

PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

P.28 WHO'S HIRING
And What They Want

P.30 GLASS ACTION
Long Lens Techniques

P.55 CAREER REFRAMED
Finding Your Calling



Bliss

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NEW CONSUMER RESEARCH

Many Decisions Lead to One Booking

People's reasons for hiring a professional photographer haven't changed, but the economic landscape and the complexity of the hiring decision have.

PPA's latest consumer research reveals the multifaceted decision-making process clients navigate today when choosing a photographer.

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Decode consumer behaviors and attitudes with "Photography Consumers 2026: Behind the Booking Decision."

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THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS OF AMERICA

Director of Publications Melanie Lasoff Levs, mlevs@ppa.com
Senior Editor Joan Sherwood, jsherwood@ppa.com
Senior Editor Amanda Arnold, aarnold@ppa.com
Art Director/Production Manager Eryn March, emarch@ppa.com
Editor-at-Large Jeff Kent, jkent@ppa.com
Contributing Editor Ellis Vener
Account Manager Jasmine Butler, jbutler@ppa.com, (404) 522-8600 x215
Advertising Sales Specialist Melat Tezera, mtezera@ppa.com, (404) 522-8600 x223

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Professional Photographers of America, csc@ppa.com, ppa.com, (800) 786-6277

EDITORIAL OFFICES

Professional Photographer, 229 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 2300, Atlanta, GA 30303-1608 U.S.A., (404) 522-8600

Professional Photographer, official journal of Professional Photographers of America Inc., is the oldest exclusively professional photographic publication in the Western Hemisphere (founded 1907 by Charles Abel, Hon.M.Photog.), incorporating *Abel's Photographic Weekly*, *St. Louis & Canadian Photographer*, *The Commercial Photographer*, *The National Photographer*, and *Professional Photographer Storytellers*.

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Professional Photographer (ISSN 1528-5286) is published monthly by PPA Publications and Events Inc., 229 Peachtree Street, NE, Ste. 2300, Atlanta, GA 30303-1608. Periodicals postage paid at Atlanta, Ga., and additional mailing offices.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Professional Photographer*, 229 Peachtree Street, NE., Suite 2300, Atlanta, GA 30303-1608.

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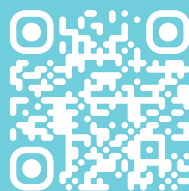
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Second Acts

LEAPING INTO PHOTOGRAPHY

When I was 4 years old, I told my mother I wanted to be an “arthur.” For those not familiar with preschooler-speak, I meant “author.” I’ve been a voracious reader and writer my whole life, graduated from college with a journalism degree and a minor in English literature, and have spent my entire career in media. I didn’t realize until adulthood that my single-minded pursuit was an anomaly. As I see with my three growing children, it is more typical to “try on” diverse interests and potential careers. I am inspired by friends who enjoyed long careers in one area and, under various circumstances, shifted to new skillsets and industries. Among them: a book editor who went to law school and now represents clients in the food and beverage industry, an attorney turned fine artist and art professor, and a small business owner who earned a degree in library science and is now a middle school librarian.

The photographers featured in “Career Reframed” on page 55 follow a similar trajectory. After successful careers in wildly different areas—one a psychiatric case manager, one an accountant, and one in the U.S. Army and then a federal air marshal—they pursued photography, where they feel reenergized and fulfilled. They cite many skills they perfected in their previous careers as crucial to their photography businesses, including empathy, flexibility, boundary-setting, and communication. They all recognize that despite the uncertainty that can come with self-employment, there is a freedom their previous careers lacked. “Being able to get outside on a workday in the gorgeous Pacific Northwest, to enjoy happy people ready to take gorgeous photos, is so much fun,” says Meaghan Bickel of Joy Photography, who has been a full-time photographer for seven years and has a brick-and-mortar studio in Washington state. “I get to create the kind of environment I want to work in,” says Florian Marschoun, CPP, who traveled around the world while an accountant. He started his full-time wedding photography business in Maui, Hawaii, and now primarily practices architectural photography in Northampton, Massachusetts.

It’s empowering—albeit unnerving—to transition from a steady income at an established organization to the unpredictable balancing of entrepreneurship and craft. It’s also amazing how many of our members have done it successfully. Last year, as part of our regular reader survey emailed to PPA members, we asked who had had different careers before photography. We heard from more than 100 second-career photographers with backgrounds including in military service, technology, teaching, and healthcare. Throughout the year, we will share more of their journeys, as well as their tips and insights into how to make that transition to full-time professional photographer. It is not for the weak, but all our second-career photographers are proud they took the leap. As Tulsa-Oklahoma-based Curtis Sprague, M.Photos., says about his photography career, “The vibe is just better now.” •

Melanie Lasoff Levs

Melanie Lasoff Levs

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Plan, save, and invest with IRA options designed for photographers.

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FOREGROUND

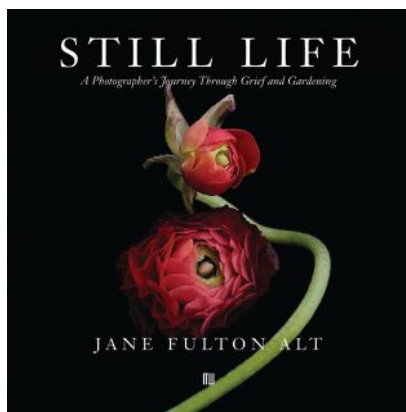
By Amanda Arnold

Gardening in Grief

TENDING TO LOSS THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY



IMAGES © JANE FULTON ALT / janefultonalt.com



When photographer Jane Fulton Alt lost her husband, she turned her attention to the garden he'd cultivated in response to his concerns over climate change. She had no experience gardening but found solace in the daily ritual of nurturing plants. The work also inspired a photo series. Her new book, "Still Life: A Photographer's Journey Through Grief and Gardening," is a collection of images she captured of the budding flowers, ripe berries, and luscious greenery of the garden that lives on.

Some photos highlight plants within the garden; some photos feature arrangements of flowers and berries picked from the garden, mirroring Dutch still-life paintings. For the latter, the setup was simple, she says: "A table, a backdrop of black velvet, and the early morning light streaming through the kitchen window." She used a Fujifilm X-T2 on a tripod. "I took many photographs that did not work," Alt says. "I think the key to a good photograph is to get yourself, your mind, and your ego out of the way. When you become one with the subject, the magic happens." •



Stamp of Approval

TOM MURPHY'S WORK CATCHES THE EYE OF THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE



It was an email out of the blue, says Livingston, Montana-based wildlife and nature photographer Tom Murphy. The United States Postal Service reached out to see if he might have a photo of a bison they could feature on a commemorative U.S. stamp.

He forwarded a couple dozen of his favorites, but they weren't quite right, he says. They wanted a profile of the animal that showed the full shape of its body. Murphy sent along a second set of options. The USPS immediately selected an image of a young bull he'd photographed in 2008 in Hayden Valley, Yellowstone National Park, with a Nikon D2X camera and a 200-400mm lens. "They loved it. It's simple. It's graphic. It's against the sky, so the background is perfectly clean," Murphy explains. "And [the bison] is standing in some grass. They really liked that little line of grass along the bottom."

The photo also works well with an image of a vintage 1923, 30-cent stamp featuring an etching of a bison that was overlaid on Murphy's photo. "They converted [my image] to sepia," he says, "so it's kind of like an old photograph, too, which is cool."

What does it feel like to have your work printed on commemorative U.S. stamp? Kind of odd, Murphy laughs, but gratifying. "When I was a little kid, I collected postage stamps because I thought they were little works of art," he says. "So, it's kind of cool, you know, that 15 million of mine are going to be little works of art." •



TOM MURPHY



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On PhotoVision at ppa.com, read more about Tom Murphy's work.

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The Big Reveal

PLACING GRAND WALL ART THAT MOVES CLIENTS



VERONICA TEJERA AND VIRGINIA CARROCIO

“THERE’S A ROMANTIC IDEA OF HANGING ARTWORK YOURSELF, BUT THAT ROMANCE QUICKLY DISAPPEARS ... WHERE PRECISION MATTERS AND MISTAKES ARE COSTLY.”



Installation day should be a “museum ribbon cutting,” advises Virginia Carrocio, who runs VV Fine Portraits in Boca Raton, Florida, with her partner Veronica Tejera. The studio focuses exclusively on commissioned fine art wall portraiture, creating custom framed work to display in clients’ homes. Carrocio offers tips on installing portraits:

Hire an art installer. “There’s a romantic idea of hanging artwork yourself, but that romance quickly disappears when installing large-scale pieces in refined homes where precision matters and mistakes are costly,” she says.

Start with painter’s tape. This allows the client to see what the scale of the piece will be like in the room before it’s placed.

Place it right. Carrocio’s installer recommends wall art hang between 57 inches and 62 inches from the floor. Adjustments should be made for furniture and ceiling height.

Use D-rings. Instead of traditional hanging wire, Carrocio’s installer uses D-rings on both sides of the artwork, which prevents the work from moving over time. “Installing those rings slightly angled inward keeps hooks hidden and allows the piece to sit flush against the wall,” she says, “a small detail that makes a visual difference.”

Make it a ceremony. Once the piece is installed, invite the clients into the room, talk about what inspired the piece, decisions that were made along the way, and what the portrait means to the client, she says. “It becomes an emotional moment.” •

Respect Yourself First

BUILD A MEANINGFUL BUSINESS

By Makayla Harris, Cr.Photog., CPP

©PHANEENDRA GUDAPATI



In my first year photographing weddings, I had one goal: Book anyone who was willing to pay us. And I meant *anyone*.

That first summer we charged \$1,500 for full-day photo and video coverage. At the time it felt like a win just to hear someone say yes. I remember thinking, *I can't believe people are actually paying me to do this*.

But the truth is, when you're booking based on price alone, people can smell the desperation a mile away. One wedding in particular stands out. It was held at a local firehouse. My husband and I showed up early and stayed late, documenting every moment. I'd spent months planning timelines, shot lists, and getting to know the families to capture important relationships. On the wedding day I climbed on tables, crouched under chairs, and chased creative angles trying to produce something they'd be proud to have in print for the rest of their lives.

At the end of the night, the groom was so drunk he tried to start a fight with my husband because he thought he was a cop crashing the party. I remember standing there thinking, *I left my kids for this?*

That wedding wasn't unusual for that season. We booked anything that came our way, sometimes for just a few hundred dollars. Every time we finished a wedding, I felt the same strange combination of gratitude and deflation: grateful that someone trusted me and deflated because none of it felt meaningful.

I poured my heart into every event. I spent every dollar we earned on new gear so I could deliver better work than the small portfolio our clients saw at booking. I roped my siblings into being second photographers because I couldn't afford contractors. I sacrificed weekends with my kids to try to build a business that mattered. At the end of the night, most clients didn't even remember my name. I wasn't an artist. I wasn't a storyteller. I was just hired help.

When you compete on price, you may work harder than everyone else in the room,

but your value is defined by the one thing you made yourself known for: being cheap. And cheap is always replaceable.

On the drive home from the firehouse wedding, we asked ourselves a hard question: What are we building? If we were going to leave our family every weekend to serve other families, we wanted it to feel like a relationship. We wanted to care deeply about the couples we worked with and feel like they cared about us, too.

That kind of relationship requires respect, and respect is hard to earn when you're begging for bookings. So, we made a bold decision. If we wanted to provide a five-course experience, we had to stop acting like a drive-through. Overnight we raised our price from \$1,500 to \$7,500.

It was terrifying. I was convinced people would laugh. But I also knew that if I wasn't confident in my value, there was no way a client would be confident in investing in it.

We signed up for a bridal show and arrived with the biggest, most beautiful sample albums we could afford. We printed large wall portraits. We dressed like we were going to a fancy steakhouse. We made it our mission to connect with people in a way that made them want to hire *us*, not just our price point. That shift, from chasing bookings to building relationships, became the foundation of our business.

Here's the lesson: Your value has to start with you. Raising your prices may feel scary. It's natural to feel unworthy or not ready. But the moment you establish your standard, your job becomes showing the world you're worthy of that standard.

Believe in yourself first. Your clients will follow. •

Bonita Springs, Florida-based Makayla Harris is co-founder of The Harris Company, and founder/CEO of ASET: Album & Art Sales and the Printographers Society.



See more from Makayla Harris, Cr.Photog., CPP, on [PhotoVision](https://ppa.com) at ppa.com.

FROM JONNY EDWARD

PHOTO VISION

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Fuel for Photographers

TURN CONNECTIONS INTO BOOKINGS

Jonny Edward

Jonny Edward is an internationally renowned photographer, art director, and creative educator based in Denver, Colorado.

Through the medium of photography and poetic interplay of light and shadow, Jonny deftly crafts captivating visual narratives that celebrate authenticity and embolden individuality.

"Keep your focus on the fact that there's a human being in front of you and never lose sight of that."

Great PORTRAITS START WITH *Human Connection*

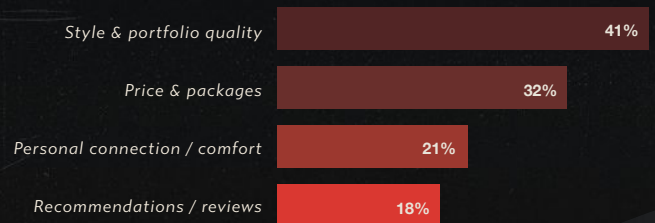
Great images may attract clients, but the booking decision goes beyond style.

