

the CONTACT SHEET

JOURNAL OF THE UNIVERSITY PHOTOGRAPHERS' ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

2020 ANNUAL



CRISIS ON CAMPUS

Pandemic impacts higher ed and UPAA

President's Perspective

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.”
—Charles Dickens



Glenn via zoom.

There is much I would like to forget in 2020, but looking back on the 59th Annual Symposium and the preparation leading up to it I have nothing but amazing memories of the hosts from UVU/BYU, our corporate partners and our members. At a moment's notice, the hosts left behind a year's planning and forged ahead with a bold plan: A digital symposium with two-a-day Zoom meetings. The Corporate Partners stepped up and provide an amazing list of speakers, Dixie Dixon, Perter Hurley, Rod Mar, Deanne Fitzmaurice,

Scott Robert Lim, Jonathon Thorpe, Caroline Summers, and Alison Conklin. The support from the membership was over the top: 180+ participants in many of the sessions!

This fall is going to be very different. How do we do our jobs when most of our usual events are not happening? Like a photo shoot, we need to find another way—unique, different, creative—to show our campus in whatever state it is in. We are the visual historians of the college/university. Capture this once-in-a-lifetime occurrence and do it well. Those who follow will be appreciative of the hard work.

UPAA is and must be a lifeline to our members. Every symposium I hear, “Finally someone who understands what I do.” We all need to be that now more than ever: Organize a Zoom meeting with local members, check in with your friends, and challenge each other to create photos. Most importantly, make yourself valuable to your institution. We should all learn a new skill, volunteer to be on the back-to-work committee, find ways for photography to be essential to online learning, or help anywhere that is needed. Beyond us

there are so many at our schools who are struggling with new types and levels of work. Be the valuable staff member.

Our organization has shown its members and their universities and colleges that photographers can adapt to change. With that knowledge, go forward and be open to something that is not exactly what was, but open to something that can provide opportunity for growth. Keep in touch and keep making the next great image.

Glenn

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The Contact Sheet is the annual journal of the University Photographers' Association of America. Founded in 1961, UPAA has sought to advance the profession of university photographer through networking and continuing education.

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For more information on UPAA or The Contact Sheet, visit
www.upaa.org.

Cover photo by
Matthew MODOONO



Comet NEOWISE was a highlight of an unusual and uncertain summer. University of Michigan photographer Austin Thomason made this photo in Badlands National Park, South Dakota, during a cross-country road trip prompted by a voluntary furlough. Hear from Austin and others who have had job stability impacted by the Coronavirus outbreak on page 13. (photo by Austin Thomason)



Herbie Husker says, 'Mask up!' Campuses everywhere transformed in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. See the last six months through the lenses of UPAA members starting on page 10.



The 2020 UPAA Symposium was reorganized in mere weeks to become the 2020 Digital Symposium. Though physically apart, the spirit and camaraderie—as shown by the UPAA 'Wolfpack'—was still there. Find out more about how it all came together starting on page 17.



Go Dawgs! University of Georgia is 2021 Symposium host. Page 20



For the first time in three years there's a new Photographer of the Year: Steven Bridges of the University of Tennessee. Meet Steven beginning on page 24.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 5 White Coats for Black Lives
- 6 Sponsor News
- 7 Board Announcements
- 8 2020 Libris/Photoshelter Grant
- 10 Covid-19 Timeline
- 13 Pandemic Job Impact
- 17 2020 Digital Symposium Recap
- 19 Annual Print Competition Comes of Age
- 20 On That Midnight Train to Georgia
- 21 2020 Annual Awards
- 24 Photographer of the Year
- 29 The Face of UPAA: Bill Bitzinger Retires
- 34 The Little Drone That Could

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White Coats For Black Lives

Photo by Brett Roseman, Des Moines University

More than 250 Des Moines University students, faculty and staff – wearing masks and practicing physical distancing – gathered on campus Friday, June 5, 2020 to demonstrate solidarity in accepting the shared responsibility of protecting people of all backgrounds by addressing racism and oppression of all kinds.

