

## Eulogy for arayti - Carol

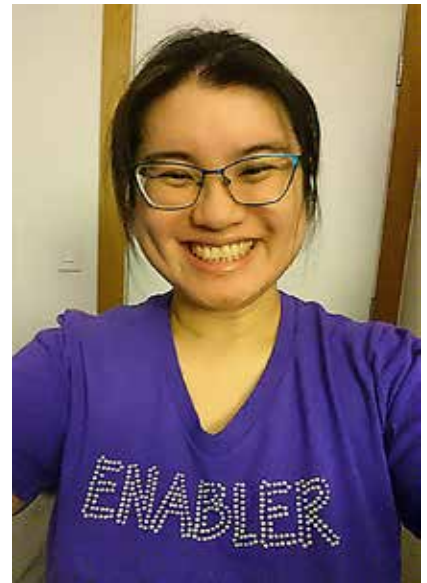


We never met in person, never heard each other's voices. Nevertheless, for years Virginia has been one of my closest friends, my anchor particularly during the pandemic (I was one of about a dozen of hers).

She was a star enabler, sending tools, materials and massive encouragement at any opportunity.



Her parents had been refugees; she lamented not having the equivalent of a cookie tin of buttons.



I told her she was welcome to be grafted into my surplus stock of maiden aunts, sending her tatting shuttles, threads, and patterns from my Great-Aunt Hazel's stash.

We were kindred enthusiasts for ruffles; I rolled my lace inventory over to her, including some hand-knit by my Great-Aunt Jessie (not pictured).



Virginia had sewn five or six dozen quilted bowl cozies. Delighted by her learning curve, she wanted to know if she were capable of sewing clothes that fit if I helped with patterns. I said, oh, honey, yes. That was the start of TeamSewMyWardrobe.

A hidden agenda was empowerment, in particular squashing cultural body-shaming. People became comfortable putting up photos of their non-standard bodies, with the group offering encouraging reality-checks for the insecure. They also became comfortable offering trouble-shooting advice, not always in agreement, which was fine.

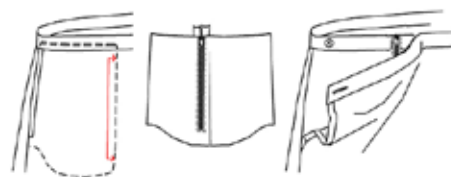
She sent garments for me to use for tutorials, and quickly grasped concepts and ran with her own designs.

Space to set up her sewing machine was problematic, so she hand-sewed poofy shirts and full-length walking skirts in her lap, leaving room on the couch for Jay as well as Astrid and Nebulon, their cats, frequent photobombers.



An early sewing project was a full circle skirt from a sheet that she had dyed a rich purple. It had no seams: how to manage access at the waist? I talked her through placket construction (we hid the zipper inside one of her mandatory pockets) while she was hanging fire at work for a major data download.

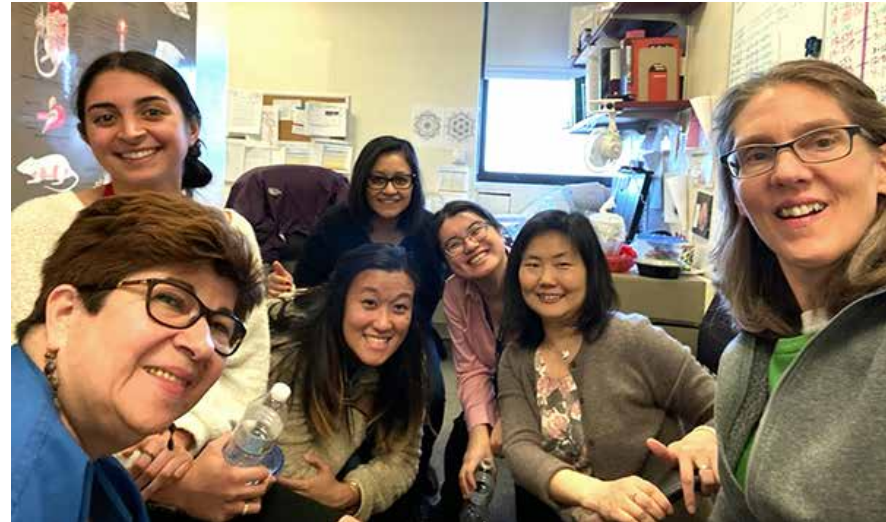
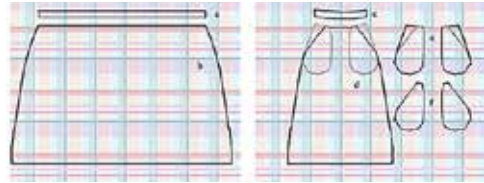
She sewed a mockup sitting by her microscope using paper towels.







She progressed to paneled/gored walking skirts (anything she could twirl in), later ones matching plaids. She was a pioneer for the craze for poofy pirate shirts of linen.



At work, her philosophy was to ask forgiveness rather than permission when cutting her staff accommodations that admin wouldn't sanction. She stubbornly refused to be promoted despite blandishments of significant salary increases, as that would land her in administration rather than hands-on in the field with her people. She was horrified to find one was hiding an allergic reaction to latex, and immediately enlisted our mask-making group for a solution.

She crocheted several neck treatments in honor of Ruth Badger Ginsberg; I sent a quick sketch for a sewn-lace jabot and Astrid was modeling one the next day.







We each had noticed an upside-down bodice in a Firefly episode.

She got how important ergonomic construction was. In the flurry of excitement over the American Duchess cape, she ordered boots (check out her lurid socks!).

We discussed how they were engineered to be comfortable and safe to walk in though with substantial heels, and compared them with Meryl Streep's and Jane Lynch's built-up soles for the "Julie and Julia" movie.



Another enthusiasm was cooking: I have been running batches of kimchi since she introduced a passel of us to it.

In the heart of Manhattan, she had access to a pan-cultural spectrum of foods and condiments, and promoted her favorite fish sauce.

She and her mother always insisted on taking home every scrap.

"You want the head, too?" "Of COURSE we want the head."

She lived that it's okay to ask for the head.