PPA research shows that while portfolio quality and pricing matter, clients also value personal connection, trust, and recommendations when choosing a photographer.

Clients aren't just selecting images—they're choosing someone they trust to guide the experience.

PPA.com/Research

WHAT MOST INFLUENCED YOUR FINAL CHOICE OF PHOTOGRAPHER?



*From PPA's Behind the Buying Decision Research Report

BEFORE THE SESSION: A QUICK PREP CHECKLIST

- Start with a conversation.** A pre-session consultation helps clients feel comfortable and builds trust.
- Explain the experience.** Walk clients through what happens before, during, and after the session.
- Keep pricing simple.** Clear packages and transparent deliverables help clients understand their options.
- Reinforce trust.** Reviews, referrals, and testimonials help clients feel confident saying yes.



Explore PPA's guides and consumer research to refine your client communication, streamline your process, and create a portrait experience clients can't wait to say yes to.
PPA.com/JonnyEdwardTips





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Blush

Amy Dawnelle, M.Photog.

Amy Dawnelle Modern Heirloom Photography
Murrieta, California

CAMERA & LENS: Canon EOS 5D Mark II,
Canon EF 50mm f/1.8 STM lens

EXPOSURE: 1/125 second at f/1.8, ISO 125

LIGHTING: Amy Dawnelle used an AlienBees
B400 with a 48x72-inch Photogenic soft box

POST-CAPTURE: She softened the skin
and made adjustments using Photoshop
and Evoto.



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Bird of Paradise

LuAnn Warner-Prokos, M.Photog.

Warner-Prokos Photography

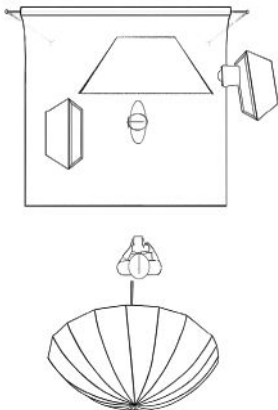
Boca Raton, Florida

CAMERA & LENS: Nikon Z 7II, Nikkor Z 24-70mm f/2.8 S lens

EXPOSURE: 1/160 second at f/7.1, ISO 250

LIGHTING: LuAnn Warner-Prokos used Einstein lights: The main light was a bare bulb bounced from a white board about 7 feet above the subject. One fill light with a Paul C. Buff 2x3-foot soft box modifier, was camera left about 3 feet from the subject, nearly even with the top of the subject's head and angled toward and down about 45 degrees. A second fill light, also with a Paul C. Buff 2x3-foot soft box modifier, was camera right, slightly back toward the backdrop and a bit higher and angled toward the subject. A third soft fill light, modified with a double diffused 7-foot bounce umbrella, was behind her.

POST-CAPTURE: In Adobe Lightroom, she made white balance adjustments, increased exposure, and decreased the highlights. In Photoshop, she used Liquify to expand the fabric background, fill in the floor where needed, and did frequency separation for skin smoothing and for areas of the fabric. She used the clone tool for the fabric on top.



© LUANN WARNER-PROKOS / wpportraiture.com



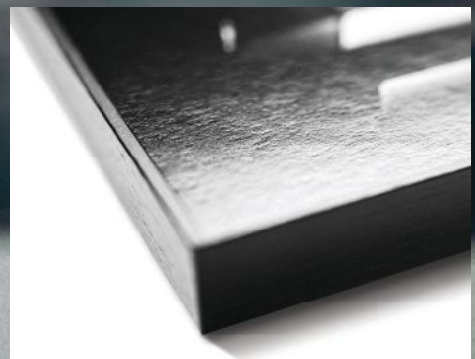
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Faceplant Recovery

It's important in life and work to separate failure from your identity and reconnect it to learning. If failure typically makes you agonize in self-blame and fear trying new things, it won't be easy. Failure is emotional and complicated. You may have convinced yourself there are things you can't do based on past failures. Who was there to witness those failures? Were they coaches who helped you improve, or judges who turned failure into punishment?



The co-authors of “Faceplant: FREE Yourself from Failure’s Funk” examine how they have coped with failure in their careers and offer fresh perspective. The **FREE** acronym simplifies how to face failure and transform your relationship to it.

FOCUS
on the failure.

REFLECT
on your reaction.

EXPLORE
your options.

ENGAGE
in flipping the script.

Make a Change

REBRANDING: FROM INTIMIDATING TO REWARDING

By *Marcela Limon, M.Photog.Cr., CPP*

Let's be real: When you first open a photography business, you don't have things figured out. You jump in with passion and excitement, give your business a name, a voice, a brand. You choose your niche and plan your marketing. You join an association like PPA to learn more technical and business skills. Years pass and your business matures. *You* mature. With maturity comes change, and then you determine it's time to rebrand, so your business reflects this new stage.

That's what happened to me last year. I started my photography business, Lemonshoots, in 2015, specializing in maternity and newborn portraits. After years on an unsuccessful fertility journey, I had a deep appreciation for the pregnant body and I saw babies as miracles.

Like many of us during the COVID-19 pandemic, I was forced to pivot, and started offering 6-month and one-year baby portrait sessions. Time went by and my clients were done building their families. I had photographed their first, second, and sometimes third children, and we would say good-bye with tears in our eyes knowing that I was no longer their portrait artist. Why was I allowing that to happen?

Last spring, as my business's 10th anniversary approached, I knew something had to change. My clients were evolving and so was I. Maternity and baby photography was still my passion, but that didn't mean I could not offer children and family portraits



IMAGES © MARCELA LIMON / marcelalimon.com



© JENNIFER GRAHAM PHOTOGRAPHY

MARCELA LIMON

to the people I already loved and who loved me. After considering for a few months the idea of expanding my niche, I decided to take the leap, retire Lemonshoots, and use my name to reflect my rebrand as a portrait artist. This change required more than a new business and adding a couple more photography



Marcela Limon, M.Photog.Cr., CPP, incorporates oil painting into her portraits.



genres. I also doubled down on printed artwork and bid farewell to digital files. I decided to explore other artistic avenues by incorporating oil painting into my photographs. This was huge. Would my clients embrace these new offerings? Would they complain about not getting digital files? Would they still like me?

A rebrand is an opportunity to redefine who you are, what you do, and why you do it. Take full advantage of the growth it will provide for you. In my rebranding process, I learned a lot. I wish I knew some of these tips before, and I'm glad to share them with you now.

WORK FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Before you jump into new designs, logos, branding, look within yourself to redefine your business.

Ask yourself hard questions. Why do I want to do this? What in my business doesn't serve me anymore? What do I want to add, change, or remove? Who is my ideal client and what kind of experience do I want them to have working with me? Most importantly, what do I want my signature product to be? Where do I see my business in five years? What does success look and feel like?

Answering these questions will deter-

mine the direction of your rebrand. For example, your process will be different if you're building a bubbly business to attract teenagers for senior portraits versus a luxurious brand specializing in high-end destination weddings. Your answers to those crucial questions serve as the foundation of your brand's identity, and your logo, fonts, colors, language, services, and products will reflect that.

Consider your systems and processes. You might have to update everything from workflows to price lists to product lines. This takes time and can feel daunting. If you have a CRM in place, review every workflow step to make sure there's no trace of your old brand. I kept a list of things I needed to update, including email signatures, and links to social media and websites. Every time I found something with my old logo, either in digital or print, I added it to that list.

Analyze your current product offerings. Are there items that don't fit anymore? Do you need to change vendors? Run your COGS (cost of goods sold) and CODB (cost of doing business) analysis so you can price everything according to your income goals. Depending on your business and brand, you might need business cards, brochures, forms, stickers, envelopes, ribbons, and branded packaging. Since I was introducing mixed-media portraits, I needed items I hadn't even considered before, such as a wax seal with my logo



accountable. Rebranding is a tough journey to make alone. There are easy and exciting tasks, like choosing your new name and logo, but there are many not-so-fun things to focus on, like analyzing financials. I am certain I would have called it quits at different stages if I hadn't had mentors to keep me going.

Finding someone you admire and who aligns with your values and principles makes a big difference in your rebranding journey. For me, that meant I needed someone who was already doing what I wanted to do—family portraits, no digitals, mixed-media art, wall-portrait focus—with success. Interview a few candidates and select the person or people who fit best. A rebrand takes time, and you'll be sharing a lot with this person: not only numbers and data, but personal things, too. A rebranding mentorship can last anywhere from three months to over a year. Once you find your mentor or mentors, remember that just because your mentor offers advice doesn't mean it's the only path to success. They are there to guide you, but you make the decisions for yourself and your business.



LEMONSHOOTS

The switch from the Lemonshoots logo, above, to the new Marcela Limon logo maintained style continuity while showing a clear change.



MARCELA LIMON
PORTRAIT ARTIST

and a more professional certificate of authenticity.

Address digital marketing. Once you change your domain name, make sure you update social media handles and ensure all redirects and links work properly. And about that domain name change: Before you settle on your new business name, make sure the domain and social media handles are available. If they are, secure them right away. You can keep both while you work on being ready for the change.

FIND A MENTOR

This is crucial, at least for someone like me who works well when being held

PREPARE TO INVEST

Rebranding can be expensive, including paying for new signage, new studio samples, a studio remodel, and reprinting everything with a new logo. You may decide you need to invest in new equipment as well. It's also a time investment. Your day will often be split between client work and the rebrand. You might have to cut back on the number of clients you serve to work on your business, which could mean less revenue.

Last year was one of my slowest years. That was a blessing in disguise, since I could focus on the rebrand. It was scary not to have the steady income, but I'd

reviewed my accounts and knew I could handle it. Business may be slow as well when you start up your new business, especially if your rebrand requires changing your domain name. It can take weeks or even months for a newly named business to show up in search engines, so plan for a slower-than-normal season once you launch. I worked with an SEO expert (another rebrand expense) a few months before the domain change, which helped me with the transition.

LET GO OF THE OLD

If you've been in business for a long time, you might feel comfortable doing things a certain way. Some of those practices can stay after the rebrand, but others will need to change.

Years ago, I heard something that has stuck with me: "What got you here won't take you there." It's true. I built a thriving business by offering portrait packages that included both digitals and albums, but those products were not going to help me sell more mixed-media wall portraits in my rebranded business. I had to let them go. You're allowed to let go of what doesn't work anymore, because today you're a different person, a different artist, and a different business owner. Your new mindset, concepts, tools, and drive will take you and your business to new heights.

GROW WITH THE CHANGE

Rebranding is transformational as an artist and a businessperson. Many changes will be visible, but the most important ones will be inside your mind. When I was still considering what to do, I looked at everything I needed to change and was overwhelmed. I remember sitting in my office after a Zoom meeting with my mentor, where we had been



YOUR NEW MINDSET, CONCEPTS, TOOLS,
AND DRIVE WILL TAKE YOU AND YOUR BUSINESS
TO NEW HEIGHTS.

discussing why I wanted to rebrand. My eyes rested on a postcard my grandmother gave me 20 years ago when she went to Paris, which hangs on the wall behind my computer. It shows a giraffe transforming into the Eiffel Tower. At the bottom, it says: "Paris - Metamorphoses." Suddenly, I noticed that postcard in a new way. The definition of metamorphosis is "the process of transformation from an immature form to an adult form, through growth and differentiation."

That postcard became the spark I needed. Recreating my business was scary and uncomfortable, but I wanted to evolve. I wanted to serve my clients better and feel more fulfilled with the art I created. After the rebrand, I feel more joy every day I'm in my studio. When I'm painting my portraits, I feel

so happy compared to uploading files to a flash drive. It's been less than a year since I launched my new brand. I've been networking, reaching out to schools and nonprofit organizations with auctions that benefit children, and getting the message out about what I do. The response has been amazing. There's still much to do to fill up my calendar, but I know I'll get there. Through the process of rebranding, I grew so much as an artist and a person. I rediscovered myself and found new passions. If I was able to do it, so are you. •



Learn more about
branding on PhotoVision
at ppa.com.

Help Wanted

PROFESSIONALS SHARE WHAT THEY LOOK FOR IN HIRING PHOTOGRAPHERS

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were over 151,200 photographers in the country in 2024*. The government expects employment of photographers to grow about 2% between now and 2034, “slower than the average for all occupations,” according to the bureau’s website.

If you run your own photography business, you are technically employed. And, you already know that part of the job is, well, *finding jobs*. We asked people who book photographers in their lines of work—including media professionals, fundraisers, realtors, and event planners—what they look for when making a hiring decision. Their comments have been edited for length and clarity. Perhaps their insights can help you prepare for your next assignment.

“**WE ALWAYS LOOK** for photographers who provide high-quality work, but beyond that, they truly become an extension of our business. Because of this, it’s important that they are professional and comfortable working directly with our clients. Our best partnerships are with photographers who are reliable, consistent, and take pride in what they do. The ones who fit best with our team present themselves as part of our organization while also representing their own business with the same level of care and professionalism.”

– **CHRISTY GALLAGHER, PUBLISHER OF STROLL LIDO ISLE AND GREET CORONA DEL MAR, CORONA DEL MAR, CALIFORNIA**



COURTESY OF THE N2 COMPANY

“**WE HIRE A PROFESSIONAL** photographer for every listing we have. Last year we had 37 listings. This year we will have more than that, but professional photographs for our listings are a must. We have tried a few listing photography companies, and we landed on one company that we love and are loyal to. We requested that only certain photographers from their whole team do our listings, because they know what we want without us asking. [We look for] responsiveness, flexibility, great customer service to us and our clients, proven work we can look at, and consistent quality of work.”

