

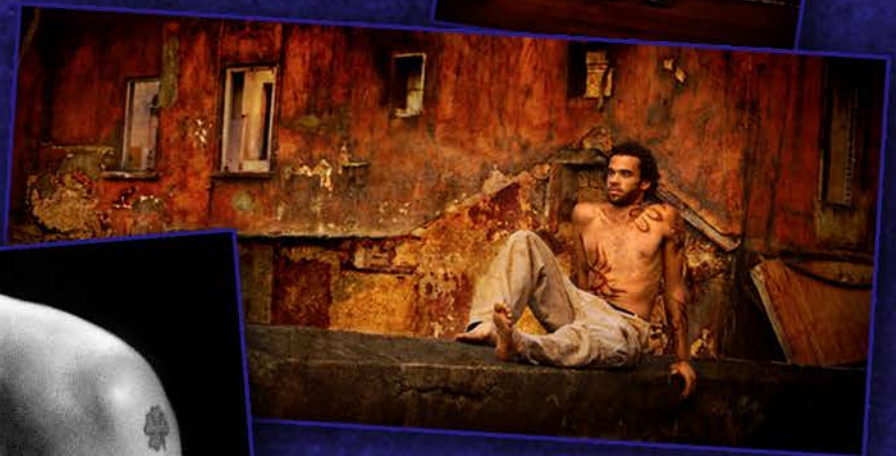
# Wisconsin The Photographer

Volume 121, Number 5

December 2016/January 2017

## Mortensen Portrait Design

## Featured Studio



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rtrummerwppa@gmail.com  
 608-469-1097

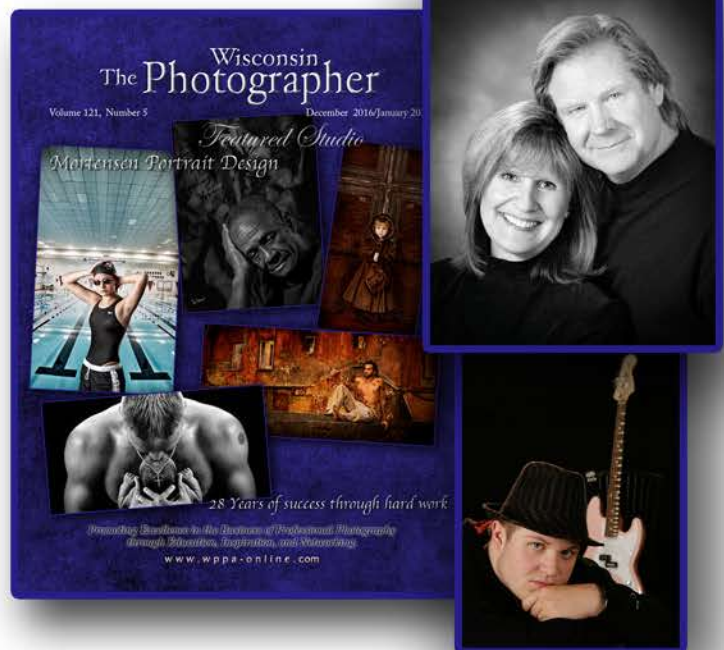
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**on the cover...**

**mortensen portrait design**  
 waukesha, wi



Mary Mortensen talks about the very beginning, her experience and the struggles of starting one of the most successful studios in Wisconsin. Through positive though and AI's volume studio success, the studio has survived through good and bad times. Get the full story starting on page 5.

## from our president...

### "Opportunity Knocks"

Have you ever had that feeling that something big is about to happen? Just that flutter of excitement in your gut. It may be something small or something life-altering. A few things happen by chance, it's true, but most happen because you've invested your time and energy to increase the odds of a successful outcome. That's where we at WPPA come in!

At Wisconsin PPA, we're putting the focus on you, our base. You are the members who worked hard to advance this organization as it helped advance your business. You are the members who dressed up in goofy costumes and socialized with other professionals who shared your goals. You met other members who you learned with and learned from. We want to present you with programs and opportunities that are just too good to miss!

We're also looking for a few good men and women. Would you like to opportunity to help choose programs and speakers in the coming year? We're looking for fresh ideas and also voices of experience. This group is on the upswing and you can help. Please call me at 920-682-2555 and we can talk about small or large ways that you can help.

We're putting together a fantastic lineup at our Spring Convention in Madison in March. Please look it over and sign up early. You won't want to miss it!

Shellie ♦



Shellie Kappelman, CPP  
WPPA President

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## Featured Guest Article

*Michael Barton,  
M. Photog., M. Artist, Cr, CPP, F-ASP, EA-ASP*

### ***“Walking to California”***

There is a common analogy that life is all about the journey. In fact, Harley Davidson says, “It’s the journey and not the destination.” This is a great way to look at life. It’s also a great way to sell motorcycles. I started thinking about this while reading the subject line of a post on a photographers’ Internet forum:

### ***“Am I a Professional Photographer Yet?”***

This post was not written with complete sincerity. However, how many beginning photographers feel this way? With such a subjective form of expression, it is difficult to create tangible goals and measuring sticks for success and yet that is an essential part of the process. Although it’s not possible to establish an exact measurement in time for greatness, there is a simple analogy that might help. If you would like to follow along, pull out a map. Unlike Harley Davidson, we are going to put all of our focus on the destination.

Los Angeles is 2023 miles from Chicago. By any means that’s a considerable distance. It’s even more daunting if we consider taking the journey on foot. There is no escaping the fact that it’s going to take a long time, there are some really obvious ways to arrive in L.A. more quickly. It is pretty simple to say that if we walk 1 mile a day we’ll get there in over 5 years. If we walk 10 miles a day we’ll arrive in under 7 months. There are certainly other factors involved in the journey. For starters, some people are naturally more capable of endurance. Genetics, body type, and other health concerns will play a part in this, however, the “X factor” in all of this is tenacity and will power. Some people are so strong willed that nothing may get in their way. They are simply able to will



themselves to greater distances.

