

When I created *Evolution*, I was in a very dark place in my life. I was undergoing treatment for breast cancer and found life genuinely challenging. I sat in my studio and just looked at the stash I had accumulated over the years, and wondered if I would be able to use any of it. That created a sudden determination to create something, anything, from what was in front of me, whether it was successful or not, it was important to keep my hands moving. I had woven the 8-shaft shadow weave fabric which was sitting on the shelf, and the lining just about jumped off my shelf, a length of polyester cloth I had silkscreened in a surface design class in college. I wove bands on an inkle loom for the trim, out of the leftover yarns from the shadow weave fabric.

This garment led to what is still, more than two decades later, one of my most popular articles, from the years I was Features Editor of Handwoven Magazine, *Designing from the Stash*. Accumulating a stash is a grand adventure, and one that visual artists, especially fiber artists find important for their creativity. But using that stash for design inspiration is equally important. I always try to use what I have at hand, replacing stash when it is appropriate.

Over the 10 years I sold my handwoven garments in craft fairs throughout the northeast, I developed a collection of silhouettes, variations on a theme, that allowed a client to customize their garment. Jackets became vests, and then jackets became coats, collars optional, etc.

When I began to teach garment construction to handweavers, sometime in the late 1980's I used those patterns I had developed into a group that I could use for teaching purposes. One of the more popular silhouettes I designed was a simple walking vest, with armhole bands instead of sleeves.

When Covid shut down my ability to travel to teach, and all bookings were cancelled for the foreseeable future, I employed my daughter, who is much more skilled technologically than I am, had her learn how to use Adobe Illustrator, and scan and digitize all the patterns I used for my classes, in all the sizes. We spent many months proofing the patterns and creating substantial directions. I used the Covid downtime to create a legacy of information so students could obtain the information without relying on me.

It became apparent pretty quickly that there needed to be video support, and once again I had my daughter learn Adobe Premier and figure out how to create YouTube content. The result was 80 videos on my channel *The Weaver Sews*, and each of the 12 garment patterns I sell has an accompanying multiple page book of directions with links to the videos where video support is provided.

I was one of the lucky ones that was able to use the Covid years to my advantage and digitize everything I could about my business and my skillset.

The 600 Walking Vest is still one of my favorite silhouettes, and I use it often, sometimes combining the pattern with elements from other patterns in my collection. All three of the garments in this grouping are variations on the 600 Walking Vest. All twelve of my patterns can be purchased and downloaded from my eShop.

-Daryl Lancaster



<https://www.weaversew.com/shop/sewing-patterns.html>