

Company History

In the 1970's, my then fiancé and I were offered the opportunity to open an Indian arts and crafts store in the brand new Adams Hotel in Phoenix, Arizona. It was to be my project since Tom was an attorney in a downtown law firm. We looked into it and I became excited about offering clothing inspired by traditional American Indian fashions to our customers, who would be buying beautiful Indian jewelry. I started making sketches and kept a notebook of ideas.

For years I had been designing and making clothing for myself that was inspired by traditional Indian clothing styles. Also, when I was a young girl, my mother had made some "Indian" style clothing for me. After some research with retail store owners and checking into small business loans I decided a store was probably not for us. However, I still had my notebook of sketches and decided to write a book about making contemporary clothing styles inspired by traditional designs. With my husband's encouragement and support, I spent the first year of our marriage writing my book. I sent off letters and sample chapters to publishers and went back to work as a librarian. It took seven years until it was published by Van Nostrand Reinhold. By then I had one baby and another on the way. As soon as people saw the book they started asking if I sold the skirt on page 72.

I had intended the book as an educational tool but realized sewing and starting a home based business was something I could do while raising my kids, so in 1981 we started Native American Fashions, Inc. Many years before, I had helped my mother work on some utilitarian quilts and made my first quilt as an adult in 1977. Along with the clothing, I started making more quilts and selling at Indian markets and occasionally to retail stores. In 1990, I started changing the focus of my work from clothing to quilts. Now, my business emphasizes quilts but I will always love clothing and will continue to produce a limited amount of wearable art along with my Classics Line.