Many of you are perhaps wondering what this has to do with anything. This last paragraph is so simple, yet few draw the connection to their craft. You see, the real truth is, walking to California is like studying photography. There are curves in the road, flat boring stretches, lots of obstacles and detours, and often times, we simply don’t feel like putting the effort forward. Perhaps the greatest truth, and one that most people don’t want to own up to is:

### ***There are no shortcuts.***

Here are a few hard facts. Some people are going to learn faster than others. Some people are naturally more gifted than others. Some people learn with less effort. There are ways to reach our destination more rapidly. Let’s bring the analogy back into play. No one says you can’t walk 30 miles on a day when you’re feeling great. That doesn’t mean letting down the following day. If you put more time into your craft, you’ll get better faster. It doesn’t seem like adding a single mile a day to our 10 mile walk would make

much of a difference, but we would get to L.A. two and a half weeks early. Knowledge works the same way. Every day counts and a little added effort adds up fast.

To tie this together from a more tangible perspective, here are a few ways to get a few miles behind you...

◆ Submerge yourself in beauty and awe. Be inspired by the world. Be inspired by the world of photography. Find out what you love and study it, breathe it, and dissect it. Most importantly, do this often and for extended periods of time. Spend hours surrounded by amazing images. Let them sink deeply into your subconscious.

◆ Practice, practice, practice. Just like a great cello player, you must work on your craft mercilessly and for long hours. It's hard work. For some, this is like hitting the Rocky Mountains when we are tired of walking. Just remember that #1 will carry you part of the way. Anything worth having is worth sacrificing for.

◆ Surround yourself with great people that inspire you. Find other photographers you admire and crawl into their heads. Find out how they think and start learning to think that way.

◆ Study the greats. Increase your understanding of what greatness looks and feels like. Photography is about emotion. Sensitize yourself to what is out there and learn what makes a great image.

◆ Be a part of a group. Photography organizations are a great place to learn and surround yourself with other people that are further along in the journey. They can also help you navigate your way.

◆ Be strong and confident. The fact is, you are going to see people along the way that have given up. You are also going to find people that have stopped walking. How you deal with that is up to you, but know that when all is said and done, it's YOUR journey.

Now you are motivated and ready to go. You have equipped yourself with the knowledge of what it takes to get started and you know your heading. The path to greatness lies in front of you and you are ready to conquer it. There's one problem. The analogy is a complete lie. It simply doesn't work. The simple fact is, there is no destination and no way of knowing if you have arrived. Photography is a process that is never ending. The only way of knowing if you are headed in the right direction is the progress you make. It is true that successful people make goals. but, the truth is you are the only one that can know what they are. The upside to all of this is that you can truly bend time by spending more time on your craft and education. Consider greatness as just part of your job and clock in everyday. If you put in more time and find a 25th hour in the day, you'll see dramatic results more rapidly than you would expect.

The real question is, if you could really arrive at greatness would you want to stop or keep going? ◆

*Michael Barton is a frequent contributor of the Wisconsin Photographer Magazine. Michael is a visual artist and educator dedicated to revealing the natural beauty in the ordinary around us. Barton's work was part of the ASP America the Beautiful Exhibit celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Washington Dulles International Airport and the fundraiser for the National Cathedral co-chaired by first lady, Michelle Obama.*

*His work is often seen in galleries throughout Chicago, the ASP Loan Collection and the PPA Loan Collection Book. Michael has a collection of his own. He collects degrees. In addition to ASP and PPA degrees, his hard work has earned him a Bachelor of Music and Master of Jazz Studies degree from the University of North Texas. He probably has a few more stashed away that he's forgotten about.*

## Evolution of a Studio

### Mortensen Portrait Design 28 + Years

#### Some Background

Most of you are long-time friends but for those “newbies”, here’s a little info on us. Al and I were married in 1979 in the backyard of Al’s parents’ country home in Sullivan, WI. It was what some people would call a “hippieish” wedding, out in the middle of a cornfield with guests dropping in from heaven! Al was a school photographer and I worked as a corporate executive at Miller Brewing Company.

Al was really excited to be marrying a “corporate” girl as he had aspirations of having summers free, etc. Because Al was a school “photographer” occasionally he was asked to photograph friends, family, etc. weddings. I actually enjoyed being his assistant, as he would send me up to the balcony, set me up with filters, etc. and he would go outside and have a smoke with the limo drivers! I helped set up the formals and really liked to do group shots at the receptions.

All was going great for Al until December 11, 1980, when our first son Shawn was born. I traveled a lot and a few years later announced from the road that I needed to be more of a mom and wanted to talk about a career change when I got home.



What to do? I suggested opening a photography studio!!!

#### The Beginning

So it began.... No experience in full-time photography and no experience in owning a business! We needed a plan!!!!!!

The strengths of us at that time were I had a business background that included my degrees in business management and communications and my work experience. Al’s strength was his knowledge of photography (which I have to say in looking back was pretty darn good!).

Another positive was that the school business had a very nice income and was continuing to grow. We

had a good plan for that end and now needed to come up with one to coincide with a studio end.

If you were ever a student of mine, you know what I am going to say next.... We need a Mission Statement before we go any farther. After jotting down things that we felt were important to include in our business philosophy, not just immediately, but for the future, here is what we came up with:



***"Mortensen Portrait Design is in business to document photographic memories for our clients serving as timeless investments that will be passed along through generations. We strive to maintain impeccable client service, having state-of-the art equipment and techniques, and providing a variety of products and services to our clients. Our passion for photography coincides with our desire to meet the needs of our clients in every respect. We pledge to maintain the highest standards of integrity and creativity allowing us to produce lasting memories with lifelong partners." - March 1988***

So now we had a business structure to build on.

- We determined right off the start that we wanted to do HIGH quality photography and target clients that could afford the best! Based on this we set goals for the first three months, six months and our first year. We set out to find a location in a more upscale area and begin to create an "Image"....