– **ALISON SIMON, REALTOR IN PHILADELPHIA AND ITS SUBURBS**

“**HAVING IMAGERY IS** vitally important to fundraising and to everything we do: [including] marketing images, social media, event footage, etc. I’ve watched the world change when it comes to hiring photographers and videographers. ... For the past eight years, we used to hire a photographer for everything. Now we want someone who does both. Nonprofit budgets are tight, and sending two people [a photographer and a videographer] is not always possible. Expanding your skills to shooting video is not that big of a stretch. Photographers already have the eye and the technical know-how. It’s getting video clips that are long enough to use that really adds to their benefit. Doing both is nearly impossible. ... I tend to lean on videos more and pull stills.”

– **KATE CROSBY, SENIOR PRODUCER OF MARKETING AT THE ATLANTA-BASED INTERNATIONAL NONPROFIT CARE**



© JOSH ESTEY / CARE

CARE hires photographers to capture images around the world, including in Tica, Mozambique, where contractor Josh Estey photographed Luis, who used his own small fishing boat to rescue dozens impacted by severe floods in 2019.

“I TEND TO HIRE photographers for client events where I need a quick turnaround. Often, we need to distribute photos to media the same day, so I have the conversation about turnaround time when I’m considering a hire. I also need a photographer who understands the type of photo that a newspaper, for example, would use. Of course, being on time (early) is a key factor. Price is sometimes an issue, as our smaller nonprofit clients don’t usually have big budgets.

“Sometimes we have clients who call with a photographer need on short notice, so I have a list of good photographers I can go to when that happens. In these situations, a quick response to my phone call, email, or text is important.”

—MITCH LEFF, PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONAL, ATLANTA

COURTESY OF SPOTLIGHT COMMUNICATIONS



“I HIRE PHOTOGRAPHERS five to six times a year all around the country. This means I frequently have to research and identify a new potential photographer in a market I’m not familiar with. The purpose for the photos ranges from headshots to client events to keynotes to brand photos. When I look for photographers, I look for someone who has had specific experience in working with companies, brands, and individuals to tell a story. Experience matters less to me than potential and alignment with my values and goals.

“I want to see how a photographer brings out the unique essence of each individual they photograph. I’m curious how the photographers tell their own stories of what motivates them, what they enjoy doing most, and what their values or priorities are. A great photographer has to remain calm to help support the high energy of a shoot and the many people involved—and even when things don’t go as planned. I look for someone who can absorb what’s happening around them and create clarity in their work.”

— SHANNA A. HOCKING, AUTHOR, LEADERSHIP CONSULTANT, PHILANTHROPIC ADVISOR, KEYNOTE SPEAKER, GREATER PHILADELPHIA

**The last year data was available.*



©LIZ ORNITZ

Poet Karla Jackson-Brewer at a Poetic People Power event

“I ONLY HIRE a photographer once a year for Poetic People Power events so I’m working with a small event budget. I look for someone who can capture people in action because of the performance aspects of the poetry presentations. And someone will rise to the top of my list because of minor things like responding to an inquiry in a timely manner, keeping me up to date on their arrival time if they’ll be five minutes late, taking the time to listen to the types of shots and look I need, and turning the photos in to me within two days (I don’t require editing).”

—TARA BRACCO, EVENT PLANNER FOR POETIC PEOPLE POWER, NEW YORK CITY

“I USUALLY CHECK OUT their Instagram to get a sense of their style and what types of things they like to shoot. I love it when a photographer can showcase their creativity with their candid photos. Usually I start out by telling them what I am able to offer them, then I show them the magazine and see if it’s a fit. I’ve learned when they are an immediate ‘yes’ to partner, they are a good fit. I think their overall style of their Instagram and/or website helps them stand out. I’m looking for an aesthetic that matches my magazine.”

— ANDREA ROMINGER, PUBLISHER OF STROLL CRESTLINE, BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

Big Glass Action

OLYMPIC LESSONS IN LONG LENS TECHNIQUES

By *Mark Edward Harris*



IMAGES ©MARK EDWARD HARRIS / ZUMA PRESS

While tracking athletes moving in a predictable way, such as speed skaters, an autofocus setting like Dynamic-area AF (S), which focuses on a point selected by the user, could be the best method to hold focus where you want it.

Whether the action is taking place on a pitch, a piste, a track, or in a ring, photographing Olympic sports typically requires long lenses and a variety of techniques. These same basic techniques can be applied to both other sports and other photography genres.

The competition in the Olympic photographers' pit can be as tough as what's going on in front of the Nikons, Canons, and Sonys directed at the athletes. So, being at the top of your game as a credentialed photographer is imperative. With photographers often pinned into relatively tight photo positions, getting the gold, photographically speaking, and not making it onto the podium can be measured in fractions of a second or the slightest degrees of an angle.

At the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan Cortina, Italy, I covered several competitions, including hockey, and figure and speed skating in Milan, downhill skiing in Cortina, slalom in Bormio, and freeski big air in Livigno.

Photographing during heavy snowfall can be particularly challenging, but I was able to track competitors with both my Nikkor Z 400mm f/2.8 TC VR S and Nikkor Z 600mm f/4 TC VR S lenses using the 3D-tracking focusing mode with People selected for subject detection on my Nikon Z 9. Most of the other focusing modes would have accidentally focused on the snowflakes. In the case of slalom, even on a clear day, non-3D autofocus modes might accidentally lock in on the red and blue gate poles, though using People subject detection will lessen those odds. In the old days I would manually prefocus on a red or blue gate pole and engage my motor drive just before the skier came into my composition, keeping my finger depressed on the shutter until just after they departed the frame.



In events such as big air (left) where it's not as easy to predict where an athlete will be, I like a Wide-area AF (L) or (S) shooting mode. If it's snowing, 3D-tracking set on People can help focus stay on the athlete.

I knew in advance that shooting at a high FPS rate in raw to capture just the right moment would mean that most of the images would end up in the digital waste bin.

The 3D-tracking mode can be an issue when an athlete temporarily goes out of frame, so each competition has to be analyzed and quickly tested to increase the odds of success. The Dynamic-area AF (M), with a medium area of coverage, can be a valuable tool when athletes are moving unpredictably, whereas if they are following a clear, predictable course, Dynamic-area AF (S), small, could be the right selection. Speed skaters moving around a rink is one such scenario for the latter (left). The camera focuses on a point selected by the user. If the subject briefly leaves the selected point, the camera will focus based on surrounding points. While I work with Nikons for my

“GETTING THE GOLD, PHOTOGRAPHICALLY SPEAKING, CAN BE MEASURED IN FRACTIONS OF A SECOND OR THE SLIGHTEST DEGREES OF AN ANGLE.”

sports photography, all camera manufacturers have similar settings.

Tripods are not allowed at Olympic venues, so monopods are a must. I use a carbon fiber Benro SuperDupa, which extends to 72 inches, yet can collapse down to 19 inches, making it ideal for travel. Its optional tilt head is valuable for long lenses. Because big glass outweighs camera bodies, the monopod is attached to the lens foot. Besides reducing the weight in our hands, monopods help with framing. With a long lens, the slightest movement can accidentally cut off a pair of feet, skis, or skates, so anything that can add stability is an asset. This can

include utilizing vibration reduction, but most sports require shutter speeds fast enough to freeze the action without the need for it. Once I establish the position to photograph from and a composition that will work based on the anticipated action, I dial in the correct settings.

A complete understanding of the exposure triangle—shutter speed, aperture, ISO—is a must. At the top is shutter speed. If it's set too slow and the goal is to freeze the action, you could miss a once-in-a-lifetime moment. It's always better to err on the side of having too fast a shutter speed. An advantage of my go-to long lens—the Nikkor Z 400mm f/2.8 TC VR S



I set my exposure compensation to -1 for the dark costume and backdrop of Ilia Malinin's exhibition gala performance.



During the Olympic closing ceremony, I crept toward my self-determined ISO limit with this exposure at 1/1,000 second at f/4, ISO 5600, EV -0.33.

with a built-in teleconverter—is besides rendering a magnificent bokeh, I can photograph wide to keep my ISOs down. Noise reduction software has also given photographers higher thresholds for their ISOs. That said, I set an ISO limit at 10,000 on my Nikon Z 9 and Z 8 cameras but try to stay far below that. Ideally, I don't want to go above ISO 3200. Indoor events at the Olympics are brightly lit, so I don't have to push too close to my self-imposed limit.

At the Olympics and other sporting events, I'm surrounded by photographers working mostly with long zoom lenses. This gives them more flexibility in terms of in-camera framing. I'm not anti-zoom; I just know the quality of my Z 400mm f/2.8 is unbeatable, especially in terms of bokeh. I have my Nikkor Z 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S on another body if I get close to the action.

Anticipating where the action is can help determine shooting modes. For the downhill non-slalom skiing events, athletes have more flexibility as to where on the piste they'll be. Wide-area AF (L) or (S) are my typical settings. The 3D-tracking mode is a possibility with People detection selected. If it's snowing, this can be particularly helpful so the focus doesn't shift to the snowflakes. With groups of athletes packed tightly together, the 3D mode can jump around, so shooting in other focusing modes can be a better option.

Fellow Zuma Press photographer David McIntyre advised me to, "trust the technology" while we were covering the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, China. Those three words completely changed how I work outdoors. He had suggested that I use Auto ISO to cover skiing on a day where the light was constantly changing. I manually set my shutter speed and aperture on my Z 9 and set my ISO to Auto. After checking the exposures on the



An exposure setting at 1/1,600 at f/4, ISO 2000, EV +0.33 perfectly froze the motion and nailed focus from fingertip to fingertip in this stunning image of Kaori Sakamoto of Japan.

first skiers down the mountain, I was sold. Because the whole area was blanketed with snow, I set my exposure compensation to +.7. This may seem counterintuitive, but remember, the camera meter uses 18% gray as its baseline, which will make snow look gray.

While athletes do intense stretches to stay limber, photographers covering the Olympics and other sporting events must be mentally flexible. Adjusting quickly to a wide variety of circumstances and having the technical knowledge to stay on track, especially when working with longer lenses, is the name of the game. •

Mark Edward Harris is an award-winning photographer and writer based in Los Angeles.



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PPA has been a great resource in helping me navigate the business aspects of being an artist. The comprehensive tools, including customizable contracts, have streamlined my interactions with clients and ensured that my business practices are both professional and efficient. I also greatly appreciated the presentations at Imaging USA that focused on the business side of photography.

I am very proud of being a part of Projecto Mayakoba in Mexico. The project was dedicated to the exploration, discovery and documentation of a series of submerged cave systems that exist below Mayakoba, a prominent and beautiful resort in the northern part of the Yucatán Peninsula of Mexico. We created a 200-page art book and a short documentary to highlight the incredible environment and help protect it for future generations.

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What's in a Flash

GODOX VIPRO

By *Ellis Vener*



With many of the specifications of the Godox V1Pro being the same as the V1, what justifies the higher price of the pro version (\$70 to \$130 higher, depending on sales)? Will the Godox V1Pro make a difference in your work? Let's review the internal changes, including power options and improved heat management, which allows for more full-power sequential flashes and shorter capacitor refresh times. Another element to consider is that the pro version also includes a detachable fill light component, the SU-1.

While the VB30 battery included with the V1Pro is the same size as older VB26 models, it has a higher output voltage, nearly 15% more capacity, and a USB-C charging port. Where VB26 series batteries deliver approximately 480 full-power flashes in a V1, the new 2,980 mAh VB30 can deliver approximately 500 full-power

flashes. Combined with improved heat management around the flash tube assembly, the more energy-dense VB30 battery can produce up to 100 full-power sequential flashes and recycles 15% faster.

Unlike similar flashes such as the Godox V1, Profoto A10, and Westcott FJ80 II, the V1Pro sports an external power port just above the hot shoe on the front of the flash. With it, users can connect the high-voltage PB960 power pack, ideal for long, high-intensity photo sessions and events. Used with the V1Pro, the recharge time for full-power shots drops to under 1 second while delivering up to 1,800 full-power shots. The PB960 can also power two flashes and has a swappable battery. A compatible cable (like a Godox Propac Cable or B&H-recommended Bolt CZ2 HV Locking Flash Power Cable) is also required.

The Godox engineering team employed three strategies to manage the extra heat



Learn more about lighting on [PhotoVision](#) at [ppa.com](#).

generated by pushing more watt-seconds through the flash tube: They improved the inductor and heatsink system, doubled the number of induction coils in the head, and added a layer of glass in the flash head to absorb, diffuse, and redirect heat. These features make the VIPro 1.4 ounces heavier (excluding the VB30 battery and SU-1) and 3/8 inch longer.

To measure the VIPro's output, I set up a Sekonic L758DR light meter 5 feet from the flash. With the meter set to ISO 100 and a shutter speed of 1/250 second, and the VIPro's beam angle at 50mm, at full power, the meter read f/16+3/10 and dropped in full-stop increments to 1/8 power. At 1/16 power, the output became slightly erratic and drifted over a 4/10-stop range. At the bottom of the power range (1/256), the output was measured at f/1.0 + 7/10.

White Balance was consistent within 200K over the full to 1/16 range, averaging 7,070K. Over the lower four stops of the power range, the power range shifted upward by 200K. To me, these shifts indicate a two-stage power distribution inside the flash. In isolation, these things wouldn't be worth mentioning, but if you are an event photographer who needs a streamlined processing workflow and consistent color from flash to flash, the color shift is worth considering.