The event, like many similar events across the country, took place in the weeks following the death of George Floyd in the custody of Minneapolis Police. Attendees knelt for eight minutes and 46 seconds, the length of time that Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin had his knee on George Floyd's neck.

DMU photographer Brett Roseman recalls, “When you think back over the year we’ve had, this photo encapsulates all the issues we’ve been dealing with: PPE, social distancing and the social justice questions.” ■

Corporate Sponsors PARTNERS

By Amanda Pitts

As you all know, this year has been a little different, in so many ways. Still, our corporate partners really showed up for us! It was by design that we began referring to them as “partners” this year, as they truly are just that. We work together all year long to brainstorm and plan for the upcoming symposium and beyond. And this year I was especially thankful for our partnerships as we worked together to switch gears from an in-person symposium to a completely digital one. It was because of them and their unending generosity that we were able to bring you the caliber of speakers and prizes at the Symposium.

I would like to specifically call out our partners that stepped up this year to provide us with speakers, prizes, and their expertise.

Nikon – Kristine Bosworth is SO dedicated to this group. This year Nikon provided us with the fabulous Dixie Dixon as a speaker, but what you might not know is that Kris fought tooth and nail to get us the prize for the Nikon shoot out, which is not easy during these tough economic times. The hours spent on this should be commended. She also sent some other really great prizes. Thanks Kris & Nikon!

Roberts Camera - John Scott, you rock. When we asked for help, you went above and beyond to get it for us. Roberts sponsored Rod Mar and also helped with the Photographer of the Year prize.

Tamron - When we only had four speaker spots slated for the digital symposium, Jillian Bell came to me and asked if Tamron could provide a speaker. Yes, please and thank you! Tamron sponsored speaker Jonathan Thorpe, sent some swag for the swag bags and also gave away an awesome lens!

ThinkTank provided a speaker for the first time in my history with UPAA. Deanne Fitzmaurice was amazing, and they also gave away some great camera bags!

Photoshelter/Libris provided Caroline Summers as a speaker, and they're also giving away \$1000 for the Libris grant!

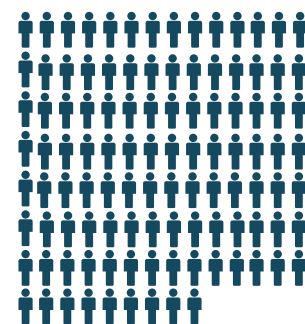
Fujifilm provided speaker Allison Conklin and swag for the giveaways.

Sony provided speaker Scott Robert Lim and swag. Canon Explorers of Light provided speaker Peter Hurley.

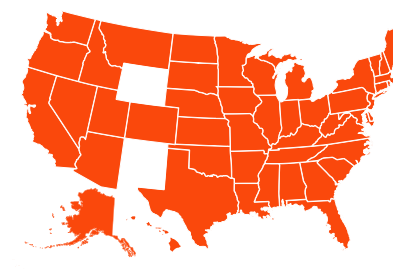
F-Stop provided a bag and some other swag to be included in swag bags.

Working with our partners to make the 2020 digital symposium a reality was a joy and a privilege and I look forward to working with our partners for years

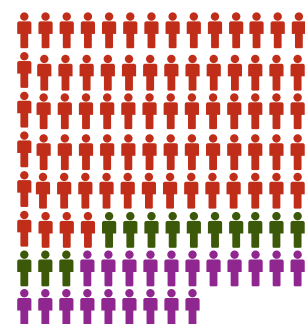
to come. If you have any thoughts or ideas on who you might like to see partner with our organization in the future, please send me an email or a message on FB or Instagram and I'll do my best to get them on board for future symposiums! ■



107
new members to UPAA
in 2019-2020



We have members in **48** of 50 states
(none in New Mexico and Wyoming)