#### *Image*

- *Reflection of your mission statement --*
- *Impeccable Studio At All Times!!!!*
- *Clients Judge On Appearance .....*
- *Upscale and Trendy ..... Appeal to all Generations.*

Our first studio was in Brookfield in a growing area on Brookfield Rd. We rented approximately 900 sq. ft., big enough for a cozy lobby, workable camera room, a sales

room and two client dressing rooms. The goal was for Al to be the photographer and I would handle everything else....

#### **Timing is Everything!**

Again, with little studio knowledge we opened our studio in March and waited for the phone to ring. We soon learned that it is quiet in March!

We were invited to attend a meeting of SEWPPA and then attended the WPPA Convention and "boy" were we happy we went! Not only did we meet many up-and-coming photographers but we learned tons of things right off the start. WPPA members made us feel right at home and introduced us to many great vendors, who as it turns out, also helped us get started with our business! We made it a point to walk around the print show and look for photographers who we wanted to visit and learn from. Our first great mentors were the Larsens, Lee and Diane. Both are past presidents of WPPA. Lee was photographing about 1000+ seniors non contract and his quality was over the top. We went to a seminar he had at his studio

with Jeff Walters, another great photographer, from Janesville. We also went to Jeff's studio. Visiting these "top notch" studios really gave us some great ideas to take back and implement. Lee also sat down with us and went over our business plan and gave us valuable information.

When setting goals here are some key guidelines we followed:



## GUIDELINES FOR SETTING GOALS

- Determine who will be involved in setting your studio's goals.
- Develop a procedure for monitoring your goals on a routine basis and revise as needed.
- Create individual goals that clarify your studio's business activities without limiting flexibility and creativity.
- Confirm that your studio's goals, taken together, provide an effective blueprint for achieving your broad business intentions.
- Make sure that your studio's stated goals are closely tied to your studio's mission statement.
- Use the goals to communicate your business intentions to people both inside and outside your studio.

Lee continued to help us as the year evolved and we were excited to get back and set new goals for our senior business as that was the season we were entering into.

## Getting The Word Out – Marketing, Marketing

Al's brother Dennis was a very successful insurance broker and had a women telemarketing for him. He called us one day and asked if we could use her for a while as she had generated enough business for him for now.

We made a list of the high schools in our area and from there we called the schools, told them we were really new in the area and our goal was to provide parents and students with a fresh style and approach to senior pictures....we really humbled ourselves and almost pleaded! We actually got students names and phone numbers (don't think that would happen today but my theory has always been that it can't hurt to ask!)

We budgeted that we could afford to pay the telemarketer per student called and let her at it. We started with the high school closest to us. We set a script for her to follow that gave parents info on us including we were new in the area and invited them in for a tour and info session. To our amazement clients were visiting and scheduling sessions! We "begged"

these clients to PLEASE tell their friends about us – we used no gimmicks or discounts to do this, they just wanted to help us. (Gift from God!)

As business evolves, you must evolve with it and adjust your goals, plans and budgets accordingly. We soon realized that we needed a part-time sales person. We asked our telemarketer if she would be interested in this position and she was. I had sales training tapes and mentors that offered to have her sit in on sales sessions and soon we developed our own sales plan that was structured to coincide with our



studio's mission statement. Based on good advice (very good advice), right off the start we projected our images using an ennescope. Being that this was film days, we had 4x5 previews printed at the lab and showed them on the screen in large format. It was wonderful! We could show our clients the images large and then small. Our sales skyrocketed. At the end of our first senior season we photographed 300+ seniors!

## Life Can Throw Curve Balls!

Did I mention I had a baby in January that year? Also did I mention my dad was living with us as he combated colon cancer? The reason I mention this is life needs some time for sanity checks! I was told right off the start

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aci

from my many friends that you need to make sure you take some time for yourself and your family....

What drives us? PASSION! I have always been fortunate to embrace my passions and enjoy them to the fullest. Eating right, exercise, enjoying nature and traveling have helped us keep focus on the direction we have for our business.

## Passion

Passion is defined as a strong, compelling emotion or feeling. Being passionate about what you do is extremely important! Al and I are both passionate about photography. We can't drive down the road or eat at a restaurant without one or both of us pointing out a beautiful scene or lighting pattern. Sometimes it becomes a game with us. We have always been passionate about marketing and business as well. It is not uncommon for one of us to come out of the shower without blurting out a new marketing idea or ideas for images for competition.

You need to surround yourself with people who share this passion as well! Get rid of those negative influences in your life and business, they are like a bad apple in your basket that will only continue to go bad and spread negatively.

I was only a WPPA member for a year or so when my

my greatest "role model" became a major player in my life – Mille Totushek! At a WPPA convention Mille and Gloria sat in front of Al and I at a program. The speaker

was not very good (which did not happen very often.

In front of me Mille leaned over to Gloria and said that the speaker did not know Sh\*t (if you knew Mille you understand!). I tapped her on the shoulder and

told her I agreed! That was our bonding moment and we became best friends up through her death a few years ago.

What a great photographer she was!

She was known nationwide for photographing men in her shed. In fact, every male "who's who" photographer wanted to be photographed by her and those that did bragged about it! I had the opportunity to teach and learn from her. She would go to every program with a little pad of paper and I can't remember her not taking a note or two. Her theory was everyone has

something to learn something

from. She also would never go anywhere with her pocket point-and-shoot camera. She has many loans taken with this camera. She always wanted to learn from people. In the later days she was passionate to learn the digital world but her mind was failing but she still tried. With her talent it would have been fun to see where she could have taken the new technology!