One of the more interesting features of the VIPro is the SU-1 detachable flash. It connects to the main body of the VIPro via a port at the top of the red translucent panel on the front of the flash. The port is protected by a spring-loaded cover. Push the SU-1 straight into the body of the flash, then push it slightly down to install. In manual and TTL modes, the rightmost of the four function buttons on the backside accesses the SU-1's menu, and the third button is on/off. With the SU-1 active, use the control wheel to set output in 1/3-stop increments, from full to 1/128 power. At full output, it produces a 1/3 stop less light



IMAGES © ELLIS VENER / ellisvener.com

For this outdoor portrait, I convinced commercial and corporate photographer Stan Kaady to step in front of the lens. I used the Godox VIPro with a Godox AK-R21 with the projection attachment and AK-R27 65mm lens as an off-camera TTL-controlled spotlight.



White coffee cup on a white background, lit by a single Godox VIPro and SU-1 external flash



With Atlanta dance instructor Taron Harris as my model, I'm using the VIPro as an off-camera TTL flash, bounced off a 10-foot-high white ceiling, with the SU-1 external flash attached and set at 1:1 ratio.



Here is the same setup with the SU-1 external flash attached and set at 1:2 ratio.



And here is the same setup with the SU-1 at a 1:4 ratio.



With this portrait I used the VIPro as an off-camera TTL-controlled key light, fitting the main flash with a Godox AK-R21 projection attachment and AK-R27 65mm lens. For fill light, I used a monolight with a small soft box from roughly the same angle.

than the VIPro main light at 1/32 power. The sub-flash was designed to act as a fill or catch light when bouncing the main light off a ceiling or pointing it up into a reflector or diffuser. Because of that, the apparent 6-stop difference between the VIPro at full and the SU-1 at full is not as great as it seems, since bouncing, reflecting, or diffusing light always reduces the

amount of light illuminating the subject.

There are hardwired limitations on which modes the SU-1 can be used in. It automatically shuts off when the VIPro is in HSS or repeat (stroboscopic) mode, or when used as an off-camera flash (OCF) triggered by one of Godox's X series radio transmitters. One way around the OCF limitation is to use a cable to connect

the flash to the hot shoe. I tested the VIPro with the Nikon Z 7II. I used Nikon SB-17, SB-28, and an inexpensive Pholsey i-TTL-Off-Camera Flash Sync Cord. This is an ideal way to work when the flash is mounted on a flash bracket above or to the side of the camera or on a stand 2 or 3 feet from the camera.

With the SU-1 installed, I experimented with different color gels on each light. This works surprisingly well. For the still-life example (previous page), I connected the VIPro to an SB-28 cable and mounted it on a small light stand on a Platypod eXtreme and Handle. I filtered the VIPro's head with a blue Rogue Photographic Design (RPD) Lost at Sea gel and aimed it at the ceiling for top fill. I used the SU-1 as a hard key light and taped an orange RPD Tangerine Crush gel over it. Then I experimented with various ratios between the VIPro and SU-1 outputs. Mixing two colors can also yield fun, creative portraits without the hassle of wrangling two separate flashes.

If you are in the market for a hot shoe mount flash, the VIPro's round-faced design is more than a cosmetic trick. Like the Godox V1 (and the Profoto A10 and Wescott FJ80 II), the VIPro's round fresnel lens produces a more even beam pattern than the rectangular head of conventional speedlights. The magnetic light modifier system makes it easy to secure snoots, grids, barndoors, gels, diffusion domes, and reflectors. You could also add the reasonably priced Godox AK-R21 projection lens and effects system. Godox is on a mission to build the deepest family of electronic flash lighting systems on the market today, with offerings from the pocket-sized iFlash Camera Flashes to the mighty P2400, a 2,400Ws pack and head system, all tied together by a 2.4GHz X transmitter system. •

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FIELD NOTES

LESSONS FROM SEASONED LANDSCAPE
AND TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHER DENNIS HAMMON

BY AMANDA ARNOLD



DENNIS HAMMON

“A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO I WAS PHOTOGRAPHING THE TETONS AT A PLACE CALLED OXBOW,”

says Idaho Falls, Idaho-based fine art travel and landscape photographer Dennis Hammon, M.Photog.Cr., CPP. The weather was cloudy and after a time, Hammon’s companions wanted to call it a day, thinking they would not get the sunset photos they were expecting. But Hammon was adamant they stay. “We’re waiting,” he insisted.

Not long after, the scene transformed (below). “God turned the switch on,” Hammon recalls. “The sky just went to this brilliant red. I mean it was one of the reddest sunsets I’d ever seen. The light just flared up.” The group got to

work capturing photos, and afterward, Hammon said, “See? If we would’ve left, we would have missed this!”

It’s a repeating theme in Hammon’s stories: He’s the last photographer standing in the mist, rain, snow, or fog, holding out for the show-stopper image. Having both the patience to stick around and the prescience to know when something great is about to burst forth are two reasons Hammon has been able to create so many gorgeous landscape photographs. “We have all these apps now [to predict the conditions],” he says, like PhotoPills and The





DEVIL'S DAWN

CAMERA AND LENS: Mamiya RB67 with Kodak Vericolor 160 film and a Cokin pola-purple filter

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE: "This was taken quite a few years ago [in Yellowstone National Park] on film with a filter. Everybody says, 'Oh, did you Photoshop that?' No, it was straight out of the camera basically. It was an early morning sunrise but there were forest fires in the area, so the skies were still kind of really red and hazy. I just intensified it with a Cokin pola-purple filter."



SAFE HARBOR

CAMERA AND LENS: Canon EOS 5D Mark III with a 24-105mm lens

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE: In Grand Teton National Park, Dennis Hammon says, "I knew about this remote lake, and it was foggy all the way up. It's foggy and misty, and we could hardly see anything. We get up there and the ducks are quacking, and I could hear the geese and the loons, and I'm just going down the lake, and I set it up and grabbed the shot. I looked at the back of my camera, and it almost brought me to tears because it was so beautiful."

"There was very little work done to it. I just warmed it up a tad [using DxO]. That's all I did. And everybody goes, 'Oh, that looks like a painting.' The biggest compliment to me is to say that it looks like a painting."

Photographer's Ephemeris, both of which he uses. "But you still gotta learn what's up in your head and watch the sky and read the weather, what's going on." You still have to listen to that inner voice, he notes, that tells you something beautiful is about the break.

HARD EARNED

Hammon has been a photographer for 50 years. He taught photography at a university, has worked in portrait, wedding, boudoir, and commercial photography, and now focuses primarily on fine art nature photography and photography education. For the last 15 years, he and his photographer wife Cheri, whom he met through PPA, have led guided photography trips locally and abroad. They live just

90 miles from both Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park, places they're thus deeply familiar with. They also lead winter tours in Yellowstone and take photographers into the park via snow coaches, sometimes in subzero temperatures. They lead trips in Scotland, Italy, and Croatia, where a yacht delivers the group to a different port each day. Hammon recently gathered some of his Yellowstone photographs for a self-published book, "The Art of Yellowstone in Winter," and plans to do the same with photos from his other journeys.

With so much experience and teaching under his belt, *Professional Photographer* asked Hammon to share his best lessons for landscape photography:

SELF-PUBLISHING

Hammon recently self-published a photobook, "The Art of Yellowstone in Winter." The book includes 45 black-and-white images, each of which includes an artist statement that he collected from his field notes. His advice on self-publishing a book? "First of all, you've got to have a good agenda," he says. "You've got to have a good storyline." You also need a hearty portfolio that supports that storyline (in his case, black-and-white photographs of Yellowstone in the wintertime). The portfolio must be deep enough that each photo you select measures up to a certain level of skill and quality, which lends the book continuity.





Slow down. Before you begin photographing a scene, stop to ask yourself, What am I feeling here? says Hammon. What's the landscape saying to me? "A lot of people are out there looking for that social media image," says Hammon. "They're looking for that image they can share. But I think sometimes location is just the geography, but emotion is the authorship of the image." He recommends taking a moment to take in the awe-inspiring surroundings. "Just stand, enjoy the moment, listen to the sounds," he advises. Particularly at national parks, people often rush through photography so they can move on to another location. But there is only one sunrise and one sunset a day. "So, you gotta choose your location where you're going to get that ultimate shot," and allow yourself time to feel it, he advises.

Make the image your own. Particularly in oft-photographed national parks, people tend to fixate on capturing images of the iconic

scenes, e.g. the T.A. Molten Barn (page 44) in Grand Teton National Park. "You can put your camera up and walk away with a wonderful shot," he admits. However, he explains, "Famous locations don't make famous photographs. Vision does." While those iconic sites are worthy, the images will be more meaningful if you work to find angles, compositions, and even weather conditions you've never seen photographed there before. "I've actually had photographers walk up and try to put their tripods in the same holes that my tripod were in," he says. "And it's like, You're not learning."

Follow the light. "Light is not decoration," says Hammon. "It's the language of the image." Light is what creates a scene worth photographing. So, no matter where you are photographing, chase the light.

Develop visual literacy. Often people will look at an image and say, "I like it, but I don't know why," says

SUBZERO PHOTOGRAPHY

"I love inclement weather," says Dennis Hammon, who leads guided winter photography tours in Yellowstone National Park in temperatures as cold as minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit. To handle the cold, he recommends heated coats, base layers, and socks; hand and toe warmers; and cleats on the bottom of shoes for icy environments. Mirrorless cameras tend to use up batteries very quickly in subzero temperatures. "We've had people go through five or six batteries in a day," he says, so he advises bringing plenty of replacement batteries. His philosophy: "There's no such thing as cold weather, just poor clothing choices."



Watch some of Dennis Hammon's educational content on PhotoVision at ppa.com.



Hammon. Visual literacy means knowing the why: recognizing the lines, rhythm, patterns, tones, and emotional impact that make an image appealing. “That’s just something you learn by experience,” he says. Once you understand what pleases your eye, it’s easier to create the compositions you want.

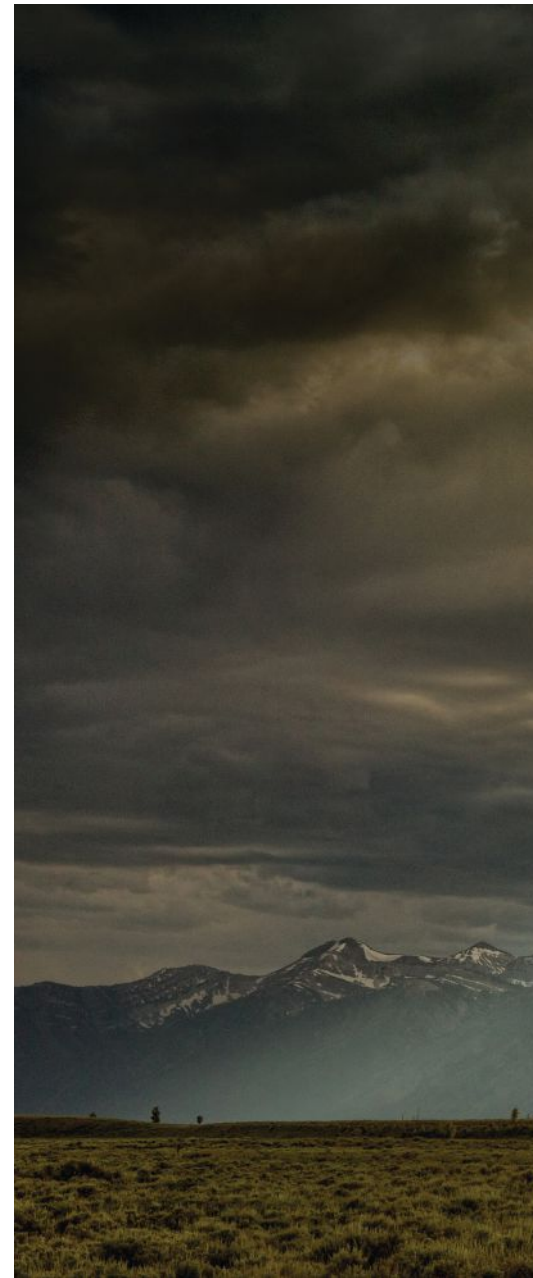
Time it right. On his guided photography trips, “I jokingly tell people we’re leaving at zero dark 30 and we are coming back at way dark 30,” he says. Indeed, depending on the season, the group may leave at 3 a.m. to catch the sunrise at a striking locale. “If you see postcards at a convenience store in the [national] parks, they’re all basically shot between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. because that’s when people travel, so that’s when everybody sees the scene,” he says. Very few people get out before the sun comes up or stay until the sky goes dark. “And a lot of times, it’s comfort,” he says. “They’re tired, they’re hungry, they want to leave early. You have to make a few sacrifices to be able to

produce these art pieces.”

Earn the impact. Overprocessing is a problem, Hammon says. When a photographer hammers the contrast, the saturation, and the color in an image, “they fail to keep the naturalness of the image,” Hammon says. “They are trying to make an impact instead of earning it.”

Don’t compare yourself to other photographers. While it’s great to have references in mind of other photographers’ works, they should serve as a jumping-off point for your unique creations, says Hammon. He may use an image taken by another photographer to consider how he would capture a scene differently. “I look at it for inspiration,” he explains, “and not for desperation and trying to copy.”