74 full members
13 associate members
20 student members

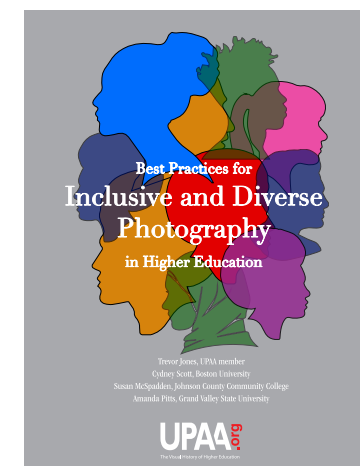
UPAA Publishes Statement on Diversity & Inclusion

Many university photographers have dealt with or have heard stories of insensitive or inappropriate attempts to highlight diversity on campus. Unethical post processing or staged situations that do not reflect the campus reality are just a few examples. These requests for visual representation of diversity often come from good intentions, but handled inappropriately or without thought, can damage internal university relationships or even make national headlines.

At the direction of the board, a committee of UPAA members created a statement about our organization's position on these issues. The statement was developed using input from diversity, equity and inclusion professionals and UPAA members.

The first goal of this paper is to make sure that we as photographers are keeping the issues of race and diversity in mind while on assignment. Documenting our campuses in an authentic and representative way is a big responsibility and as an organization we want to provide as much support as we can. The second goal of this paper is to provide photographers with a tangible set of best practices to present to designers, social media managers and leadership that will aid in photographs being utilized with compassion, sensitivity and in an appropriate context. Photographs alone cannot tell the entire story of campus diversity and every campus has unique situations and challenges. We hope that this statement can benefit members by serving as a starting point or to further clarify the practices of their departments.

An 8-page supplement should be included in your Contact Sheet envelope, and a PDF of the statement is at UPAA.org.



New and Returning Board Members

2019-20 saw both continuity and change on the UPAA Board. Glenn Carpenter and Amanda Pitts were both re-elected by the membership. Trevor Jones, elected in 2019, left his full time position at Ohio Northern University to seek new adventures in the wilds of Alaska. Cydney Scott of Boston University was appointed to fill the remainder of his term.



Top left: Glenn Carpenter
Top right: Amanda Pitts



Bottom left: Trevor Jones
Bottom right: Cydney Scott



2020 Libris/Photoshelter Grant

Shannah Montgomery

University of Georgia

UPAA wouldn't be the organization it is without the tremendous support of our sponsors and industry partners. The work of a university photographer can sometimes be a little isolated, even though we generally work with people every day (well, not in the past few months), and having those industry partners can be a great resource and support. When I heard about the Libris/Photoshelter UPAA grant, I couldn't believe they offered this opportunity to any member, Photoshelter user or not. It is a tremendously generous award designed to support our personal and professional goals with no strings attached! One of my "coronavirus resolutions" was to put myself out there more and enter more competitions, so this seemed like a good place to start.

I was beyond shocked and thrilled when I received the email from Caroline Summers. It seems my struggles—but also passion—about my job struck a chord. Despite working as a photographer for the last 25

