Commemorative quilt honors Spring Arbor history

When the '50s, '60s '70s Reunion Committee opted to host an auction to benefit Michindoh’s camp scholarship program at their recent reunion, alums Bill HS ‘51, JC ‘53 and Shirley ‘84 Zeller volunteered to design and create a quilt to honor Spring Arbor’s history.

The Concept sculpture catches the observer’s eye, but getting it on the quilt was no easy feat. The sculpture was embroidered by a local specialist.

“The sculpture was too large for me to embroider,” says Shirley Zeller, who notes that including it was worth the extra work. “It was important to Bill and me to include this feature. Our good friend, James J. Snyder Sr. HS ‘48, JC ’58 sculpted the aluminum fountain on campus.”

The Junior College Class of 1959 purchased the commemorative quilt at auction for $2,600. “From the first sketch, I knew this quilt needed to be displayed at the school because that was where it belonged,” says Chuck Conrad JC ’59, class representative. The newly-acquired artifact was presented to SAU President Brent Ellis, transferred to the University Archives and is on permanent display on the south wall of the main level of White Library.

Additional funding was provided for displaying the quilt in conformity with both institution and preservation standards determined by Susan Panak ’12, university archivist. An enclosed quilt frame was handmade by Bill Zeller assisted by Harold Dunckel (1961-63).

Sticking with the quilt theme, Zeller made a wooden quilt hanger with the theme. “Quilts connect the past with the present and the future.”

Archival assistant, junior Hannah Dennings (Montrose, Mich.), edited photographs of the junior college sign and the university brick wall for use in the quilt. Seniors Emily Thompson (Lake Odessa, Mich.), Kim Binnendyk (Muskegon, Mich.), and Dennings also developed a brochure dating the historical icons.

There is no doubt that this commemorative quilt will be enjoyed by many future faculty, staff and students visiting the Hugh A. and Edna C. White Library.