One of the most important lessons Hammon has learned in his career is to share knowledge. When he first began his photography journey decades ago, he found that many of the seasoned photographers he admired refused to share their expertise. “They would go, ‘Oh, I can’t tell you. That’s a



secret,” he says. “So, I decided that when I got to be in some place of influence, I would share,” Hammon says, a promise he has kept through his workshops and guided trips. Sometimes photographers ask him, “Aren’t you afraid of telling everyone your secrets?” he says, to which he replies, “I’ll spill my guts out to you.” Only about 2% of the people he teaches actually use the techniques he shares, he surmises. “But at least I give it to them to learn. And hopefully they’ll learn and grow from it.” •



IN HIS BAG

For trips, Hammon brings one large bag with all of his equipment and a smaller sling bag in case he decides to venture out with fewer items.

- Canon EOS Mark IV camera bodies
- 24-105mm lens
- 70-200mm lens
- 150-600mm lens
- Macro 100 lens
- Tripods and cable releases
- Polarizing filters and 10-stop variable ND filters
- Bear spray
- Bottle of water



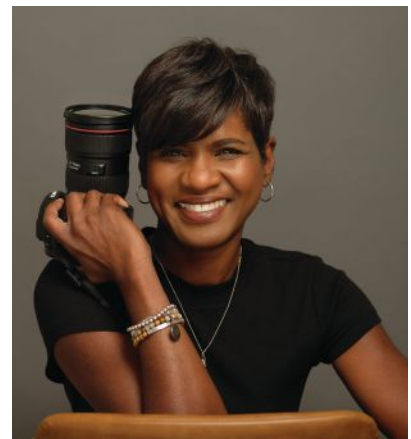
Kisha Beek
creates portraits
families will cherish
for ages

BY EVELYN SACKS

What's an information systems specialist with a background in international relations doing behind the lens of a camera? The answer: bringing joy to families via heirloom-quality photographs that capture the tenderness and vulnerability of new life.

As a child, newborn photographer Kisha Beek loved to page through the many photo albums that graced her family's Kingston, Jamaica, home. Photos of her parents before they met. Grainy studio portraits of grandparents. Images of long-past times and places. The photos were not just a chronicle of milestones. They were the invisible thread that stitched together her family's journeys and generations.

"Heritage is very big in Jamaican culture and family was everything to us," says Beek, based in Wellington, Florida. "We were all close. My sister and I grew up with cousins who were more like siblings. And on every occasion pictures were taken."



KISHA BEEK

New
Life



There was never a question about purchasing school photo packages, regardless of the washed-out colors and rigid poses.

On September 12, 1988, Hurricane Gilbert stormed the island, causing much death and destruction. Beek's family was lucky, as only one room in their house suffered water damage.

Unfortunately, it was the room with their photo albums. Out of countless images, only a few survived. The loss was profound for Beek, 15 at the time and a self-described sentimentalist.

TOE IN THE WATER

In high school, Beek learned about film photography and dark room basics in photography club. "Everything had to be captured with such intention—the lighting and the composition," she says. "Then, you wait." She loved the process and was especially drawn to black-and-white photography, but she never considered her interest would move beyond a hobby.

Beek went on to attend the University of the West Indies where she earned a bachelor's degree in international relations. She continued her education with a master's degree in computer-based management information systems and found satisfying work in IT. By this time, she had met Cary Beek, a Jamaica-born pilot. They married in 2001.

A true-blue "island girl," Beek and her husband soon relocated to South Florida, where Cary worked for Air Jamaica. The move to the United States was difficult for Beek, but over time, and with the birth of sons Christian and Kaleb, the Sunshine State came to feel like home.

Beek left her IT career to manage her busy family. Like many new parents, she was determined to document every moment of the boys' lives on







“Heritage is very big in Jamaican culture and family was everything to us. We were all close. ... And on every occasion pictures were taken.”



film, from small to seismic. “Using a point-and-shoot, I worked in black and white, getting right up in their faces and capturing it all,” In 2010, the young family moved to Dubai when Cary took a job with Emirates Airlines. Dubai’s exotic scenery, from urban backdrops to dramatic desert settings, enhanced her family photos.

By then, Beek was using a Canon DSLR, but she needed something simpler for street photography during the family’s many travels. The answer was a Fujifilm X-T1 with a 35mm lens. “It was the best thing ever,” she says. “It hung around my neck while I held both boys by the hand. It was sturdy and rugged, but I could pick it up quickly and capture anything.” She filled albums with images of trips to Western Europe, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

On a whim, Beek entered a photography contest at her

boys’ school and took first place. Surprised but encouraged, she decided it was time to up her photography game. She signed up for an online course, joined a meetup, and got involved with Gulf Photo Plus, a Dubai-based photography center.

Once she felt that her technical know-how was aligned with her artistic vision, she was ready for the next step: a family photography business she named Photography by Kisha Beek. Though her outreach was limited to the school community, her reputation grew as she fused talent and experience with Dubai’s stunning natural and man-made backgrounds. Returning to Florida, Beek decided to narrow her focus to newborns, a niche she was increasingly captivated by. She registered her business in Boynton Beach and built a home studio informed by research and inspired by

world-renowned newborn photographers and industry experts Kelly Brown and Ana Brandt. Word spread among besotted, sleep-deprived parents eager to chronicle this brief moment in their families’ lives. Though she does photograph older babies, her sweet spot is newborns five to 21 days old and their families.

A SYSTEMS APPROACH

Over the last decade, Beek’s business has continued to grow and her brand has evolved. She credits her success in part to applying her systems and IT expertise to the work of crafting images of angelic newborns and their adoring parents. A tightly curated, ordered process and lots of pre-session planning are the keys to delivering exquisite photos and a fun, relaxing experience, she says.

“From the first phone call to final delivery of product, it’s



a guided process,” says Beek. “It starts with an initial phone, Zoom, or coffee shop meeting to see if we’re a fit. If so, the next step is a pre-consult where I explain the process and discuss the most important thing: the safety of their babies.” Parents complete a client form that includes details like the baby’s weight, which can shift dramatically by the time they arrive for their session. (No worries, she says, as she keeps outfits in all sizes.) Beek is trained in CPR and has completed newborn safety training. She limits sessions to one per day, which ensures a relaxed vibe and no rushing.

Before the family arrives, Beek takes the time to go over logistics and expectations. The parents pick colors and props, and Beek sets up lighting and equipment. On the day of the session, her process includes regular breaks, a private space for naps and nursing, and lots of adult snacks. “Yes, it’s all about the babies, but I pride myself on taking care of the parents, especially moms,” she says. “If they’re comfortable and relaxed, the babies are, too.” The extensive pre-planning frees Beek from logistical concerns, which keeps her focus on the tools and techniques to support her work, including enjoying her time with the babies.

Technology and talent coexist beautifully in Beek’s studio. Her camera of choice is a Canon EOS R6 Mark II mirrorless camera, with a Canon RF24-70mm F2.8 L IS USM lens. She uses a Canon



RF100mm F2.8 L Macro IS USM lens for detail shots. Beek favors continuous LED daylight-balanced lights over flash “because I don’t want that jarring light change every time I release the shutter,” she says. A white noise system and warming device keep her tiny subjects calm and cozy on the set.

Beek describes her process as “baby led.” As such, she does not guarantee particular poses but works from a general set of expectations. Like all good photographers, she says she knows to take advantage of the unexpected—an adorable expression or a single closed eye. Though

she has a complete inventory of outfits, swaddles, hats, bonnets, and headbands (all washed with hypoallergenic products), Beek favors simpler, more organic settings. She tends to avoid elaborate structures and props. “Having said that, I recently had a dad who was obsessed with superheroes, so of course we indulged him,” she adds (above).

When planning a session, Beek envisions the babies on the other side of her lens as older children viewing their own newborn photos on the walls and in albums at their homes. “It’s important for kids’ self-confidence to see themselves

in timeless images that can be loved and passed down, not on a phone or hard drive,” says Beek.

Outside of her own business, Beek volunteers as a digital retouch artist for Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep, a nonprofit that offers complimentary portrait sessions to families experiencing newborn loss. She extends compassion to these distraught parents who lost their babies “because family is everything,” she says, a powerful message from someone who loved and lost her own visual history. •

Evelyn Sacks is an Atlanta-based writer.

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CAREER REFRAMED



Professionals from different fields discover their true calling behind the lens

Sometimes people graduate from high school, seek a college degree in photography, and build a career in the field. But a majority of professional photographers take a more circuitous route. Often photographers work for many years—or even decades—in other careers, photographing as a hobby, before transitioning into the full-time photography work they love. Last year, *Professional Photographer* editors asked PPA members if they had had different careers before photography. We heard from more than 100 second-career photographers with diverse backgrounds including in military service, technology, teaching, and healthcare. Here, three of these photographers share their journeys to the profession, how their prior occupations influence their current photographic work, and their future goals in the business. Their comments have been edited for length and clarity.

BY AMANDA ARNOLD

©MEAGHAN BICKEL / joyphotography.net



MEAGHAN BICKEL

MEAGHAN BICKEL

Joy Photography
ELLENSBURG, WASHINGTON



IMAGES ©MEAGHAN BICKEL / joyphotography.net

Amanda Arnold: What career did you have before you became a professional photographer?

Meaghan Bickel: My first true career was as a mental health counselor at an acute inpatient psychiatric hospital in southeastern Washington. I worked there from 2008-2012, leaving a few months after a serious attack by a patient. I started in 2012 as a case manager at a government-contracted agency that coordinates care for seniors and people with disabilities. I worked there from 2012-2019 before switching full-time to photography when my son was born.

AA: How many years have you been a full-time photographer?

MB: I've been full-time for seven years, a photographer for 11 years, and I've had my brick-and-mortar studio since 2022. My studio is called Joy Photography, a double meaning: my middle name and what I hope my clients feel.

AA: What inspired you to switch to a photography career?

MB: I was handling infertility, and one day in a church parking lot after the service, I was sitting in my car by myself thinking, if I ever managed to have a child, I wanted my career to be flexible so I could be with them. That moment, I posted in a community Facebook group that I had a "fancy camera" (a Canon EOS Rebel T2i with a 50mm lens) and wanted to explore family photography. I offered 10 free sessions to the community to try it out. Surprisingly, about 60 families volunteered. Turned out, I wasn't terrible at it. After I finished photographing all those families, people offered to pay me. It snowballed from there and here I am today, and after two rounds of IVF, we got our miracle baby.

AA: Describe your journey to becoming a full-time professional photographer.

MB: One thing I'm glad I did was, while busting my tail part-time—doing headshots for the local hospital during my lunch breaks, staying up late editing every



“IF YOU’RE TRYING TO GO FULL TIME,
KEEP YOUR EYES ON YOUR GOAL
AND KEEP GOING. THE HARD WORK
WILL PAY OFF.”



night, and having sessions every weekend—I saved 100% of my photography money to invest back into equipment and training. That meant zero business debt. I'm really glad I did it that way, even though it was so hard. If you're trying to go full time, keep your eyes on your goal and keep going. The hard work will pay off.

AA: What qualities or skills did you develop in your first career that you now use?

MB: Working with people with mental health challenges, and mental, physical, and intellectual disabilities, I've learned to read emotions pretty well. If I sense a client is feeling insecure during the session or is overwhelmed during the ordering process, I try to give clearer instructions and slow down my usually upbeat, talkative self to mirror them and make them more comfortable.



AA: What experiences do you have in your photography career that you never got to have in your previous career?

