

THE HISTORY OF NORTHWEST QUILTERS GUILD

It all started with a single quilt. In the early 1970s, a group of 21 women worked for an entire year to create a commemorative quilt to be presented to Governor Tom McCall and hung in the Capitol in Salem. The quilt featured historic moments and scenes throughout the state of Oregon. Before giving the quilt to the Governor, it was shown to the public for three weeks at Portland Community College in March of 1974. In addition, there were lectures and demonstrations to highlight the artistry of quilting. Over 10,000 people attended.

This success spurred the creation of a meeting place for quilt lovers. The first meeting was at the Lloyd Center Auditorium on Saturday, May 18, 1974. One hundred and seventy-five people attended that first meeting. One hundred and forty of them joined together and the Northwest Quilters Guild was born. Nancy Wanamaker was the first president and Helen Grigg was the first Vice President. Initially there were two meetings per year at the Sellwood Community Center. One was a workshop in the fall and another was a quilt show in the spring, with smaller local groups meeting in people's homes monthly.

Our first official quilt show was in 1975. Admission was \$1 and seniors over 60 were free. The shows have been held annually until the 2020 pandemic shut it down for a few years. Past quilt shows were held at the Old Church on SW 11th & Clay, at Portland State University, Multnomah University, and the Portland Expo Center.

In 1977, the guild peaked at more than 1700 "members". This was mostly because everyone who attended the quilt show was put on a mailing list for the same \$1 and was sent a monthly copy of the Patchword. Eventually this practice proved unsustainable as the mailing took over 10,200 sheets of paper (20 reams) and a yearly membership fee needed to be established (\$1 unless over 60 years old). As time went on, many new guilds were formed based on location and focus and our membership was divided amongst them. Currently there are 43 guilds in Oregon. There are approximately 7 guilds in the Portland area (which includes Vancouver).

This year marks our 48th anniversary. Long live Northwest Quilters Guild!