## As Business Evolved

Our first session ever was a mom who called for a child session and then added two other children to that session. She neglected to mention that her older daughter was disabled; we said no problem. Again, let me remind you this was our first studio session! We posed the three girls, turned around to head back to the camera, and the daughter was right behind us pulling her dress over her head! This went on for 4-5 times.... Finally, after much sweating, we got the shot. Our second session was a newborn with colic. The baby never stopped crying and the parents said that is the way it is and to just take a picture. With much patience and the help of a flashlight, we got one pose without tears! At that point we looked at each other and said "what did we do?". Al decided then he was not a baby photographer. That's when I decided to become a children's photographer. I studied with Marion Vance Silber at a PPA school and the rest is history!

I would be remiss not to mention friends. One of our best are the Guellers who we have shared business ideas, opportunities, problems, etc. but most of all great friendship. Being both working with partners and having sons, and they are one of the hardest working couples we know, we had lots in common. Passion fueled our friendship.... We have traveled



together and would charge \$.25 each time someone would mention business on vacation but soon had to drop the charge as we found this was somewhat impossible to do.

Vendors played an integral part in developing our business. Our first lab was Supra Color in New Berlin. Jack Helmen was the chief in the beginning. He was a FONT of information about the industry and actually told us back in 1990 that someday we would take pictures without film and print them from our desk and make tons of money! One day he sat down with us in a hotel room and we laid out our goals for the year, five years and ten year. All this at no charge, just friendship! (God is Great!). Also good to us was John Piccone from Supra Color, our sales rep. Anything we needed, he was there for us! He also became a great friend. The same was true for Troxel Green...we were sorry when Supra Color closed – but then we met all our Burrell friends across the country. We were part of Burrell's Charter Group of their prestigious Presidential Circle, landing us in exotic places to network, play and learn from the most successful studios in the country.

We then were invited to be part of Print Masters Lab in

Green Bay, which at the time was by invitation only. Dan Stoller had the best of the best – best artists, printing, etc. We were able to charge higher prices because the quality reflected it.

Then came Pat Cahill and American Color (ACI)! We turned all our school processing over to them many years ago and have grown with them as they establish themselves as the top lab in the country! Pat is also a very hard worker and is passionate about what he does including helping people. He has the kindest family and now celebrates being a new grandpa this year!

I served as trade show chair one year for the WPPA convention and continued really getting to know the wonderful vendors that have supported our State throughout the years. It was nice going year after year to conventions and reuniting with them.

The first ten years was truly a whirlwind for us! Life was good but we knew change was coming!

### REMEMBER:

- Your business plan must take into account the major forces that are at work in your industry;
- The number and size of your competitors shape the structure of your industry.
- How big your market is and how fast it's growing determines how fierce your competition will be;
- How well your business works depends on your relationships with suppliers, customers and distributors;
- A successful studio keeps costs down and profits up;
- You can find good industry data on the internet.

You can either run away or embrace change. We chose to embrace it. When the first digital camera was released, we knew how important it was for us to keep on track. I attended the first Photoshop classes offered.



The attendees are now the successful studios in our state. We all saw the handwriting on the wall and forged ahead. I already told Al we need to purchase the first Canon camera and make it work! We bought it at

our WPPA Convention in February and a week later we were testing on it. Our Cute Kids Contest was beginning and I photographed a session with it. What fun was it to go back to my computer, download and see my session immediately! My thoughts were from "I like that" to "why did I do that" or "next time I will do this". Instant learning!

I was so excited, but where to go from here? I called Dan Stoller at Print Masters and asked what they were doing with digital. They were in the learning as well. We decided to print some of my images. We learned a lot from proper white balance to resolution issues. Once solved, I announced to Al that we should do our seniors digitally? He almost fainted! But we knew it was part of our mission statement to be innovative and have foresight so we proceeded.

I failed to mention earlier that during this period we were fortunate to have our nephew, Rick Swearingen, join our team. He is the digital guru. He set up all the groundwork for us entering this era and continues to do so today! He is passionate about the digital industry and that is why we keep our fingers on the pulse!

Our son Shawn also joined our team after studying at MATC in visual communications. Shawn is one of the BEST digital artists I know and sees color better than anyone. I owe many of my competition awards to his fine-tuning!

We converted our sales process, purchased Pro Select and project images with a projector. Our clients LOVED this and we were on a roll. The next few years were wonderful and the studio was growing. We moved three times because we needed more room and then bought a building in Waukesha. We had two full-times sales people and two part-time office assistants. But no one could predict 9/11!

## 9/11

I flew into Philadelphia at midnight on 9/11 with Al's mom, rented a car and drove to Atlantic City, NJ. I was scheduled to speak at 1 pm on 9/11 talking about charitable marketing at PPA's Family and Children's Conference. We woke up around 8:15 or so and then Al's mom asked if I heard the thunder outside. I didn't but after turning on the television, life changed. Our hotel was under lock down and the national guard were outside. Dennis Craft was speaking and they were told it was a false fire alarm so he continued. We stayed to give my presentation but left right after with our rental car. We drove all the way (mostly in silence) to Michigan before we stopped....

## Life After 9/11

As you all know, things changed fast. Digital cameras became the norm. Everyone is now a photographer. Computers are affordable. "Photoshop It" is a casual saying. The phone book is

inundated with photographers. Jpegs are preferred over photographs. Quality is not important to the norm. Social media is now the number one marketing tool. Etc. Etc. Did we all plan for this? Probably not.

We needed to downsize our studio, reevaluate our market, reevaluate our procedures, etc. We looked at our product lines and made determinations as to what is our major line and determined that all along it

### REMEMBER:

- As you put your plan into practice, make sure that you organization, procedures and people all work together toward the same goals;
- How you organize – by function, product, market or division, for example – plays a big role in making your plan work;
- With more management levels in place, you gain control but lose flexibility as a company;
- Be ready to change the way that your studio is organized as you grow or business circumstances change;
- Don't say, "That's just the way things are done." Make sure that every procedure that you adopt makes good business sense.

continued to be our school business. Not once along our many years did we waiver from that being our central focus. Even through the early years when Al was demeaned by some photographers because he photographed schools and "why did we use the same name for

both businesses"?! Why, because we knew the power of volume business and have always knew that a studio needs diversity in what it does in case something goes amiss in one area, the other should sustain it.