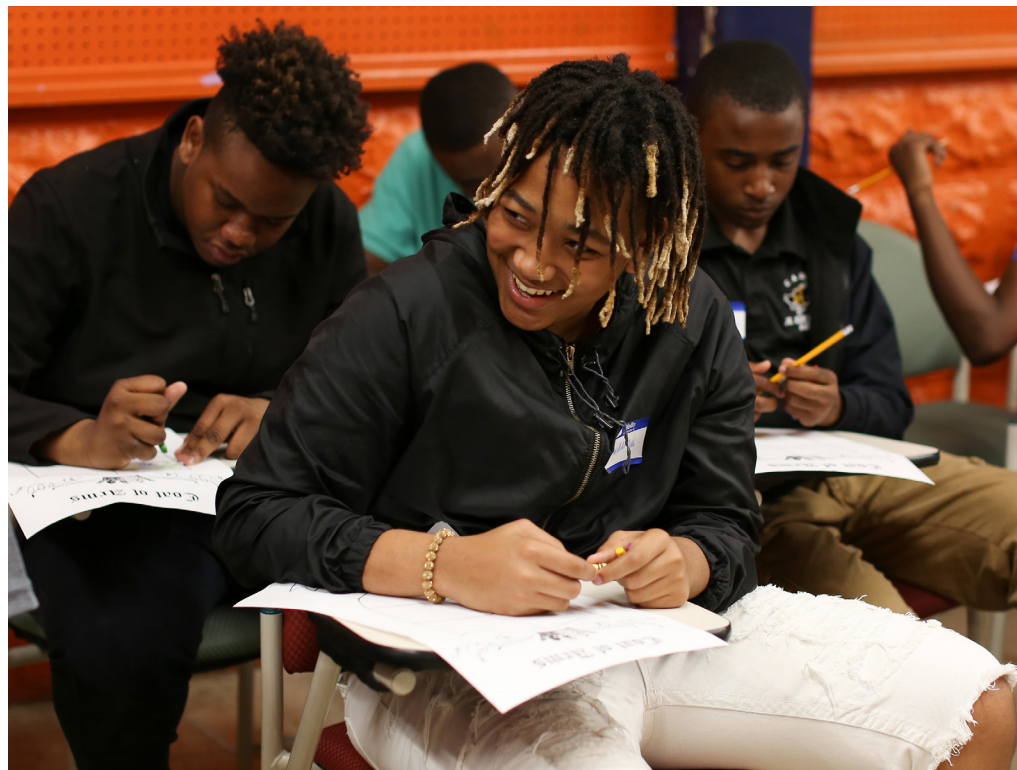


years, I know I'm not the most talented in the group, so I feel certain I didn't win on the merits of my photograph alone. But the story behind it spoke to why I love my job. We are storytellers at heart and this shoot allowed me to tell a great story of overcoming obstacles, breaking down barriers and seeing a bright path to success for students who've been left behind in the past. It represented why I do what I do, and reminded me of how lucky I am to have this job.

I have technical challenges and budget restraints, just like everyone else, so some of the award will be directed to overcoming those. But I also wanted to take a portion of the award and pay it forward. In my years as a photographer (which has come full-circle from my first job as a university photographer to newspaper, magazine, freelance and now back to a university again), I've belonged to many professional organizations—but this one is really special. I want to put some of the award towards a scholarship for a member who has been with UPAA for a while, but who's never been able to attend a symposium for financial reasons. Maybe this can help someone else out there experience the comradery, support and friendship that I've found here.

I'm so appreciative of this award and the continued support of Libris/Photoshelter and Caroline Summers to UPAA and our members. I can't wait to see everyone IN GEORGIA next year! ■

Leadership Legends is a multi-year leadership program for at-risk African American young men in Colquitt County. The program was developed by community leaders and Public Service and Outreach units at the University of Georgia. (photo by Shannah Montgomery)



"Westside 365"

Charles Smith of Jackson State University in Jackson Mississippi was the 2019 Libris Grant awardee. He used the funds for a community documentary project he calls "Westside 365."

"I grew up a few blocks away from the university that I work at today, Jackson State, and I still live in the neighboring area," said Charles. "This grant enabled me to continue to document the story of the families that live in this area of the city."

"West Jackson has changed from my early formative years. We have all the problems associated with economic decline, urban decay, and a tax base that can't rectify these issues. This photo essay is an opportunity to speak of the good things about who we are, and the truth about our obstacles and hopefully be seen as a way to create a new vibrancy for long term improvement." ■



Charles Smith's ongoing project shows the scenes and the spirit of his hometown of Jackson, Mississippi. (photos by Charles Smith)