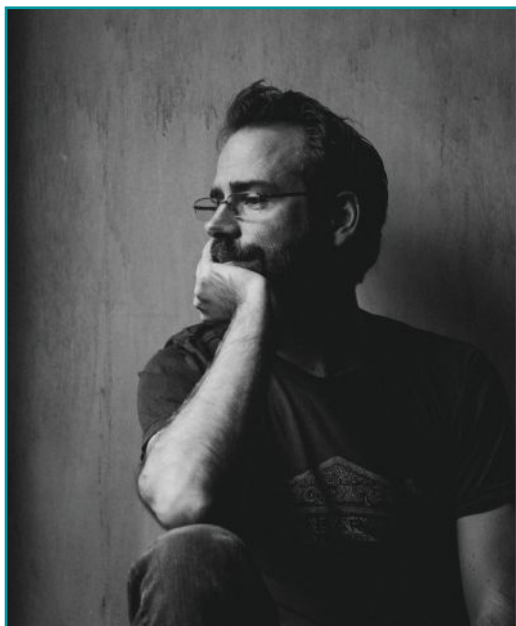
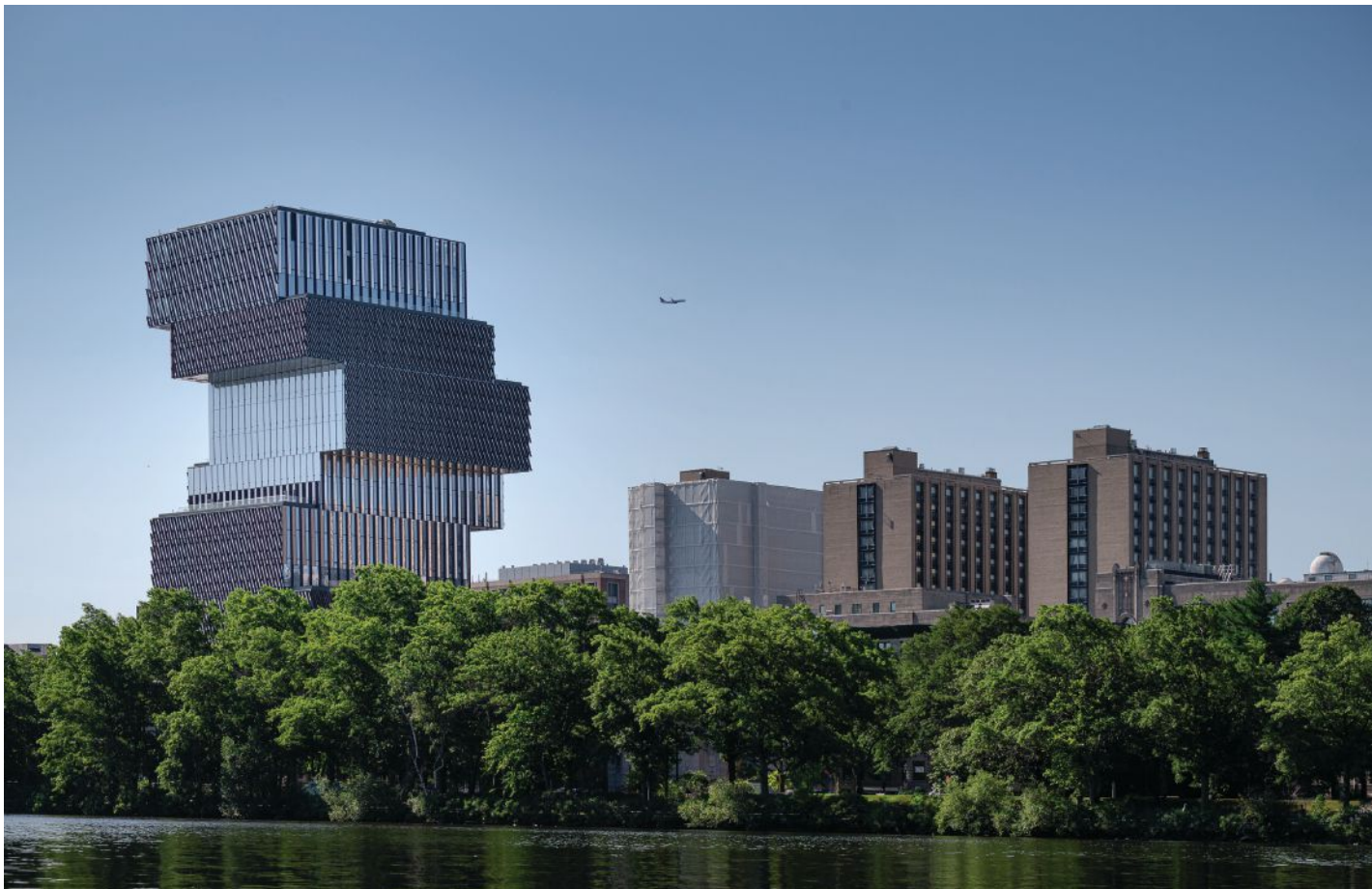
MB: I remember sitting in my office on a beautiful day longing to enjoy the sun. Being able to get outside on a workday in the gorgeous Pacific Northwest, to enjoy happy people ready to take gorgeous photos, is so much fun. Also, 99% of the time, the people who choose to come see me for portraits are happy to be there! Working with people hospitalized for severe mental conditions (often against their will) or disabled to the point of needing help can be very rewarding, but also heartbreaking, and it can affect your own well-being. The lighter atmosphere has been a good decision for me.

AA: What goals do you have for your photography business?

MB: My goal with my photography is continued growth but mostly achieving more balance with family life and finding moments for hobbies with no income pressure. And most of all, memories with my kindergarten son. •







FLORIAN MARSCHOUN

AA: What career did you have before you became a professional photographer?

Florian Marschoun: I earned my degree in business administration, and after finishing university, worked in management accounting for a large industrial company for about 15 years.

AA: How many years have you been a full-time photographer?

FM: I started doing full-time photography in 2014.

AA: What inspired you to switch to a photography career?

FM: I'm originally from Vienna, Austria, where the cultural focus leans more toward job security and steady careers than

FLORIAN MARSCHOUN, CPP

Aspect Six

NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS

forging your own path. Photography was always a passion, but it wasn't until I met my wife while traveling around the world for a year that I finally dared to make the transition. I started my photography business in Austria, and when I later moved to Hawaii, we began photographing together.

AA: Describe your journey to becoming a full-time professional photographer.

FM: When we lived on Maui, a classic vacation destination, our focus was wedding and family photography, with a lot of sessions on the beach. After moving to Massachusetts three years later, I began expanding into architectural photography. While photographing weddings was exciting, I quickly realized how much more architectural work fits my personality, and I fully shifted my focus toward it. For me, switching careers was an all-or-nothing decision, and taking that leap meant leaving behind the safety of a regular income. That created a lot of pressure. You're constantly balancing artistic growth with the practical demands of running a company. That balance is challenging, but it's also what makes the journey so rewarding.

AA: What's something you learned or experienced in your first career that has helped you in your photography?

FM: In my previous career I worked with people in many different roles, and I learned how to build genuine rapport with them. Developing clear communication skills and managing expectations have helped me build long-lasting client relationships, establish trust, and feel confident setting boundaries and saying no when necessary. I'm a very structured person, and my accounting background helped me tremendously with the administrative side of running a business. That extends beyond managing financials to handling the IT side of things and putting the right systems and tools in place to support the business.

AA: What experiences do you have in your photography career that you never got to have in your previous career?

FM: Being self-employed allows me to shape my work environment in a way I never could before. I can clearly see how the decisions I make play out over time, and I get to create the kind of environment I want to work in. I also have the freedom to infuse my



“FOR ME, SWITCHING CAREERS WAS AN ALL-OR-NOTHING DECISION, AND TAKING THAT LEAP MEANT LEAVING BEHIND THE SAFETY OF A REGULAR INCOME. ... [IT’S] CHALLENGING, BUT [THAT’S] ALSO WHAT MAKES THE JOURNEY SO REWARDING.”

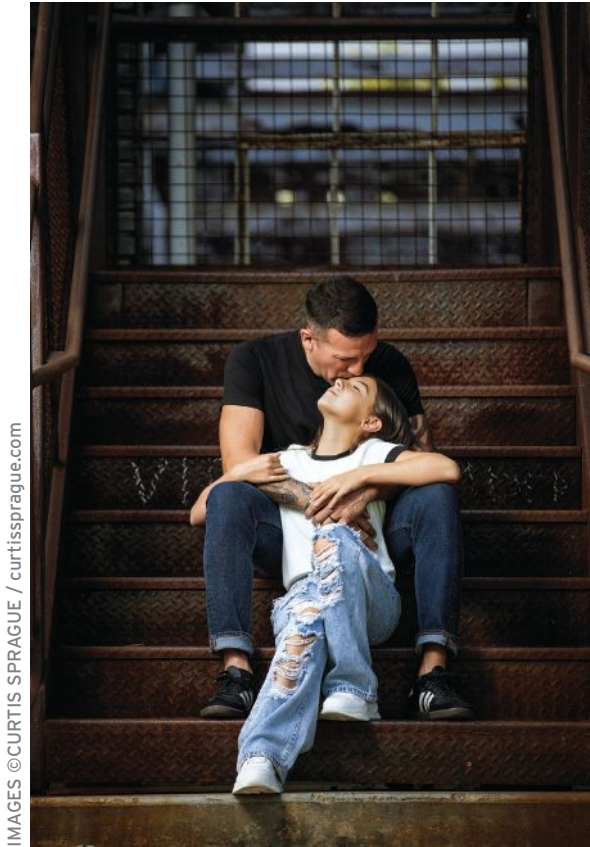


own identity into my work. Another aspect that feels completely different is how many personal stories I get to witness through photography. With wedding work, we were invited into a very specific and emotional moment in people’s lives. With architectural photography, taking in the stories people share and capturing how they connect to the environments they live in has become one of the most meaningful parts of my work.

AA: What goals do you have for your photography business?

FM: Over the last decade, I’ve built a solid professional foundation and gained valuable experience. I want to continue building that base and focus on the projects

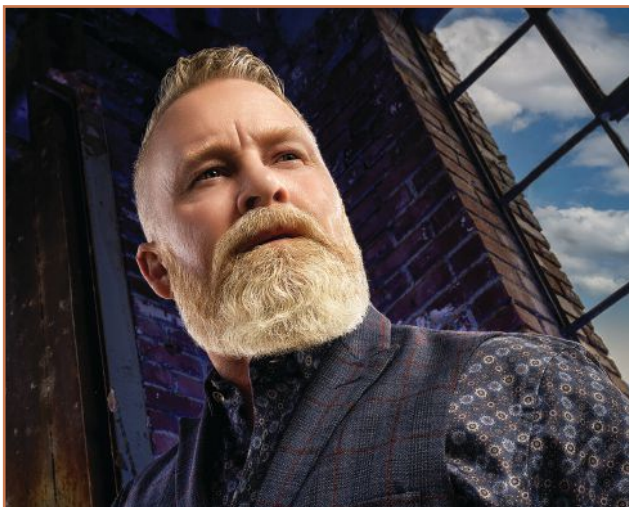
that interest me most. Aviation has always been a strong interest of mine, especially the public infrastructure that supports global mobility. One of my dream assignments would be to photograph a major international airport and show how architecture, logistics, and human expertise make air travel possible. I also want to keep sharing my knowledge. Last year, I began bringing local photographers of all levels together, creating a network for professionals, inspiring beginners through monthly meetups, and teaching classes. I plan to expand these activities this year, and this fall I’m organizing a regional photo marathon to bring that playful, creative spirit to an even broader community. •



IMAGES ©CURTIS SPRAGUE / curtissprague.com

CURTIS SPRAGUE, M.PHOTOG.

Curtis Sprague Photography
TULSA, OKLAHOMA



CURTIS SPRAGUE

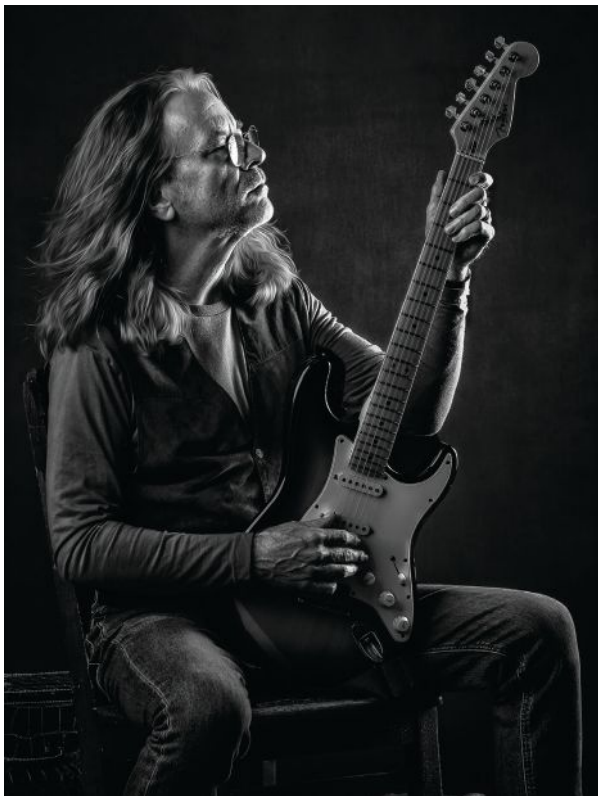
AA: What career did you have before you became a professional photographer?

Curtis Sprague: I joined the U.S. Army at 17 years old to pay for an art degree, having no idea that I had a tactical bone in my body. I just wanted to pay for my education. So, I guess my first job was with the Army. After college I took a freelance art job in Miami, doing T-shirt graphics for companies like Hawaiian Tropic and Ocean Pacific. Within two years, I was deployed overseas for Operation Desert Storm, during which my wife was pregnant with our first child. When I returned from the war, I had no work to speak of and a brand new baby. I knew I needed something reliable, preferably with a health insurance and pension plan. I'd done very well in the Army and decided that maybe law enforcement would be a suitable career, so I began working as a police officer. I made it onto the department's SWAT team and spent about 10 years there. Shortly after 9/11, due to my tactical background, I was hired by the Federal Air Marshal Service as a federal air marshal. I spent another 10 years with that agency before I was approached by a defense company in the private sector who asked me to retire [from the military] and work for them as an aviation/tactical subject matter expert. I spent 15 years with that company and was working there when I decided to try my hand at photography as a retirement gig. I wanted to spend my retirement years working for myself in a creative field to counterbalance all the destructive things I'd seen throughout my career up to that point.

AA: How many years have you been a full-time photographer?

CS: I decided around the first of 2018 that photography was going to be my thing. I had dabbled in leatherworking and some other creative ventures, but I found that photography really spoke to me. I was obsessed with





“I WANTED TO SPEND MY RETIREMENT YEARS WORKING FOR MYSELF IN A CREATIVE FIELD TO COUNTERBALANCE ALL THE DESTRUCTIVE THINGS I’D SEEN THROUGHOUT MY CAREER UP TO THAT POINT.”

learning more. So, I launched a part-time brick-and-mortar studio in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.

AA: Describe your journey to becoming a full-time professional photographer.

CS: I had built a very comprehensive leatherworking shop and was having some success. But I quickly realized that beating on cowhide in my hot garage on an August day in Oklahoma was less than fun. My youngest was about to graduate high school and approached me about taking senior photos. I thought, *I can probably do that*, even though I knew nothing about it. So, I did it. They turned out OK. As a result, I started getting requests from cousins and friends of cousins, etc. I thought that maybe this would be a better option than the leatherwork. So, I sold much of my leatherworking equipment to buy photography equipment and began watching YouTube videos and subscribing to sites like Phlearn and KelbyOne to learn quickly.