## The Future

Only God knows what our future brings. Throughout





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ups and downs, our business has been VERY good to us. I often say if I would have stayed at Miller Brewing I would be well retired now and living VERY comfortably!

## CHECKLIST OF PLANNING ESSENTIALS

- Get everyone involved in setting goals and objectives
- Learn all you can about your customers
- Understand who your competitors are
- Identify your strengths and weaknesses relative to opportunities and threats
- Determine which capabilities you absolutely need to succeed
- List all the things you do that add customer value
- Make sure that you do your financial homework
- Imagine several different versions of your studio's future

But all the great people and friendships we have made throughout these years cannot be traded and perhaps they are some of our GREATEST gifts. Our clients are truly treasured and the many cancer children, their families and being apart of the charity to help someday cure childhood cancers, are the reasons we were directed to this profession. We are truly thankful to know that we have created lasting memories of these children, especially those that lost their fight, we were united with God's angels while on earth.

I am also thankful to Darrell Chitty from Sheveport, LA, (a long-time friends of WPPA) for encouraging me to learn Painter and become part of the Dead Artists Society. My inspiration and growth as an artist would be possible without these artists (Annell Metzger and Tim McCary).

Our family is growing, we are enjoying our two grandchildren and we look forward to doing the other things are passionate about....

I am excited to continue to learn and do more artwork at FortMort and beyond!

## Our Wish For You

WPPA wanted you to get to know us and learn about our journey that has led us to be one of the more outstanding studios. We thank them for this. Our involvement in the photographic organizations has made this all possible!

A big thank you to Rick Trummer (Mr. Passion). He is one of the most dedicated, passionate photographers we have known!

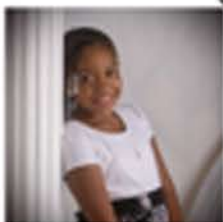
As we became successful, we wanted to give back to our community. We began our Cute Kids Contest 25 years ago with all proceeds going back to the MACC Fund for research to help fight childhood cancers and related blood disorders. We have raised thousands of

dollars throughout this time. Years ago I was given this poem written by a teenager who was losing her battle. I read it at the end of all my programs. I'd like to share it with you. Feel free to pass it on as well!



## SLOW DANCE

WRITTEN BY A TEENAGE GIRL WHO HAD SIX MONTHS TO LIVE AND AS HER DYING  
WISH SHE WANTED IT SHARED WITH AS MANY AS POSSIBLE ...



Have You Ever Watched Kids On A Merry-Go-Round?  
Or, Listened To The Rain Slapping On The Ground?  
Ever Followed A Butterfly's Erratic Flight?  
Or, Gazed At The Sun Into The Fading Night?  
You Better Slow Down, Don't Dance So Fast.  
Time Is Short, The Music Won't Last.  
Do You Run Through Each Day On The Fly?



When You Ask "How Are You?" Do You Hear The Reply?  
When The Day Is Done, Do You Lie In Your Bed,  
With The Next Hundred Chores Running Through Your Head?



You Better Slow Down, Don't Dance So Fast.

Time Is Short, The Music Won't Last!

Ever Told Your Child "We'll Do It Tomorrow?"

And In Your Haste, Not Seen His Sorrow?

Ever Lost Touch, Let A Good Friendship Die,  
Cause You Never Had Time To Call And Say "Hi"



You'd Better Slow Down, Don't Dance So Fast,

Time Is Short.. The Music Won't Last.

When You Run So Fast To Get Somewhere,

You Miss Half The Fun Of Getting There.

When You Worry And Hurry Through Your Day,

It Is Like An Unopened Gift, Thrown Away.



Life Is Not A Race. Do Take It Slower,

Hear The Music,

Before The Song Is Over.



©Photos by Mortensen Portrait Design

Thanks WPPA for being there all these years to help us learn from the best talent, shop from quality vendors and network with the best friends ever. Please volunteer to help this association! It would be a shame for it to go away. I believe that the professional industry will come back full speed with a little time and education to the general public. Appreciation of fine art will always be a part of lives, as long as we help to keep it alive!

- Mary & Al Mortensen

## "Being a Print Artist in a Digital World"

*Tim Walden, M.Photog., Cr., CPP, F-ASP*

"The negative is the equivalent of the composer's score and the print the performance."

-Ansel Adams

The term, "Print Artist" came to life one day as I answered the phone at the studio and heard the question I had been dreading to hear. The question was, "Do you sell files?" Surprisingly, it was as if I had an answer memorized although I had never spoken these words. My answer was this, "No, I don't sell files. That is a different kind of photographer. You see, I am a Print Artist, meaning the portrait is not complete until it is in printed form." Recently, I was unpacking a case of my father's prints and awards and I stumbled across an award he was given in the 80's from Kodak. It was an award for being a Master Printer! I suppose the apple doesn't fall far from the tree!

**I feel we are experiencing the law of the "Unintended Consequence."**

When digital technology appeared on the horizon, I was not aware of the ramifications. For many years, I was simply focused on how to use the new cameras which changed drastically year to year, how to work on a computer which was now my "darkroom", how to process files and most importantly, how to safely archive those files. Of the billions of photographs taken every year, most are impermanent as they exist only as digital files on cell phones and sometimes on a computer hard drive. And we all know what happens to hard drives!

The likelihood is that most of those billions of photographs will not survive those who took them!



**We are facing the dilemma of the empty shoebox!**

Anyone who has ever found a shoebox of old prints in an attic have moments of joy as they realize that yes, they do look just like mom or dad. Faded, bent snapshots of holidays once enjoyed or places once visited come back to life for another generation to enjoy. Photographs freeze moments in time, reminding us of where we came from!

We are in danger of having a whole generation that has no family albums or shoeboxes crammed with photographs from the past because people just leave their photographs on their phone or computer, and then suddenly they may be deleted without recourse.