COVID ON CAMPUS

a visual timeline

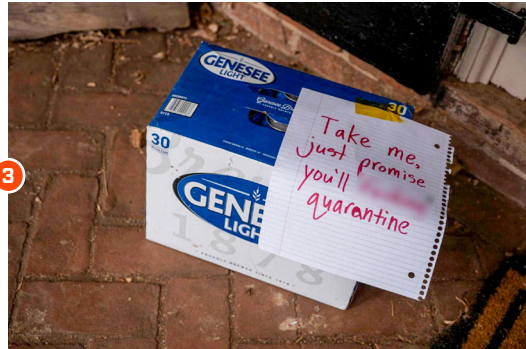
As this magazine arrives in mailboxes it has been more than six months since the COVID-19 pandemic crashed into the higher ed world. And the crisis is far from over. As this is written, some campuses are re-opening, and some have already modified plans or re-closed to in-person classes. College and university budgets will feel ripple effects for years. Uncertainty is a constant, but so is the need to document our universities' parts in this worldwide story.

"We are witnessing events that will be a bookmark in the lives of faculty, staff, students and our schools," said UPAA President Glenn Carpenter. "The need to remember these times may not be fully realized as we are living them, but those that follow us will need to know what was done, the impact, how to do it better, and to remember this unprecedented time in history."

"Your images are so much more than marketing and promotion, they are the Visual History of Higher Education."

March

- 01: Campuses emptied in March, some with the promise of returning before May, but most knew it would be the rest of the spring semester at least. Here, a Bates College student from Ireland gives a wave as she begins her journey home. (photo by Phyllis Graber Jensen)
- 02 and 03: Students at the University of Virginia donned caps and gowns for a final look at The Lawn. Some left parting gifts. (photos by Sanjay Suchak)
- 04: There was no March Madness on television and no basketball on campus either as hoops are unused on the empty campus of Grand Canyon University. (photo by David Kadlubowski)



April

- 05: Remote learning began. Johnson County Community College student Taylor Nguyen took advantage of mild weather to find some quiet space away from her mother and four siblings. (photo by Susan McSpadden)
- 06: In the hard-hit northeastern U.S., with hospitals overwhelmed, a gymnasium at Southern Connecticut State University was converted to an emergency medical facility. (photo by Isabel Chenoweth)
- 07: Work-from-home became the new normal. Michel Caron of Université de Sherbrooke in Quebec, Canada, shows his home office during Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's daily address. (photo by Michel Caron)



May

- 08: Pictured in a selfie, photographer Jeff Miller continues wearing a face mask and adhering to social-distancing practices while working during the COVID-19 pandemic. (photo by Jeff Miller)
- 09: Cal State Chico graduate Allyah Perez puts on her stole, cap and gown to attend the virtual commencement for the class of 2020 in her home in Chico, Calif. (photo by Jason Halley)



June

- 10: Following the Memorial Day death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis Police, protests and marches happened around the country and on campuses as well, as the nation was again reminded of issues stemming from systemic racism. Notre Dame football players organized a campus march in honor of Juneteenth, a commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. (photo by Matt Cashore)



July

- 11: Many schools began marketing campaigns to encourage health and safety practices. University of Nebraska mascot Herbie Husker shows off proper mask wearing. (photo by Craig Chandler)
- 12: Iowa State University printing services prints floor decals to show proper social distancing. (photo by Chris Gannon)



August

- 13: Colleges and universities began cautiously welcoming students back to campus for in-person classes. Temple University Provost JoAnne Epps greets an arriving family at move-in. (photo by Ryan Brandenburg)
- 14: Parents drop off their daughter at Ball State University. (photo by Bobby Ellis)
- 15: University of Georgia campus transit bus shop mechanic John Benedit sprays disinfectant inside a bus. (Photo by Andrew Davis Tucker)
- 16: Photographer and instructor Billy Weeks teaches a Rising Rock class at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. The Rising Rock class combines photography, videography and writing to tell community stories. The circles were painted on the field before classes started to give students a visual representation of 6-foot distancing. (Photo by Angela Foster)



INSTABILITY AND UNCERTAINTY IMPACT UNIVERSITY PHOTOGRAPHER JOBS

As the pandemic began spreading through the country in early March and the nation's economy went into freefall, college and university campuses emptied as quickly as restaurants and airports. Nearly every higher education institution was suddenly looking at revenue shortfalls and tightened budgets. Hiring and pay freezes were first, then announcements of layoffs and furloughs began appearing on the UPAA Facebook group.

