

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Life began at 50 in 1980; that is my photographic life began then. The seed was planted many years before, during summers of my college years when I worked for my father's newspaper as a reporter. It was here that I often was awed at the power of one black and white photograph and the story it told.

Of course, life had ways of interfering. There was college to finish, establish myself in a job, marriage and children. At 50, I found myself able to pursue whatever I wanted. I bought a camera, took a course called "No Nothing Photography," joined The Latent Image Workshop in Bethesda, MD and started shooting. Our work was 'critically critiqued' at every meeting and it was there that I was reintroduced to black and white photography.

Upon retirement from teaching, in 1990, I moved to Tucson, Arizona, For me, adjustment to the bright light and the browns in the landscape in Arizona was difficult. I decided not to do anymore color. I was used to lots of trees and tall buildings, but mostly trees and green and dimmer light. So I concentrated on black and white.

Diligently, I worked several days a week in the darkroom, showed my photos at a camera club, went home and repeated this cycle. After winning the photograph of the year award and having a couple of monthly 1st or 2nd place winners, as well as placing well at the state level, I decided that I didn't want to compete anymore. I needed to work on 'bodies of work.'

This was more difficult than I realized. My first big body of work included infra-red photography both in Tucson and in Montana. I loved Montana because of the green fields and rolling hills beneath the majestic mountains except, once, when a yearling bear that tried to get into the hot tub with us one night!

Life changed in 2000. My son, who lived in Maryland, had developed a rare blood cancer. We, his family, were most concerned, and were not prepared for this. Adjusting to having my son ill, made me realize that I needed more meaning in my life-a serious project, something that had meaning for me.

I was volunteering at a homeless women's shelter at the time and I often marveled at how these women survived. I so wanted to show their faces to others, but needed an incentive or push in order to start. My project became the answer. I soon discovered that, after one of the women trusted me enough to invite me to her camp, others followed. From November 2002 to November 2003, I continued to photograph homeless women. In order to know how to present my work, I turned to Pima Community College and spent 3 semesters of independent study with Ann Simmons-Myers. Thus, my first major portfolio, Women of Courage, came to life.

I continued the black and white photography until digital photography entered the scene. Now I spend hours at the computer instead of in the darkroom. My goals have continued changing throughout this process. Before the homeless women series I had not thought about photo essays...telling stories. I do now.

My second portfolio is named, Mostly Oaxaca, and consists of stories of people from Oaxaca or a neighboring state in Mexico. My current portfolio is titled: Tattoo Artists, Their Art and Their Clients.

All of this brings me to where I am today, telling stories with photographs for people that would normally never see these faces. Understanding and accepting others, as I peek into their lives, helps give my life meaning. My son succumbed to the cancer in 2008 at the age of 50. I owe a lot to him. The effect of his illness on me gave me the courage to do what I could do and had, perhaps, always wanted to do. I'm eternally grateful to him for his encouragement.

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