**The message of the Print Movement is this: PRINT YOUR PICTURES!**

The entire history of Walden's Photography has been as a studio that charged top prices for top quality and high value. That has not changed. Imagine the perceived value of a CD or flash drive being handed to a client (containing unworked files) versus a masterfully retouched, art worked, adjusted, matted, framed, hand-printed archival portrait.

## There is simply no comparison-selling the PRINT is where we have "planted our flag!"

As Bev does sales, she often compares the value of a sofa purchased for several thousand with the value of a clients family portrait purchased for several thousand. In five years, which one is on Craig's list for a few hundred dollars and which one is priceless? Printed art is priceless!

## Two words that will separate you from the masses: Create Gaps

What is everyone (the masses) doing? Go the opposite way! Years ago, we defined a style that relied heavily on the print and the artist/photographer. Today, we populate the studio with beautifully printed, matted, framed and hand-signed archival portraits that carry the message of printed art.

Underneath each framed portrait, we have a small work print, marked up with instructions in black marker to emulate what my dad and I used to do in the darkroom. We would print a test print, look at it, mark it up with corrections for the final print and then proceed.

What happens in the studio as our clients look at our walls? They always look first at the work prints as they seem out of place and ask what they are. This opens the door for a conversation about how we

value the print and allows us to briefly talk about the printing process and our history as printers. It is also a kind of comparison of "before and after" showing the care we take in getting the potential from each portrait.

To carry through the value of the printed portraits, we always include a Certificate of Authenticity that

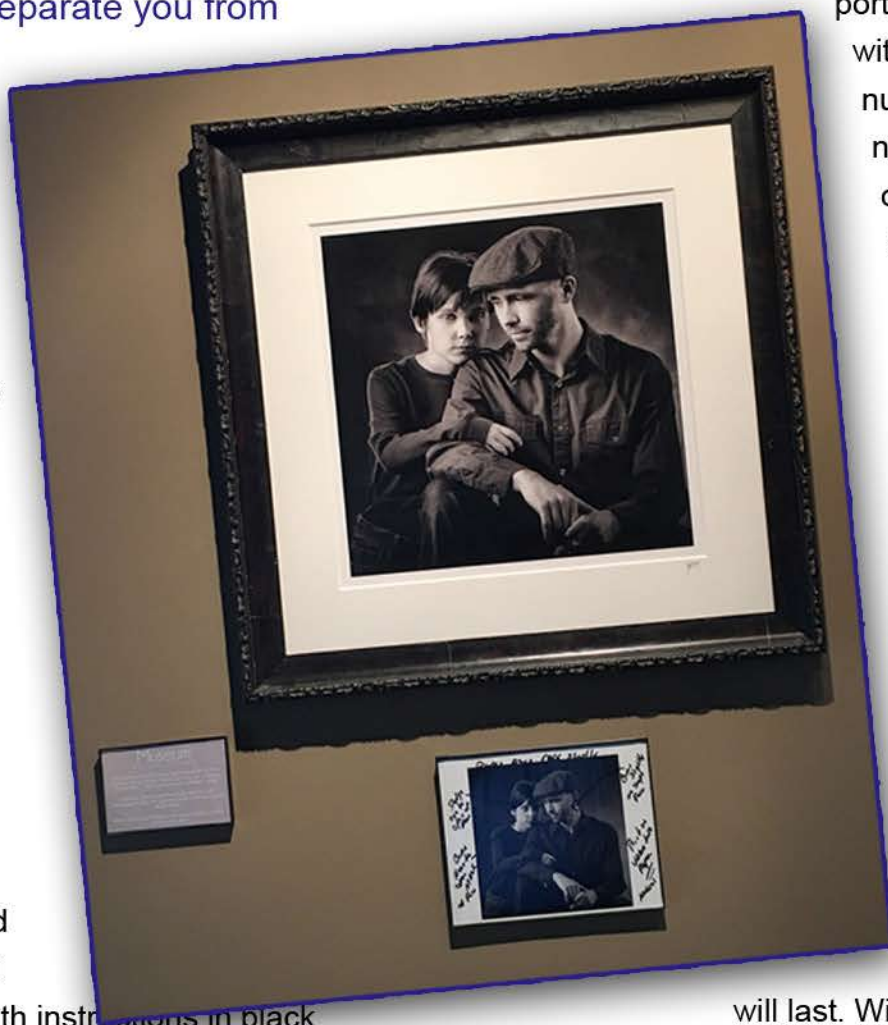
has a handwritten number across the seal which indicates the date the portrait was taken along with the customer number and the pose number. As a finishing touch, Tim hand-signs the certificate across the bottom as well as the actual print.

The message of a portrait that is archival is carried through in our Pricing Schedules as each of our lines has a Longevity Chart. Simply put, the Longevity Chart defines how many generations a print

will last. With a generation

defined as 25 years, we have portraits that are noted to last a single generation all the way to multiple generations.

Again, this helps us message the value of the print. In fact, we have a portrait hanging in our studio of my grandfather when he was five years old. We show our clients this portrait and they are mildly interested UNTIL... we tell them it is 108 years old!



*"Being a Print Artist in a Digital World" continued from previous page*

How many of us will be showing someone a "pic" on our cell phones or computers that is 108 years old? It is truly astonishing.

Years ago, we felt this wave of change coming and we quit being "photographers" and became "Print Artists." We are a rare and unique breed that "knows" what a print should look like, shoots in ways that allow prints to be at potential AND most importantly, we are "craftsman that craft our art pieces to their potential by controlling the printing".

As far as messaging and marketing goes, we became pro-active, making the print a value point rather than just saying NO to a request for digital files.

*Categorize yourself as a Print Artist. It's a marketable skill that makes you unique in today's market.*

There are two roles in printing: the "Print Artist" and the "Print Maker." The print artist makes all the critical decisions about the art. The print maker performs the mechanics, running that image through the printing process. You are a "Print Artist."

