

**Eastern Illinois University**  
**The Keep**

---

2005

Press Releases

---

11-21-2005

## 11/21/2005 - Family Ties Provider Winning Edge for EIU Clothing Design Student

University Marketing and Communications

Follow this and additional works at: [https://thekeep.eiu.edu/press\\_releases\\_2005](https://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_2005)

---

### Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "11/21/2005 - Family Ties Provider Winning Edge for EIU Clothing Design Student" (2005). 2005. 240.

[https://thekeep.eiu.edu/press\\_releases\\_2005/240](https://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_2005/240)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Press Releases at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2005 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact [tabruns@eiu.edu](mailto:tabruns@eiu.edu).

## Family Ties Provide Winning Edge for EIU Clothing Design Student

Nov-21-2005

It could be said that Elizabeth Walter's recent success in clothing design is a direct result of family ties.

That's because an award-winning dress she created earlier this year was inspired by the extensive neck tie collection owned by her grandfather, James Bailey, a retired Shelbyville school principal.

Earlier this month, Walter's dress, called "All Tied Up," was accepted into two prestigious international shows: the International Textile and Apparel Association conference in Washington, D.C.; and the Chicago Fashion Group, which based its winners on design as well as grade point average.

Walter was thrilled to see her work on display for student and professional designers to see.

"It's amazing to see something that you've made from scratch go down a runway," Walter said.

Walter, who graduated from Shelbyville High School in 1998, had long dreamed of creating a dress out of ties, thanks to the hundreds of ties her grandfather had amassed in his long career in education.

"Actually, I've had the idea since I was 11 years old," Walter said, adding that she'd even sketched the design as a youngster.

She didn't raid her grandfather's closet for her creation, however. Instead, she bought ties from the Salvation Army in Mattoon, and, using special software at EIU, she and two other students created fabric to make original ties.

Walter, who had only been sewing for a year and half before she embarked on making the dress, had to take each of the existing ties apart to make them uniform in size, and she had to flare and add a new point to all of the ties, a tricky task.

The pieces of tie-shaped fabric were sewn together vertically to form the skirt. Shoulder straps made of ties were also added to the blue satin bodice.

The final product was worth the effort.

"I honestly had no doubt that she'd be selected for at least one of these competitions," said Jean Dilworth, an EIU textile design professor.

The dress was one of about 100 garments from university students in 23 countries chosen for the show in Washington, D.C. And the majority of the works selected for the Chicago show were designed by students from Chicago design schools.

The exposure Walter received will likely have a significant impact on her future career, Dilworth said.

In fact, Walter was approached by representatives of three major universities who were encouraging Walter to pursue her doctorate at their institutions.

Walter's success is also good for the EIU School of Family and Consumer Sciences, Dilworth said, as it helps get the word out that although EIU doesn't offer a design degree, EIU students can study design and excel in the field, whether they're interested in designing textiles, apparel items or digitally printed retail graphics.

Walter, who lives in the Shelbyville area, plans to earn her bachelor's degree in merchandising from EIU's School of Family and Consumer Sciences in August. She would like to stay at EIU to get her master's degree before moving ahead with her career or further education.

But for now, she's still basking in the glow of watching one of her first creations, inspired by her grandfather, attain such positive reviews from fashion experts.

"I feel like I've accomplished something," Walter said. "It was something that I'll never forget, ever."



*Elizabeth Walter's dress (modeled here by another student) was shown in two international shows in November.*