

**Jeannie Spears**

I began to quilt to use up fabric from sewing for four daughters. I sewed clothing for myself from the time I was in high school, my mom sewed a lot of my clothes, and I learned from her. Money was tight when the kids were little, so I seldom bought clothes for them. My parents taught me never to waste anything, since I was born during the great depression.

I began quilting during the Bicentennial celebration in 1976. My grandmother quilted, but not my mother. I loved doing crafts as a stay-at-home mom, and the magazines were showing “old-fashioned” ideas.

I quickly discovered that I didn’t care much for piecing or appliqué, but liked the hand quilting best. That led me to using batik and other surface design techniques to dye fabric for a quilt top in a traditional pattern, then I could get to the part I liked best. However, when I began teaching quilting, I needed to become skilled in basic techniques.

My preferred technique/style has always been to use surface design techniques with traditional patterns, but once I learned to use graphic design programs on the computer and print the results on fabric, that has been my main focus.



Another Rose of Texas, 60" x 60", 2012, copyright Jeannie Spears

All of my quilts tell me stories, as they bring back memories. The story of Another Rose of Texas is bittersweet. My mother lived in Texas, in the Rio Grande Valley, and one February, my siblings and I visited her for the last time. You might think the weather would be warm, since winter Texans plan on that, but it was cold, windy, wet, and raw! As part of our visit, we took her to a bell concert at her church one evening. It had been misting all day, and the beautiful roses in the church garden had drops of moisture on them that looked like dew. I took lots of images.

I used the image of one of the roses in a quilt challenge from a Japanese quilt magazine. A special fabric had been designed to print with an inkjet printer. Although an exhibit in Japan had been planned, it fell through, but as an editor at

Quilter’s Newsletter Magazine, I was able to display the challenge in the publisher’s gallery. I called the quilt Another Rose of Texas, referring to my mom and her love of roses.

The impact of quilting on my life is immeasurable. It allowed me to express my creativity and to gain recognition in my own right, and not just as wife and mother. The income I generated let me be independent, and I traveled the world over. Most important, I think, I was able work with other quilters to set standards for teaching, judging, and appraising quilts that are still in use. And I couldn’t have done it without Minnesota Quilters.