If people have seen your work, and they love what you do, your prints are going to be what they want. I tell my clients that my work is not complete until it's in final print form. To be honest, a lot of my work doesn't look right until that point; every choice I make in the process is for the final print.

A final thought: Start where you're at.

Even if you've sold nothing but files, it begins with the first step. It really does work. ♦



*Tim took over Walden's Photography from his father in 1980, taking the studio in an entirely different direction when he developed the Walden trademark "Relationship" Black and White Fine Art portraiture. Today, he and his wife Beverly run a high-end studio, providing beautifully crafted images for their clients as well as traveling the world teaching and sharing with other photographers.*

*Tim is a Past-President of the PPA. He earned his Fellowship from ASP and is also a member of Society of 25 (XXV). He is an International Approved Juror and International Speaker and has won numerous awards including the Kodak Gallery Award and Imaging Excellence Award. He is a PPA National Award recipient from Kentucky as well as a Past President. Tim also has received the IPC Leadership Award in 2014 and the Gerhard Bakker Award for his outstanding service through education in the field of photography.*

# 2017 WPPA Forward Photography Expo Tentative Schedule

March 4th - March 6th, 2017 - Marriott West, Middleton, WI

**Saturday, March 4th, 2017**

7:00am – 9:00am

**Greg Loll**



9:30am – 11:30am

(Canon Speaker to be Announced)

1:00pm – 5:00pm

**Rod Oman**



**Sunday, March 5th, 2017**

7:00pm – 9:00pm

**Amy Feick**



# 2017 WPPA Forward Photography Expo Tentative Schedule

March 4th - March 6th, 2017 - Marriott West, Middleton, WI

**Sunday, March 5th, 2017** *(continued)*

9:30am – 11:30am

**Sandra Pearce**



1:00pm – 5:00pm

**Sandra Pearce** *(continued)*

**Monday, March 6th, 2017**

9:00am – 11:30am

**Michael O'Neil**



1:00pm - 5:00pm

**Michael O'Neil** *(continued)*

## Message from the Executive Director

**Rick Trummer**, M.Photog., Cr., CPP, F-WPPA, F-APPI,  
F-SCPPA, F-PPANI, F-IPPG, EA-ASP



Recently, I tuned into a wonderful story of how Tower Records started and had a 38 year run on the top of the music selling industry.

The story goes that Russ Solomon and his father started a soda fountain shop that also sold pharmacy goods along with single RPM's. Russ witnessed the sales of those singles and thought...music will be the future. His father turned over the keys to his son and that began Tower Records in Sacramento, CA. It became the center of music sales and other stores followed. A couple more in Sacramento, then San Francisco and LA until the entire west coast was saturated with Tower Records. The employment culture was one of excitement and energy and Tower Records flourished. It was the start of the american dream.

Russ had an idea of expanding to Japan, sent over one of his employees to do some research and they opened a store. It was a huge success as Japan was really into the american music dream. One store became two, then three, then six, seven and eight. It was the first american company to not have a Japanese owner. Japan created the boom for adding more stores, it was time to start on the east coast of america.

They rented a very cheap building in Manhattan, with that store they single handedly started a

rebuilding process for business to the area to create Greenwich Village. Their marketing department decided it would be a great idea to have their own industry magazine, so Pulse Magazine was born. It was an industry cornerstone being featured on MTV. They developed their own press house, marketing and print firm. A company that was this large didn't want to outsource anything. The one store became two, then three, then eight, nine and ten, and the east coast was now dominated with Tower Records. That lead to the central United States and the empire continued.

With the addition of cheap money during this time, they went world-wide, creating stores in South America, Europe and additional Asian stores. I think you can imagine what happened, the bottom dropped out when music became cheap. Why buy a full album when you only wanted a song or two for .99 each? Music sales started to slow so the banks came in wanted their money. They (the banks) brought in their own management team, sold off Japan, the most profitable piece of the puzzle, and without that money additional stores started closing and the American Success Story ended with the closing of all the Tower Records by the end of 2006. The comparisons are stunning to our industry, we are not the only folks that have been hit with cheap outsources, but we have something a large company like that doesn't have. The ability to turn the rudder on the ship quicker and with more ease. We must adapt, change and regain our hold as the creators of photographic art. The alternative is the loss of the art that has been a part of us since 1839 with the creation of the first image. We are the only ones that can change the future of our industry, to not end up with the closing of our doors and the art. ♦

Be Good To Each Other!

Rick

# Constitution & By-Laws Proposed changes

*The proposed changes will need to be voted on at the next Annual Meeting to be held at the Forward Photography Expo in Madison, WI on March 6th, 2017*

(B) LIFE. A life membership may be conferred upon an individual for services rendered to the photographic profession, or for any reason that may be deemed sufficient at the discretion of the Board of Directors upon an individual who exceeds the following minimum requirements. Must be a member in good standing and have served the association or profession in some capacity through the years. ~~Must be of good character and reputation in his/her community and profession.~~ **Must have a minimum of 10 years of consecutive membership, and have accumulated a total of 80 qualifying years (points). One qualifying year (point) is awarded for each year of membership and each year of age.** A life member shall not be required to pay further annual dues, and shall enjoy all the privileges of Primary membership. **Applicant's will need to fill out the Life Member Application and submit it to the Board of Directors no later than December 1st of any year to be considered for the following year membership.** One vote.

**Once awarded Life membership that member may have Associate members under them.**



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# The Loss of an Icon - Irene Wright-Solway

October 8, 1927 - December 7, 2016

Irene M. Wright Solway, 89, Village of Howard, passed away on Wednesday, December 7, 2016. She died peacefully at home after fighting cancer for the last 8 years. She was born in the family farmhouse in New Franken, WI on Oct. 8, 1927, to Anton Peters and Frances Van Lanen Peters. She attended New Franken Grade School and St. Joseph Academy.

Irene married Donald J. Wright on April 26, 1947, and together they raised four sons, James Donald, Wayne Michael (deceased), Thomas Earl and Steven Joseph. They spent a lot of time camping with them when they were very young.

