

Texas School's Miracle Lady

Stephanie Huebinger

by
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It is rare to find a professional photographer who actually went to school to learn the profession. Most of us started out doing something else and eventually ended up doing what we do, but Stephanie Huebinger found her calling as a student in Austin, Texas.

During her junior year at the University of Texas, some of Stephanie Huebinger's friends told her of a "really cool" photography class where you set up products and photograph them with a 4x5 view camera. At that time, she didn't even own a 35mm camera and knew absolutely nothing about photography. "I remember walking into this large room where a large, robust guy with a dark beard sat at the end of the table. I wondered how I would be able to talk myself into this one, so I introduced myself and told him how much I wanted to take the class. Not only did he let me in, but this special man grew to be the most



influential person of my life." She was referring to the late Charlie Guerrero, a past president of Texas PPA. Upon graduating from U.T., Stephanie went to work for Charlie. That was twenty years ago.

Her mentor was a talented commercial as well as portrait photographer and a past president of the Texas Professional Photographers Association.

Under his guidance, Stephanie's artistic talent would evolve into a rewarding career that initially began as a commercial photographer. Recalling those days as a commercial photographer, Stephanie commented, "I remember spending days doing one multiple exposure on a 4x5 camera. But those days are long gone. Companies that used to spend good money for a product shot, now just want a down and dirty shot to slap on the internet instead of producing a large annual report. So, life as a commercial photographer really changed for me. And, to tell you the truth, I didn't like the change. It wasn't fun to do just a 'plain Jane' shot. I wanted something more fun and challenging than that."

So, eleven years ago, Stephanie bought an old 7-11 store and she and her parents spent a year turning it into a studio. "I remember that I had just opened my doors and people would come in asking me to take their picture and I didn't even have a single portrait of a person hanging on the wall!" But the people kept coming in and Stephanie soon got into the swing of things with a Halloween special and photographed over 350 kids. "They were wrapped around the building and down the street," she recalls. Her studio has never been the same. Since that time, her specialty has been high school seniors, children, and families.



Texas Professional Photographer

Central Texas has always been Stephanie Huebinger's home. She was born in New Braunfels and lived there until her family moved to Austin when she was five years old. She hasn't strayed much further from home than that over the years. Today, this Master-Craftsman owns a studio located in downtown Round Rock, a small town on the outskirts of Austin, Texas. It is a 2400 square foot facility with a large camera room with "plenty" of backgrounds. "I'm a background junkie. I probably have 50 of them," she admits. The camera room also has window lighting and her studio lights are on rail systems. Her favorite studio lights are 4x6 foot Larson soft boxes. She has four of them. Just this spring, she also completed an outdoor studio featuring a waterfall.

But Stephanie Huebinger may be best known by other professional photographers as the "Miracle Lady" behind the Texas School of Professional Photography. As a Texas School Trustee, she is known for creating innovative systems to handle the many challenges of a growing school. "When I started, we had



10 classes. Now we have over 30. Along with these numbers comes new challenges to manage people, models, and instructors," she explains. "Imagine booking 300 sessions in your studio with a staff of more than 30 photographers and you must make sure they have all the props and equipment they are accustomed to having in their own studio."

And nobody appreciates her efforts more than Don Dickson, Texas School Director. "Stephanie is a very important part of our team at Texas School. She is highly organized and looks for the smallest details. I just know that if I ask her to do something, it will be done and it will be done on time. She has more drive than anyone I think I have met. She is one amazing woman."

Having recently celebrated her 40th birthday, Stephanie has a boundless amount of energy and one would find it most difficult to keep up with her. She loves sports and has season tickets to U.T. Volleyball, U.T. Men's and Women's Basketball, Round Rock Express, and the farm team for the Astro's... not to mention a whole orange section in her closet allocated to wear at Longhorn games. When her friends call her on her cell phone, most of them usually ask, "Are you at the game?" She also is quite handy with a hammer and a paint brush and has spent the last four years remodeling her 1955 house. Some of her specialties include



laying ceramic tile, landscaping, and painting. "So far, I haven't found a man who owns more power tools than I do, but I'm looking!" she says with that incurable smile.

Stephanie is obviously a highly motivated individual and loves to come up with ideas to improve the things around her and she isn't afraid to try something new in her studio either. "Sometimes they are successful and sometimes they are flops, but you never know until you try," she says. "My brother and I were raised to believe that you can do anything that you put your mind to. I think that is why I do more things than the average person would ever think about doing." One of her close friends, Sharon Baker, said it best... "Stephanie does more before noon than most people do in a week!"

One of her secrets for success is that Stephanie realizes that people are important to her. She feels honored that people choose her as their photographer and she gives them 110% "because I know they are expecting 100%" and never forgets to thank them for allowing her to photograph them. "What we do is so very important... capturing memories for people that they will cherish forever. I am so blessed to be able to use my gift each day to help bring joy to someone else."