After photographing my first paid client, I received a phone call from the client’s friend, a PPA member named Leslie Hoyt, M.Photog.Cr., who wanted to introduce herself. She encouraged me to become a PPA member and consider photographic competition. I was so grateful for that meeting and for her friendship that I became a member of PPA and my local and state guilds. I entered my first photographic competition and I’ve been hooked since. Leslie has become one of my dearest friends and was kind enough to sponsor and share the stage with me when I received my master of photography degree from PPA.

AA: Can you share a story of something that you did or experienced in your first job that has helped you in your photography career?

CS: I wouldn’t trade the rewarding experiences for anything. But with the good also came the bad. I was always showing up at the worst time in someone’s life. Maybe it was a wife who had just been battered by her husband. Maybe it was a call involving the death of a child, and I had to inform the parents that their child would not be coming home. That can take





a toll on a person. Those experiences help me now to be grateful and appreciate the little things in life. Nowadays, my reward is watching someone walk out of my studio with a little spring in their step because they had a wonderful experience and saw themselves the way I see them, beautiful and lucky.

AA: What qualities or skills did you develop in your first career that you now use in your photography career?

CS: I became very good at reading people and their non-verbal communication. In law enforcement, you find yourself surrounded by a lot of disingenuous people. So, you must learn to read other cues to get to the truth. My ability to read people helps me to help them when they are nervous or have an issue I need to

address that maybe they're too embarrassed to bring up. It helps me put people at ease more effectively. It also comes in handy for in-person sales.

AA: What experiences do you have in your photography career that you never got to have in your previous career?

CS: I never got to be friends with my "clients" before. Many have become some of my best friends. The vibe is just better now.

AA: What goal(s) do you have for your photography business?

CS: This will be my first full year as a full-time photographer. My goal is to pay all the bills, stay healthy, and bring joy to every life I encounter. The rest will take care of itself. •

A Leader with Heart

ANGELA KURKIAN IS PPA'S NEW CEO



©MONICA SIGMON / gittingshouston.com

On May 1, Angela Kurkian, M.Photog.Cr., CPP, became PPA's new CEO. A member since 1994, Kurkian started working with the association in 2012, as director of education for more than a decade. She was appointed Deputy CEO by the PPA board of directors in May 2024.

"We interviewed some amazing candidates for this position, but Angela really stood out among them. Her enthusiasm, coupled with the fact that she already understands the culture of PPA, made her

"I FELL IN LOVE WITH PHOTOGRAPHERS BEFORE I FELL IN LOVE WITH PHOTOGRAPHY, SO BEING ABLE TO SERVE OTHER PHOTOGRAPHERS HAS ALWAYS BEEN CENTRAL TO MY HEART."

an obvious choice," says Mark Campbell, M.Photog.Hon.M.Photog.Cr., CPP., who was PPA board president at the time and is currently board chair. "Her excitement is contagious and you can see how staff responds to that. But the thing that still sticks in my mind was the comment she made during her interview. She said, 'I don't want the job, I want the work!' That helped me realize how invested she is in seeing PPA continue to grow."

Before Kurkian joined the PPA staff, she ran a successful wedding and portrait photography business in Cincinnati for 25 years and has been educating and sharing her experience for more than two decades. She says, "I really want photographers to

own and understand their value so they can build profitable and sustainable businesses.” One of her most enduring projects at PPA was developing and growing the organization’s extensive photography and business education platform, which has evolved into PhotoVision on ppa.com.

PPA: Tell us about your photography journey.

Angela Kurkian: I first attended PPA’s annual conference when I was just 18 or 19 years old, traveling with friends and mentors Stewart and Susan Powers. I was so fortunate the day they chose to befriend me, an 18-year-old college student working at a country club, because it altered the trajectory of my life. I wasn’t a photographer yet, but I fell in love with the people of the profession and thought, *Well, I can learn photography.* And that’s what I did. I traveled with Susan and Stewart, who were such giving educators, and their collaboration and care for the photographic community made me fall in love with the profession. Photography simply became the tool that allowed me to connect with people. I have been fortunate to have many great mentors along the way, all of whom I met through PPA.

PPA: What part of PPA’s legacy are you most grateful to inherit?

AK: The organization has such an amazing and long history. Those of us who work for and guide this association are simply its stewards. And there have been no better



Find content created by Angela Kurkian, M.Photog. Cr., CPP on **PhotoVision** at ppa.com.



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PPA's new CEO Angela Kurkian, M.PhotoG.Cr., CPP, often uses her journal to express herself. In June 2024, she penned this heartfelt missive to those who share the profession she is so passionate about.

AN ODE TO PHOTOGRAPHERS

*You are the collectors, the excavators,
the makers,*

*travelers whose work transcends time
and space,*

*creating portals to experiences both past
and future,*

*yet living in this moment to witness the
world unfolding.*

*To create for another is a gift of seeing
into their world,*

*bearing witness to their life, making a
moment more by giving it weight*

*because you have said, "Look at this,
this matters."*

*And you give it form. You bring a moment
to life for our future selves*

*who will look back one day with the
gratitude and wisdom that only
time brings.*

*You shape future perceptions, creating
stories today of what will be what
once was.*

*Our future selves thank you for the gift
you share with us.*

*Because each moment captured is a
moment we can revisit again and again.*

*We are made up of every moment we have
ever taken breath—and your work
reminds us of our lives well lived.*



Angela Kurkian, M.PhotoG.Cr., CPP, presented a workshop for new PPA members at Imaging USA 2026 in Nashville, Tennessee, in January.

©ALEX THE PHOTO GUY

stewards of PPA than former CEO David Trust and former CFO and COO Scott Kurkian, Hon.Cr.PhotoG. Because of their devoted service, PPA provides benefits to members that far outweigh the cost of membership, copyright reform is a reality (and the battle is ongoing), PPA has a worldwide reputation for excellence, and the organization is in an incredibly strong financial position. PPA is a living, breathing entity that we, all of us who work and serve here, have the profound honor of nourishing for a time.

PPA: How do you envision PPA's future?

AK: Our power is in our numbers and in the diversity of our membership. We are a cross-section of all humanity, both in what we create and in those we serve. Photography, imagery, is a universal language. What we do as a profession is important, perhaps now more than ever. We have a lot to share and experience together.

PhotoVision, PPA's new digital learning platform, has begun to lay the foundation for how we will con-

nect, learn, and foster community into the future. Through this platform, we're sharing more and better stories, and uplifting the profession to not only shape the photography industry today but form how we see ourselves in the future.

Early in my career, Stewart Powers shared one of the most important things I would ever learn. He said, "The greatest master of photography isn't the one with the most medals around their neck or the most awards. The greatest master is the one who helps *create* the most masters." At the time, those words really felt like truth, and they've shaped my own desire to serve others. I am humbled and honored to be a part of PPA's story, and incredibly grateful to be of service to a community that has selflessly shared so much wisdom with me along my journey.

As we stand on the shoulders of giants, honoring all that occurred to get us here, it's exciting to know that our collective voice is louder than ever, that we are leaning into the strength of our community, and that there is yet still a vast, creative frontier to explore. •



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COMMUNITY NETWORKS DIRECTORY

When you get together with other photographers in your area, you'll see a world of opportunities open up to you.

One of the best ways photographers hone their craft is through peer interaction. Finding a mentor, meeting with like-minded people in your area, and relying on a network of business friends are keys to your success. Thanks to the Community Networks program, you can easily find and connect with professional photographers near you.

PPA has Community Networks across the United States. No matter where you live, odds are there's a Community Network to welcome you.

ppa.com/community-networks

INTERNATIONAL American Society of Photographers

Mel Carlil
23745 Del Monte Dr. #152
Valencia, CA 91355
(661) 775-3375
info@yourasp.org
yourasp.org

MEXICO

Escuela de Fotografía y Publicidad George Eastman

Alvaro Balderas
abc261273@yahoo.com
georgeeastman.com.mx

Sociedad Mexicana de Fotógrafos Profesionales

Alvaro Balderas
Privada del Florecer 10
Residencial Las Americas
Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico
91098
(814) 442-6136
alvarobalderas@gmail.com
facebook.com/smfpac

ARIZONA

Arizona PPA

Thomas Cheswick
14842 North 45th Way
Phoenix, AZ 85032
(602) 493-1833
tomcheswick@cox.net
arizonappa.com

ARKANSAS

Arkansas PPA

Mike Kemp
1435 Norbert Cir.
Conway, AR 72034
(501) 472-0678
mike@mikekempphoto.com
arkansasppa.com

ARKANSAS,

MISSOURI,

OKLAHOMA

PP of the Ozarks

Jackie Strain-Mahar
1025 Parkway
Conway, AR 72034
(501) 472-9447
ppozarks@gmail.com
ppozarks.com

CALIFORNIA

Channel Islands PPA

Michael Mercadante
4410 Chesapeake Dr.
Oxnard, CA 93035
(408) 504-3592
mmjmercadante@gmail.com
cippa.org

Inland Empire PPV

Troy Miller
6857 McKenzie Ct.
Eastvale, CA 91752
(951) 818-4582
troy@ieppv.com
ieppv.com

PP of California

Marcy Dugan
466 Foot Hill Blvd. #357
La Cañada Flintridge, CA
91011
(661) 429-3640 Ext 1
president@ppconline.com
ppconline.com

PP of Los Angeles County

Mel Carlil
23745 Del Monte Dr. #152
Valencia, CA 91355
(661) 904-3612
mel@scvphotocenter.com
pplac.com

PP of Orange County

Duane Murphy
1240 E. Ontario Ave. Ste
102-138
Corona, CA 92881
(714) 863-2126
duane@shashinphotography.com
ppoc.org

PP of Sacramento Valley

Jeff Galinovsky
890 John Murray Way
Folsom, CA 95630
(916) 705-0110
president@ppsv.org
ppsv.org

PP of San Diego County

Cindie Wolf
1750 Lotus Ln.
El Cajon, CA 92021
(619) 208-1282
programs@ppsd.com
ppsd.com

PPA of Santa Clara Valley

Roberto Gonzalez
2929 Ocala Ave.
San Jose, CA 95148
(408) 460-7549
nuevafoto@sbcglobal.net
ppscv.com

PP of Wine Country

Norah Burrows
7610 Bately Ct. #3
Sebastopol, CA 95472
(707) 327-7570
norahburrows@gmail.com
ppwc-online.org

West Coast School

Tim Meyer
tim@meyerphoto.com
westcoastschool.com

COLORADO

PP of Colorado

Jessica Vallia
10252 Deer Meadow Cir.
Colorado Springs, CO 80925
(719) 232-4275
president.ppcolorado@gmail.com
ppcolorado.com

PPG of Colorado Springs

Carrie Cleghorn
15631 Agate Creek Dr.
Monument, CO 80132
(571) 389-7334
carriecleghornphotography@gmail.com
ppgcs.com

DELAWARE

Mid-Atlantic Regional School

John Capone
director@marsschool.com
marsschool.com

FLORIDA

Bay PPA

David Graham
2228 Bahia Vista St. C3
Sarasota, FL 34239
(941) 302-4495
bayprofessionalphotographers@gmail.com
bappaff.com

Florida PP

Dana Niemeier
720 E. New Haven Ave.
Ste 8
Melbourne, FL 32901
(321) 446-5236
danaphotography@gmail.com
thefpp.org

Florida School

Kevin Boller
kevin@kevinbollerphotography.com
thefpp.org/2026-fl-school-of-photography

Image Creatives

Sherri Dove
6177 Nobility Way
Ave Maria, FL 34142
(516) 306-0519
sherrimarkdove@gmail.com
imagecreatives.com

PP of Central Florida

Javier Morales
2410 Temple Grove Ln.
Kissimmee, FL 34741
(689) 777-8913
javier@letsjump.media
theppcfl.com

PP of North Florida

Jonathan Lee
2658 Westport Dr.
Green Cove Springs, FL
32043
(352) 647-5955
jon@jwlemedia.com
theppnfl.org

PPA of Palm Beach

David Summers
231 Moccasin Trail W.
Jupiter, FL 33458
(561) 310-1035
ppapalmbeach@gmail.com
ppapalmbeach.com

PPG of Florida

Veronica Tejera
9355 SW 8th St.
Ste 101
Boca Raton, FL 33428
(561) 699-1360
vtejera23@gmail.com
ppgf.com

Tallahassee PPG

Kate Bellflower
2148 Orleans Dr.
Tallahassee, FL 32308
(904) 614-5234
kate.bellflower@gmail.com
tallahasseeppg.com

Tampa Area PPA

Darin Heinz
109 W. Hanlon St.
Tampa, FL 33604-4023
(813) 324-1230
mdarin@heinzfoto.com
tappa.org

GEORGIA

Georgia PPA

Lisa Hill
1371 Cornell Rd. NE
Atlanta, GA 30306
(404) 226-1451
info@gppa.com
gppa.com

HAWAII

PP of Hawaii

Dwight Okumoto
2878 Pahoehoe Pl.
Honolulu, HI 96817
(808) 591-9044
s3fx@aol.com
pphawaii.org

IDAHO

PP of Idaho

Michael Collins
5503 S. Stromboli Pl.
Meridian ID, 83642
(805) 588-0376
ppofidaho@gmail.com
ppofidaho.com

ILLINOIS

PPA of Northern Illinois

Carrie White
25201 W. Indian
Boundary Ct.
Plainfield, IL 60544
(708) 254-7583
info@carriewhitephoto.com
ppani.org

