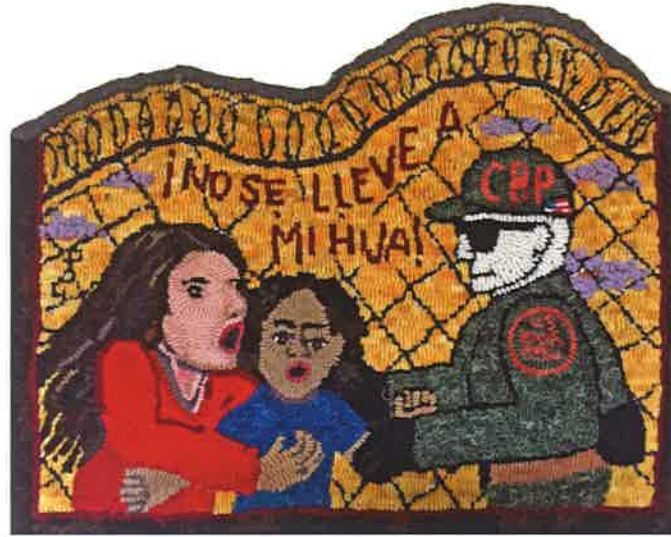




Fleeing from Persecution

POLLY A WEBBER was an Immigration Judge in San Francisco from 1995-2016. She practiced immigration law from 1977-1995 before becoming a judge. An officer in *the American Immigration Lawyers Assn* for many years, Judge Webber was *National President* in 1989-90.



Caught in the Covfefe

Over her last 10 years on the bench and in retirement, she is a fiber artist, mainly in rug hooking and yarn arts. For her these activities are forms of meditation that have been an important counterbalance to the pressures and intense focus of being an Immigration Judge. ©Polly A. Webber All Rights Reserved



Safe Haven

Dear Friends,

There is a pressing need for immigration reform in the United States. The Dreamers captured the hearts of a majority of Americans, and the taking of the children captured their outrage. It is time to bring this issue forward whatever way possible. This is my small contribution.

My refugee-themed triptych, "Refugee Dilemma," uses multiple rugs to tell a story about people fleeing from persecution to a safe haven. Indeed, it is a tribute to the thousands of people who seek refuge from their places of origin annually all over the world.

"Fleeing from Persecution:" The first rug pays homage to now extinct but iconic San Diego traffic signs and the fleeing refugees they sought to protect. The plea "Help us!" appears in Spanish, Mayan, Haitian, Arabic, Pashto, Somali, Sudanese, Russian, and English. I used marbled red and brown wool for the silhouettes to make them more human and universal. The white outline around the figures is a technique found in Russian art.

"Caught in the Covfefe:" The second rug depicts a border patrol officer taking a young girl from her undocumented mother, who is pleading in Spanish, "Don't take my daughter!" The officer's face is

hooked in pure white, an institutional and domineering color, and he is given an almost robotic stance. The mother is frenzied, understandably, and the child is traumatized. The chicken wire fence around them with its barbed wire atop, and the borders around the rug are all done to project the feeling of being trapped. With the more open border at the top, there is hope. "Covfefe" is a made-up word tweeted by Donald Trump. It went viral as nonsense. I use it to describe the confusing, nonsensical, inhumane hell that Trump and Homeland Security's Border Patrol put families, and especially children, through as they attempted to assert asylum eligibility at the border and secure a safe haven.

"Safe Haven:" The third rug depicts two Central American women and their children, in a place of relative safety. For some, this is still aspirational, while others have succeeded. Their smiles are tired smiles, but full of hope. The pattern for this rug was developed from a rug that my aunt, Emma Webber (1917-2015), hooked decades ago from a 1950s UNICEF card. Knowing how much my aunt would have appreciated this group of rugs, I wanted to honor her as well.