as a volunteer.

[Information on our history is taken from articles written by Dorothy Scholten, Marie Contreras and Quilters Cables, (September, 1981 to the present), The Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, 1981, SFQG Bylaws, CHQP Oral Interviews, 9/1997 and 11/2003.] For more information on our guild history see SFQG History Binders and our website.