INDIANA

Daguerre Club of Indiana

Sarah Parent
1200 Fawn Ridge Dr.
West Lafayette, IN 47906
(765) 532-9417
daguerrein@gmail.com
facebook.com/daguerreclub

Indianapolis PPG

Tami Mohs
3552 Mockingbird Dr.
Columbus, IN 47203
(812) 371-8801
tamimohsphotography@gmail.com
ippgonline.org

IOWA

PP of Iowa

Jaimy Ellis
PO Box 315
Knoxville, IA 50138
(319) 430-2703
info@ppiowa.com
ppiowa.com

KANSAS

Kansas PPA

Cindy La Barge
404 Poyntz Ave.
Manhattan, KS 66502
(785) 539-3690
cindy@jcimaging.com
kppa.org

Kansas School

Cindy La Barge
cindy@jcimaging.com
kpps.com

MAINE

Maine PPA

Emily Small
11 Peters Cove Ln.
Westport Island, ME 04578
(207) 882-5001
info@maineppa.com
maineppa.com

MARYLAND

Maryland PPA

Lidia Miller
1741 Castle Rock Rd.
Frederick, MD 21701
(301) 524-2910
president@marylandppa.com
marylandppa.com

MASSACHUSETTS

PPA of Massachusetts

Cassandra Sullivan
53 Main St. Apt 223
Wareham, MA 02571
(508) 335-2369
president@ppam.com
ppam.com

MICHIGAN

Detroit PPA

Danuta Ranek
2847 Bywater Dr.
Troy, MI 48065
(248) 247-0986
president@dppa.net
dppa.net

Great Lakes Institute of Photography

Amanda Scott
fae@laumephotography.com
glip.org

PP of Michigan

Pamela McCormick
60586 Gary Ct.
South Lyon MI 48178
(248) 342-4749
president.ppfmi@gmail.com
ppfmi.com

MINNESOTA

International Society of Animal Photographers

Lisa Asp
6129 France Ave. S.
Edina, MN 55410
(952) 303-3619
info@lisaasp.com
theisap.com

Twin Cities PPA

Emily John
16526 Temple Cir.
Minnetonka, MN 55345
(612) 229-9334
president@tcppa.org
tcppa.org

MISSOURI

PPA of Missouri

Jennifer McCall
417 Fort Saratoga
Saint Charles, MO 63303
(314) 705-0056
develop@moppa.com
moppa.com

MONTANA

Montana PPA

Andrea Reiger
5919 US Highway 12
Ismay, MT 59336
(406) 971-5834
andreareigerphotography@gmail.com
montanappa.com

NEBRASKA

PP of Nebraska

Cory Loomis
122 N. Broadway
Bloomfield, NE 68718
(402) 604-0969
cory@coryloomis.com
ppofn.com

NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire PPA

Nicki French
PO Box 4085
Manchester, NH 03108
(603) 345-8739
arby.nickifrench@gmail.com
nhppa.com

NEW MEXICO

New Mexico PPA

Donita Privett
222 W 2nd St.
Portales, NM 88130
donita@portales.com
ppanm.org

NEW YORK

Capital Champlain PPS NY

Robert Near
1 Greensburgh Ct. Unit 1217
Athens, NY 12015
(518) 698-2967
rjnear3256@gmail.com
capitalchamplain.com

Dutchess Regional PPA

Eli Sloves
6 Drum Ct.
Poughkeepsie, NY 126903
(845) 227-2266
esp377@optonline.net
drpp-ny.org

Hudson Valley PPS of New York

Steve Moses
617 Twin Arch Rd.
Rock Tavern, NY 12575
(845) 401-8774
steve@stevemosesphotography.com
hvppsnyc.org

PPS of Central New York

Amy Davis
1386 Riverbend Dr.
Baldwinsville, NY 13027
(315) 383-8958
amy.davis@yahoo.com
pps-cny.com

PPS of New York State

Timothy Daley
15 Robinson Dr.
Westfield, MA 01085
(646) 509-1609
timothy@daleylight.com
ppsnys.org/about

NORTH CAROLINA

East Coast School

Ann Norment
ann@anorment
photography.com
eastcoastschool.com

Photographic Society of the Triangle

Cecil Hudgens
104E G St.
Butner, NC 27509
mchudjins@nc.rr.com
facebook.com/
groups/32259093485

PP of North Carolina

Ann Norment
102 Laurel Cir.
Fort Mill, SC 29715
(803) 322-2701
ann@anormentphotography.com
ppofnc.com

Prof. Imaging Group of Eastern NC

Kimberly Moore
2243 Cobb Rd.
Kinston, NC 28501
(252) 560-0664
kdotoimaging@gmail.com
pigoenc.com

OHIO

PP of Northeast Ohio

Eric Arnold
5600 Windfall Rd.
Medina, OH 44256
(330) 203-1460
president@ppofneohio.com
ppofneohio.com

PP of Ohio

Danica Barreau
2612 McClain Ct.
Grove City, OH 43123
(614) 678-3058
staff@ppofohio.org
ppofohio.org

OKLAHOMA

Metro PPA

Brent Fuchs
501 Bento Rd.
Edmond, OK 73034
(405) 471-1231
hello@metroppa.com
metroppa.com

PP of Oklahoma

Michael Scalf, Sr.
PO Box 1779
Blanchard, OK 73010
(405) 485-4456
michael.scalf@ppok.org
ppok.org

Tulsa Area PPA

Bob Holder
8990 S. Sheridan Rd.
Ste B-205
Tulsa, OK 74133
(918) 417-2170
inppa.tres@gmail.com
tulsaareappa.com

OREGON

Oregon PPA

Thea Martin
10234 NW Alder Grove Ln.
Portland, OR 97229
(503) 706-3239
sunstramals@gmail.com
oregonppa.org

PENNSYLVANIA

Northeast Pennsylvania PPA

Joshua Rose
20671 State Route 706
New Milford, PA 18834
(575) 226-7676
jrose@omegaimagephoto.com
facebook.com/
nepaphotographers

PPA of Pennsylvania

Ronald Bookwalter
20671 State Route 706
New Milford, PA 18834
(717) 249-6366
ronfoto4u@comcast.net
ppaofpa.org

SOUTH CAROLINA

PP of South Carolina

Jennifer Curtis
PO Box 1003
Simpsonville, SC 29681
(864) 430-5286
curlygirlphotography@gmail.com
ppofsc.com

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota PPA

Joshua Sweets
PO Box 88733
Sioux Falls, SD 57109
(605) 759-2299
joshwsweets@msn.com
facebook.com/SDPPA

TENNESSEE

PP of East Tennessee

Liz Salem
751 Foxridge Ln.
Caryville, TN 37714
(865) 712-9658
liz@lizzyllovephotography.com
ppetrn.com

PP of Middle Tennessee

Michael Gustafson
135 Forest Retreat Rd.
Hendersonville, TN 37075
(615) 569-9222
m.g.photography@comcast.net
ppmtonline.com

Tennessee PPA

Karen Fox
6604 Shouse Cemetery Rd.
Lyles, TN 37098
(615) 939-6151
kfox@kfpimages.com
tnppa.com

TEXAS

Dallas PPA

Kenny Richard
1405 Comanche Dr.
Allen, TX 75013
(214) 789-8610
minvi.dallasppa@gmail.com
dallasppa.com

Fort Worth PP

Andy Lay
6101 Greenfield Rd.
Fort Worth, TX 76135
(817) 475-5301
andylay@andylay.com
fwppa.org

PP of San Antonio

Trey Homan
17222 Classen Rd.
San Antonio, TX 78247
(210) 827-2933
trey@ehoman.com
ppgsa.org

PPG of Abilene

Steve Morrow
1817 Meadowbrook Dr.
Abilene, TX 79603
(325) 513-2514
steve@stevemorrow
photography.com
facebook.com/
groups/1939706649889107

PPG of Houston

Duane Blocker
15707 Bryan Creek Ct.
Houston, TX 77044
(425) 320-8229
dbblocker@comcast.net
ppgh.org

South Plains PPA

Cris Duncan
2402 Slide Rd.
Lubbock, TX 79407
(806) 781-2747
dee@cjduncan.com
westtexasphotographers.com

Texas PPA

Steve Kozak
5323 Fig Tree Ln.
Grand Prairie, TX 75052
(972) 601-9070
steve@stevekozak.com
tppa.org

Texas School

Cris Duncan
cris@texaschool.org
texaschool.org

UTAH

Intermountain PPA

Brian Russell Ford
3022 W. Mt. Logan Way
Taylorsville, UT 84129
(801) 867-3652
brford64@gmail.com
intermountainppa.org

VERMONT

Vermont PPA

Jonathan Adams
219 Lake Rd.
Milton, VT 05468
(802) 355-2435
jon@jonadamsphoto.com
vtprophoto.org

VIRGINIA

Virginia PPA

Deborah Fisk
3433 W Point Ct.
Richmond, VA 23235
(804) 748-8722
debbie@reallifeevents.net
vppa.org

WASHINGTON

PP of Washington

Faye Johnson
27088 Ohio Ave. NE
Kingston, WA 98346
(360) 509-6994
office@ppw.org
ppw.org

WASHINGTON D.C.

PPS of Greater Washington

George Singleton
11113 Luttrell Ln.
Silver Spring, MD 20902
(301) 873-5382
george.singleton6@verizon.net
ppsgw.com

WEST VIRGINIA

West Virginia PPA

David Bruffy
114 S 3rd St.
Oakland, MD 21550
(304) 282-0363
daveb@smokenphoto.com
ppww.org

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin PPA

Jamie Steeno
2933 Lineville Rd.
Green Bay, WI 54313
(920) 655-4380
wppajamie@gmail.com
wppa-online.com

WYOMING

Wyoming PPA

RJ Pieper
109 E 17th St. Ste 6091
Cheyenne, WY 82001
(307) 389-2822
wyomingppa@gmail.com
wyoppa.com

COMMUNITY NETWORK SCHOOLS

EDUCATION NEAR YOU

Looking to update your photography education and skills? Find inspiration, knowledge, and camaraderie by attending a Community Network School. These schools typically provide photographers with educational opportunities on a statewide or regional basis during one week of the year (and participating is a great way to befriend your fellow photographers).

Many Community Network Schools offer scholarships. As schools differ in tuition and housing arrangements, contact each school directly.

EAST COAST SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKSHOPS

NORTH CAROLINA

Contact: Ann Norment
ann@anormentphotography.com
eastcoastschool.com

FLORIDA SCHOOL OF PHOTOGRAPHY

FLORIDA

Contact: Kevin Boller
kevin@kevinboller.com
thefpp.org/2026-fl-school-of-
photography

GREAT LAKES INSTITUTE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

MICHIGAN

Contact: Amanda Scott
fae@laumephotography.com
glip.org

KANSAS PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS SCHOOL

KANSAS

Contact: Kathleen Pearce
kathleenrockers@hotmail.com
kpps.com

MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL SCHOOL (MARS)

DELAWARE

Contact: John Capone
director@marsschool.com
marsschool.com

TEXAS SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY

TEXAS

Contact: Cris Duncan
cris@texaschool.org
texaschool.org

WEST COAST SCHOOL

CALIFORNIA

Contact: Tim Meyer
tim@meyerphoto.com
westcoastschool.com

2026 COMMUNITY NETWORK SCHOOL DATES

MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY

May 3-8, 2026

Hyatt Place, Dewey Beach, Delaware
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glip.org

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westcoastschool.com

FLORIDA SCHOOL

September 25-28, 2026

Holiday Inn Resort, Orlando, FL
thefpp.org



IMAGES ©SAJJAD MAHMOOD / @sajjadmahmoodphotography

For this image of the Passu Cones along the Karakoram Highway, Karachi, Pakistan-based nature, wildlife, and travel photographer Sajjad Mahmood says, "I wanted to capture the sheer scale of the mountains by using a low-angle perspective on the road. This allowed the yellow center line to serve as a strong leading line into the frame."

He used natural sunlight to highlight the texture of the asphalt and the vibrant greens of the trees against the blue sky. "The biggest challenge," he explains, "was balancing the bright sky with the shadowed areas of the mountainside to maintain detail throughout the scene."

In this behind-the-scenes image, he shows us where he set up his camera to capture the vibrant photograph, titled "The Road to the Peaks." •

- **CAMERA AND LENS:** Canon EOS 5DS R, Canon 16-35mm f/4.0 lens
- **EXPOSURE:** 25 seconds at f/22, ISO 50
- **FILTERS:** Kase Gradual Gray 0.9 and ND64 (1.8)

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30 UNDER 30

ONES TO WATCH

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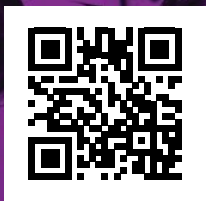
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Community Network with PPA

Stronger Together

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Photographers helping photographers is what Community Networks are all about. These local creative communities nurture and provide the support and tools to help you grow. As a member of your local Community Network, you will:

- ◆ Connect with peers and mentors
- ◆ Sharpen your skills by competing in your local image competitions
- ◆ Earn merits towards your PPA degree by attending or speaking at a PPA Merit Program
- ◆ Get recognized, build credibility, and set yourself apart
- ◆ Give back to your photographic community
- ◆ And much more!

There's never been a better time to get involved. After all, it's together that we thrive.

Find a Community Network Association near you:

[PPA.com/Community-Networks](https://ppa.com/Community-Networks)