

WATERCOLORS: Display is up at library computer room

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Adirondacks.

“Adele Hepburn was the artist-in-residence there, and she helped me with techniques,” Judy recalled.

Attracted by the spontaneity and brightness of the medium, she acquired a strong background in composition and design, textile designing, and fine arts at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs. Her first date with husband-to-be Don Hayden was at the Fourth of July fireworks at Fort Ticonderoga. Their honeymoon consisted of driving from New York to Los Angeles, where Don had a job waiting for him.

“When I first moved to the West Coast, I went looking for a place to buy yarn,” Judy said. “That led to meeting a family who owned a company, and I went to work for them as a designer.” She eventually found a woman who was selling from her samples to interior decorators, so she left that company and began her own business, Hayden Weavers, in 1964.

The first Hayden Weavers workshop was in her home, where Judy custom-dyed and designed fabric for woven draperies, and cut veneers for wooden woven blinds. She acquired the materials and dyed the yarn or stained the wooden veneers, and then calculated the number of threads for fabric, or slats for blinds, needed to create the end product. Fabric was woven on fly shuttle looms, and wooden blinds were cut and sewn together by hand.

Pots of colored dye, heavily

infused with vinegar, simmered on the kitchen stove. Judy’s daughter, Dale Lysne of Sisters, recalled, “I can still smell the dye pots. I would sometimes have to call a friend to get a ride somewhere. I would say ‘my mom can’t take me because she’s dyeing.’”

Both Judy and her sister, Sharon Hayden of Gresham, worked for their mom.

“At first, I would dye the yarn and weave a sample, called a strike-off,” Judy said.

Her interior designer clients would send items — a marigold, a man’s shoe, wallpaper or carpet, even a fireplace stone — for Judy to color-match the end product. Once she arrived at the correct color, Judy had to calculate the math: how many threads per inch, and how many inches wide the final product needed to be. Since many of her clients were overseas, the calculation often involved converting dimensions from metric to avoirdupois units.

“Not only does Mom love the colors and the textures, she also loves the math. And she is so good at it,” said her daughter.

Judy’s business grew exponentially, as she worked with interior designers around the world. She moved the business to a huge warehouse. Hayden fabrics and blinds were featured in design showrooms in San Francisco, Seattle, Houston, New York, Miami, and more. They ended up in luxury homes and businesses worldwide.

One remarkable custom job involved weaving wooden blinds for a top-story restaurant in Kuala Lumpur. After converting from metric dimensions, each blind was woven to a different specification, packaged and shipped, first to Seattle and then to Asia. The

eventual fit was perfect. But they nearly didn’t make it. The blinds were too large to fit in the standard elevators. Fortunately, the contractor found an elevator whose top had not been finished, so the blinds were stood on end and moved to the top floor.

“The other option would have been to cut them in half!” Judy exclaimed — a move that would have ruined the product.

In addition to ending up in celebrity homes, Judy’s fabrics would go on to earn recognition at the California Design X exhibit at the Pasadena Art Museum. She can’t recall all of the celebrities who eventually acquired her fabrics, but Dale specifically mentioned making fine white cloth that upholstered a stool for then-popular comedienne Totie Fields.

“After her left leg was amputated, she used that stool to rest her good leg,” Dale said.

In 1985, Judy retired and turned to painting from her studio in northern California. In 1996, she moved to Florence, on the Oregon Coast, a place where she had always found inspiration during her many visits there. Last year, she moved to Sisters to be closer to family, including her daughters and her twin sister, Helen, in Copalis Beach, Washington. She fully expects to keep right on painting, tuning her color palate for the Cascades and the High Desert.

Judy’s watercolor scenes are in the computer room and the entryway of the Sisters Library through the end of June. A few of them are for sale, with a small portion of the sale price going to the Friends of the Sisters Library. Len Babb’s Western art is featured at the same time in the community room.



PHOTO BY HELEN SCHMIDLING

Judy Hayden, right, and her daughter Dale Lysne.

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