Stephens City, VA--After nearly twelve years of quarterly rotating quilt exhibits, a permanent display of quilts has been installed at Mary Jane and James L. Bowman Library in Stephens City.

The idea of displaying quilts at the library originated nearly 15 years ago when Handley Regional Library formed a Fine Arts Committee to plan for displays in the local libraries. Bowman Library was nearing completion and the Committee needed to address placing art in the new facility, which featured expansive open ceilings and larger walls than most library buildings.

Colleen Cornell, then Chairman of the Art Committee and an enthusiastic quilter, remembers suggesting the use of quilts as artwork because they are much larger than traditional, framed art and the open design of the library called for larger pieces to make an impact.

Four area quilters’ guilds were tapped to assist with the project: Skyline Quilters, Top of Virginia Quilt Guild (TOVA), Apple Valley Needle Threaders Quilt Group and Shenandoah Piecemakers. The first quilts were hung in the fall of 2003 and the guilds continued to provide exhibits every three months until this year when the permanent display was installed.

Past exhibit themes were holiday or seasonal in nature, but occasionally a theme would be even more adventurous as in the display of Japanese inspired quilts, obis and a wedding kimono. Recalling these and other themes, Colleen Cornell said, “It was fun!”

Chairwoman of the Fine Arts Committee, Tracy Drumheller, commented “I’m so pleased with how beautiful the permanent quilt display is at Bowman Library. It has been a wonderful experience to work with these four quilt guilds over the years.”
The permanent display of quilts donated to Bowman Library features different styles of quilt-making. A listing of the quilts donated appears below:

“Stars and Stripes” was made especially for Bowman Library by Linda Hammond.

“Tied Crazy Quilt: With Martha Gochenour’s Label” was purchased in Middletown, VA in 2004 at The Wonderful Store. Ties were removed and quilting and binding were added by Mary M. Campbell in 2005.

“Summer Butterflies” features a quilt top purchased from a Roanoke Valley antique shop in 1998. Mary Campbell, a member of Top of Virginia Quilt Guild, hand-quilted it in 2000.

This Black and Stars quilt was donated to Bowman Library by Shenandoah Piecemakers of Clarke County, VA. The top was pieced by Elizabeth Harp and was quilted by Quilt Peddler in 2014.
“Robin ‘Round Belle Grove” was made by Joyce Badanes and friends. This was a round-robin quilting project undertaken by Apple Valley Needle Threaders Quilt Group in 1998.

“Lucky Stars” was made for Bowman Library by Skyline Quilters in 2015.

“Oh, the Glory of Color” was made for the Mary Jane and James L. Bowman Library in Stephens City, VA, by members of Apple Valley Needle Threaders. Measuring 76 by 76 inches, this work was quilted by Christy Dillon and installed in January 2015.

After the installation of the permanent quilt display, Art Committee Chairwoman Tracy Drumheller noted, “We truly have a special relationship with these guilds which has enabled us to make Bowman Library a warm and inviting space for all to enjoy.

For more information about this display, contact Brenda Diehl at bdiehl@handleyregional.org or call 540 662-9041 x28.

To see additional works by area quilters’ guilds, visit the quilt show in Berryville April 17-19.