

Conference Staff

Varian Brandon, Coordinator, Knitting Instructor

Varian Brandon started knitting at age eight. A trip to the islands of Great Britain rekindled a love of color and created an interest in the traditions of Fair Isle design and construction. She is currently designing stranded colorwork patterns for several yarn companies, as well as her own website. Additionally, her designs have been published in several national and international magazines including *Yarnwise*, *PLY* and *Interweave Knits*. Currently living in Saluda, North Carolina, Varian has been teaching stranded colorwork and related knitting techniques, both virtually and in person, at national and regional fiber festivals and retreats, in local yarn shops, and for the past 17 years at the Kanuga Knitting and Quilting Retreat. Online, she can be found at www.brandonknittingdesigns.com , on Ravelry at [varianbrandon](#), and on her YouTube channel, [Varian Brandon](#).

Jolie Elder, Knitting Instructor

Jolie has explored a wide range of needle arts after learning to cross stitch at age four. She designs, teaches, spins, and stunt knits in the Atlanta area where she demystifies the obscure. She has served on the boards of Atlanta Knitting Guild, North Georgia Knitting Guild, Southeast Fiber Arts Alliance, and Center for Knit and Crochet. She has been published in *PLY*, *Spin-Off*, and *Cast On*. Her cleverest invention is a method for working stockinette-based laces reversibly. You can view her experiments at jolieaelder.blogspot.com and YouTube channel Jolie knits.

Meg Evatt, Knitting Instructor

Meg started knitting when she was 17 years old. She checked a book out of the library and taught herself through trial and error. After retiring, she studied and honed those knitting skills. Meg began teaching knitting classes in the Upstate area to help other knitters learn new techniques and perfect their skills. Meg expanded her fiber skills to include dry needle felting and teaches needle felting for those who wish to expand their fiber skills.

Mimi Kezer, Knitting Instructor

After spending 20 years as a singer and musician, Mimi has spent the last 15 years teaching and designing as well as encouraging and empowering knitters in their own creative pursuits. From instructing in local yarn shops and fiber festivals to her own YouTube video tutorials, this self-described "technique maven" relishes making the complex simple and enabling knitters to walk in new places of confidence in their work. Mimi designs for her own knitting line, Pastiche Knitwear, and is addicted to making colorful, beautiful things.

Roberta Platt, Knitting Instructor

Roberta was taught to knit by her wonderful Aunt when she was 10 years old, but seriously started knitting in college (when everyone was doing it!). She has honed her craft over the last 60 years, learning from experts and experienced knitters and passing that knowledge along.

After selling a business, teaching knitting became a fun and fulfilling experience: sharing tips, techniques and projects from start to finish. There were also occasional forays into knitwear design. Especially thrilling was the opportunities to design for S. Charles Yarns and Claudia Handpainted Yarns.

Currently, she is associated with Friends and Fiberworks in Candler, NC, where she conducts a Help! Class every week, and at Heritage Weavers and Fiber Artist, Inc. in Hendersonville, NC, where she teaches several classes. Knitting and the love of yarn are the passions of her life, running a very close second to Family. She and her husband currently reside in beautiful Western North Carolina.

Carolyn Ratola, Quilting Instructor

Carolyn is from California and has arrived in Camden, SC to retire by way of Nevada, Utah, and Ohio. She started quilting in 1991 as a hobby and started taking classes from nationally known quilters, as well as, making quilts together with her husband in 2001. They then started entering quilts in the local quilt shows, winning ribbons, and started CaTs Quilting to create custom quilts, long arm quilting services and teach.

Carolyn has been teaching classes for 15+ years at local quilt shops and quilt guilds in Nevada, Utah, Ohio, North and South Carolina. For the last 9 years, she has been teaching classes using the Deb Tucker tools and patterns, and became a Certified Instructor with Deb Tucker's Studio 180 Design in 2016. She is published in the 100 Quilt Blocks magazine and has several of her own creations. In 2017, she was selected as part of the faculty for the Studio 180 Academy in Hamilton, NY. As a Certified Instructor with Deb Tucker, Carolyn tests new patterns and techniques for Studio 180 Design and other Certified Instructors with Deb Tucker before they are released to the public.

Her goal is to inspire people to create beautiful quilts by giving them the tools and knowledge; but most important, to have fun making their masterpieces.

Heather Storta, Knitting Instructor

Heather is a TKGA-certified Master Knitter, Tech Editor and Knitting Instructor. She is the VP of Education on the board of directors of TKGA, and the editor of TKGA's K2TOG newsletter. Heather has been teaching knitting for over 15 years and teaches up and down the east coast as well as nationally (and online!) Heather resides in the Charlotte, NC area and can be found online at www.heatherstorta.com.

Jennifer Deaton, Retreat Chaplain

The Reverend Jennifer Deaton serves as Rector at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Indianola, Mississippi, and Vicar at St. John's Episcopal Church in nearby Leland. She has been chaplain for a variety of guest periods and conferences at Kanuga, where she met her husband, the Reverend Charlie Deaton. She returns for her 12th year as chaplain at KKQ. Jennifer started knitting 20 years ago (and for a brief, ill-fated stint when she was six), and learned to quilt with the help of the quilters at KKQ.