UPAA is there to give support. *"As a benefit to our members who are laid off or lose their job, we will extend their membership through the end of the next calendar year so they can benefit from the networking of UPAA in the hopes they find new employment opportunities," said UPAA Membership Chair Jeff Gage. "Helping out the members of the photo family during their trying times, is the right thing to do."*

Even with campus re-openings, employment uncertainties will remain for some time. Four UPAA members give their experience and strategies for dealing with the career impact of the pandemic. ►

UPAA Can Help

- Memberships extended for those who lost jobs due to pandemic
- Members willing to help with website and portfolio reviews
- Let UPAA know if and where you're available for freelance jobs
- Keep in touch through the UPAA Facebook group and the UPAA blog



(photo by Steven Bridges)

JOE HOWELL: Transition to full-time freelance

Joe Howell was senior photographer at Vanderbilt. He took a voluntary buyout offer and his full time employment ended May 31.

Joe Howell described the email he received as “ominous.” It was around May 1, and Vanderbilt was seeking to trim staff. Joe faced the dilemma: Voluntarily leave his staff job of 12 years or stay put and hope to avoid a layoff? “I talked to my wife and said ‘should I be interested in this?’” The buyout offer had some financial advantages over a layoff, which meant some startup money for equipping a freelance photo business. They decided to take the offer and Joe became a full time freelancer on May 31.

He’ll be leaving his staff job, but he won’t be leaving higher ed photography. His first job as a freelancer was a portrait shoot for a small college, and he says he expects Vanderbilt to be his largest client in the coming months. In addition he was selected to be the Nashville Metro Arts photographer, photographing public art and covering events.

Joe said he’d gladly do any job to provide for his family, but staying in photography was his intention. “I want to make pictures, I want to tell stories,” he said. Though after 26 years as either a university or newspaper staff photographer he says he will miss the daily interaction with co-workers. “I love being engaged personally,” he said, “I get to ride the creative wave with the team.” But he is looking forward to having more say over his schedule and more time for his young son.

Joe Howell’s website is howellimages.com.

CARLA WEHMEYER: “Still hoping and praying a job opens up for me.”

Carla Wehmeyer was staff photographer in the Office of University Relations at the University of Northern Iowa. Her position was eliminated.

My job being eliminated actually came as a bit of a surprise. I felt I was doing everything they asked and more. Plus they had spent a lot of money on a rebrand and wanted to go for a certain look for photographs so it didn’t make sense to get rid of the photographer. At least to me.

However, I think working from home most of the worker bees were kept in the dark. I knew Athletics was getting hit hard, so I figured other departments would be too. The director called May 8 and told me and one other coworker our positions would be eliminated on July 7, his was August 7 because he had been there 20 years. They also cut a person to part-time. Since then there was another round of cuts. The part-time person was cut and another full-time person was cut to part-time.

Have your portfolio, resume and cover letter ready to go and start trying to hold back a little money. I try to keep a folder of my favorite photos over the year and randomly take out and update images in my portfolio. That should be a habit for all photographers, sometimes I get behind though on that too. I probably need to be more active on LinkedIn and get a website up.

I wish I had more people review my portfolio, cover letter and resume. I just don’t know what directors want or what they are looking for or how to make myself stand out. Plus, I am not always the best at asking for help.

I am applying for unemployment at this point. The unemployment office has been super helpful and nice. I think they know so many folks are struggling right now. The only bad part if you got a big vacation payout you have to use all of that before you get unemployment at least in Iowa.

