

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW? Founding Members Twila Christensen and daughter Carolyn Christensen Normington

It started with just a kernel of an idea...

There were so many quilters in the state...how could they be pulled together? Sitting in Green River, Twila Christensen had an idea. Sitting across the state in Cheyenne, Wilda Vance was coming up with the very same idea. The two of them knew there were other quilters of the same mind. They decided to send out letters inviting other quilters to attend a meeting to discuss putting together a state quilt guild. It is hard to imagine it now - but there was no Facebook, internet or e-mail at that time. They typed up letters, put a stamp on envelopes and mailed them off. Twila and her daughter Carolyn attended the meeting, as did over a dozen women.

Shortly after the planning meeting, Twila retired to the family sheep ranch in Montana. She remained active in the guild by organizing and offering a Kids' Quilt Camp in Cheyenne. The camp was right before Quilt Wyoming. She was so thankful for the many wonderful quilters from Cheyenne and Laramie that helped during the camp. Several kids' quilt camps have been held since, each time being organized by the region that is sponsoring Quilt Wyoming. After a couple years, the Wyoming State Quilt Guild decided to offer funds to help put on a kids' quilt camps across the state each year.

Carolyn has been involved with WSQG by serving several times throughout the years as the chair for selecting quilting books for County Libraries. She has been part of several quilt groups and guilds.

Carolyn has sewn many full-size quilts. She also has made monthly quilted wall hangings for her sister, not once, but twice! The second set of wall hangings are hand quilted, each one differently with Carolyn's own designs.



Sewing and quilting has a long history with Carolyn and Twila. Carolyn started sewing as soon as she was old enough to be in 4H. Her mom Twila was her leader. Twila has sewn for as long as she can remember. Her leader? Her mom, of course. Carolyn has carried on the 4H tradition by teaching young girls to sew. Twila remained active working with kids by designing patterns and projects and teaching kid's sewing classes.

The women have attended many quilt conferences from Quilting in the Tetons to Black Hills Quilt Camp. It hasn't always gone smoothly. They both started the laborious chore of designing a watercolor quilt after taking a class in the late 1990's. Carolyn's was completely designed on a flannel board two weeks after the class. Sadly, she was moving and a very supportive "non-quilter" friend helped by taking each and every square off the board and putting them in a box. *Oops!* Tears may have been involved. Twila says she knows where hers is in her quilting room and someday may finish it.

In her "retirement" years, Twila continues to quilt. At 70, she often works 10-12 hour days in the late spring, summer and early fall. She and her border collie Alex take hand appliqué projects with them to sew while sheep herding. (Actually, I'm not sure Alex does much quilting but she keeps Twila company and keeps track of the sheep). She has made too-many-to-count quilted wall hangings and quilts for her daughters and grandsons. The thing Twila likes the best about quilting is sharing it with her daughters. As 4H'ers both Carolyn and Darlene made quilts that won 4H Best of Show at the Wyoming State Fair. Twila is proud to have worked with them to design and make their quilts.

Carolyn is an avid quilter – all while working full time as a middle school counselor and being a mom of two young boys (ages 6 and 8). She makes time to quilt whenever she can. It brings some quiet and sanity to her life. Her youngest son, Decker, has been "helping" iron and pick fabrics for several years. He even quilted a little when he sat on his mom's lap when he was 2 or 3. It was for Aunt Darlene. Carolyn wanted to tear it out and was told "*Don't you dare*".



*Written by Darlene Christensen*