Together Don and Irene formed Wright Portrait Studio in 1953 in Green Bay. At that time, she did all the oil coloring and black & white photo correction until natural color became popular, and she changed from oil coloring to correcting color photos. After Don became ill, they sold the Studio to their son, Wayne, and Irene opened her own business, called Wright Photo Technique, which included negative retouching, print enhancement and restoration. She began working for other studios out of her home.

In 1986, Irene took a class in negative retouching at Winona School of Photography. In 1988, she received Wisconsin Artist of the Year and was awarded Black & White Negative Retoucher of the year in 1990. Since joining the Professional Photographers of America in 1986, Irene has received many Artist Print Merits and has had an oil colored portrait chosen to be shown at Epcot. In 1990, she earned her Certified Professional Photographic Artist Degree. In 1992, she was awarded the Degree of Fellow of Photography by the Wisconsin Professional Photographers. On June 29, 1993, she received her Master Artist Degree and on June 30, 1993, she earned her Degree of Photographic Artisan from the American Photographic Artisan Guild.

In 1994, she became a National Specialist Judge. In 1995, She obtained Life Membership in Fox Valley Professional Photographers, and in 1996 was awarded Life Membership in the Wisconsin Professional Photographers. In 2003, she received the Very Prestigious Hall of Fame Award from the Wisconsin Professional Photographers Association.

Irene's other interests were gardening, bird feeding & crafting. She loved the Christmas Season with her family. Don passed away on May 14, 1991. She married Florian (Tony) Willmas on



May 31, 1996. Tony passed away on Jan. 13, 1997. On May 7, 2004, she married Lawrence "Larry" Solway. She was proud to say that all three were active in the 4th Degree Knights of Columbus.

Irene was a member of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Howard and a member of the Catholic Women's/Christian Mothers. She is also a member of the Catholic Women's Club of Green Bay. She was active in the UCT (United Commercial Travelers) local council and became a Past Grand Counselor of the Wisconsin Grand Counsel. After retiring as a Photo Artist, Irene became proficient as a water color artist. She joined the Bay Area Watercolor Guild. Irene, Jane Gerlach and Sr. Claudette Janquart started a group that meets once a month all day Saturday. They meet at each other's homes and not only paint but socialize and pray together. They find it very relaxing.

Irene was preceded in death by her sister, LaVerne, in 1924 who died a few days after her birth; her mother, Frances, who died in 1943, when Irene was 15 years old; her stepmother, Dorothy Fischer Luebeck Peters who died in 1985; her father, Anton, who died July 8, 1990 at 93 years of age; her husbands, Don and Tony; her son, Wayne, in 2010; her daughter-in-law, Peggy Wright in 2009; stepson, Jack Willmas and stepson-in-law, Dave Rusch.

Family and friends may call for visitation from 4 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 14, at Blaney Funeral Home, 1521 Shawano Ave. A Parish Wake Service will be held at 7 p.m. Visitation will continue from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. Thursday at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, 2597 Glendale Ave. (one quarter mile east of the corner of Cardinal Ln. and Glendale Ave.), Howard. The Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 12 p.m. at the church with Rev. John Bergstadt officiating. Burial will be in Fort Howard Memorial Park. ♦



Mary Gueller  
M. Photog., Cr., CPP, F-WPPA

## ***January Webinar Program - “This Little Studio went to Market”***

During this webinar Mary will take you through marketing their studio has used over the thirty-six years in business. Over the years the methods of marketing may have changed, but the message remained the same - get people in your door! You will learn how to plan your entire year's marketing calendar. Set goals for each promotion, design the marketing campaign according to your target, finally implementing the plan in a timely fashion. Over the years Gueller's Photography have used numerous avenues for marketing, Mary will share success and failures, and how they have changed with the current times. Promotional ideas to introduce new clients to your studio will be shared.

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 6:10pm - 6:25pm | Get Signed in to the Program<br>(You must be signed in by 6:25pm) |
| 6:30pm - 7:20pm | Mary's Webinar Program  |
| 7:20pm - 7:30pm | Question and Answer Period  |

Recorded Copy will be available for purchase

***Wednesday, January 25th, 2017  
6:30pm - 7:30pm***

Call Rick Trummer at (608) 469-1097 to sign up for this webinar today, space is limited to 24 so don't delay!

## calendar of events

### WPPA Events

[www.wppa-online.com](http://www.wppa-online.com)

### New WPPA Webinars

January 25th, 2017

**Mary Gueller - Marketing**



**Webinars will start at 6:30pm until 7:30pm with a 10 minute question and answer period.**

### 2017 Forward Photography Expo & NorthCentral District (121st Year)

March 3rd - 6th, 2017

Marriott West - Madison, WI

### Madison Marriott West

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3-star hotel

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[Directions](#)

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Laundry service

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### Foxes

[www.fvppa.com](http://www.fvppa.com)

Regional Director: Michael Kallies

December 12th, 2016 - Holiday Dinner  
**Appleton, WI**

January 16th, 2017 - Round Table  
**TBA**

February 20th, 2017 - TBD  
**TBA**



### Indianhead

[www.indianheadphotographers.org](http://www.indianheadphotographers.org)

Regional Director: Tom Giles

January 9th, 2017 - Colby, WI  
**TBA**

February 13th, 2017 - Colby, WI  
**David Johnson -  
Video Editing in Photoshop**

April 10th, 2017 - Colby, WI  
**Jane Bores -  
Special Event Photography**



### South Central

[www.southcentralppa.com](http://www.southcentralppa.com)

Regional Director: Krystal Stankowski

January 23rd, 2017 - Madison, WI  
**TBA**

March 27th, 2017 - Waunakee, WI  
**Greg Loll - Selling Wall Portraits**

April 24th, 2017 - Madison, WI  
**TBA**



### South Eastern

[www.sewppa.org](http://www.sewppa.org)

Regional Director: Jon Allyn