I am still hoping and praying a job opens up for me. Photography has always been what I want to do. I really love the university setting, working with other departments, and the variety of things I get to shoot. I think shooting so many different things really makes one grow. I have applied to two places that so far haven’t closed or hired anyone. Other potential jobs have been canceled due to uncertainty of the pandemic and budget. I have thought about doing freelance and maybe working an 8-5 for insurance until I figure life out. I need to update equipment though. I wish I would’ve updated equipment since college. It’s just hard to justify spending that kind of money when you don’t do a ton of freelance shoots. I worked a lot of hours plus nights and weekends so I just didn’t do a few family or senior photos which my equipment is fine for that.

It would be great if some members could review resumes, portfolios and cover letters. Maybe talk about what they or their directors look for in a photographer. Even evaluate the layouts of the resume and cover letter. Everyone has been so supportive and I really appreciate that.



A self-portrait of Austin Thomason on the road in July. In the finest tradition of Jack Kerouac and Hunter S. Thompson, Austin decided to do a cross-country road trip during his voluntary furlough from the University of Michigan. (photo by Austin Thomason)

AUSTIN THOMASON: “Furlough would cost me a few thousand dollars. Getting laid off would cost much more.”

Austin Thomason is senior photographer at the University of Michigan. He voluntarily took a 4-month furlough.

My last “regular” shoot was on March 16. After that I stayed busy for a few weeks, finalizing photos and video from my recent trip to Kenya. By the time I got through my “I’ll get to it eventually” list, it was late April and our president had announced a voluntary furlough program. We could take up to four months off without pay, and the University would continue our benefits and pay the premiums.

Taking the furlough was a quick, easy decision for me. I’d recently moved and was knee deep in a home renovation. I’d been preparing for finals in my classes. Our fall and winter semesters had never been busier. I was exhausted. It was time. Taking myself off the payroll would hurt for a few months, no doubt, but if it would help me keep my department afloat and my job secure, it seemed like the right thing to do. The University filed for unemployment on behalf of all of us who took a furlough, which lessened the sting financially. I thought of it in longer terms, though. Going on furlough now would cost me a few thousand dollars. Getting laid off would cost much more.

In reality, the transition was difficult. Twelve years in a job I loved, seeing campus emerge from gloomy winter into glorious spring; commencement, celebration, opportunity. But not this year. Campus was dead, and I wasn’t even there to witness the absence of it all.

After finally getting used to having so much free time, I figured I should take advantage of it. I set out on the cross-country road trip that I’d never had time to do before. The trip was more driving-centric than photo-centric. The lure of the NEOWISE comet was strong, however, and I eventually found myself driving to Badlands National Park so I could get a good picture. I guess even taking a summer off of photography couldn’t keep me from photography.

My official return to work date was August 24, though that could get pushed backward or forward depending on how things pick back up with the new semester. I’m glad I took the opportunity for a road trip. It’s longer than my usual vacations, and I’ve unplugged from anything university-related, so I’m out of the loop on everything happening at work. That never happens. I feel like I’m emptying my Trash, in a way, and when I get back I’ll have a ton more hard drive space available to fill up with brand new photos. ►

PETER HENSHAW: “I think I’ll be okay.”

Peter Henshaw is university photographer at Northeastern State University in Oklahoma. He used a combination of federal and personal leave to manage family and personal needs, and began pursuing a “Career Plan B” master degree.

Our university went online only after spring break when the stay at home recommendation/order took affect for the United States. Essential workers had to stay on campus and do their jobs. I was considered non-essential, and was allowed to work from home where I can access the university’s server remotely. This enabled me to access our photo catalog to fill photo requests and answer emails. My fiancée is a non-traditional science major due to graduate in December. She is Native and her son speaks Cherokee as his first language. He has been in the Cherokee Immersion School since pre-K. We were all at home together doing our duties as best we could while telecommuting and homeschooling.

I returned to campus twice for headshots. I used CDC guidelines and took the portraits outside.

I was also called back for an “essential” role to take photos of all of the different masters’ hoods that they could use on their virtual graduation. The photos weren’t used.

The Cherokee Immersion School canceled summer school so I was allowed to stay home with my fiancée’s son under Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). This entitled me to 2 weeks full salary, and 10 weeks paid at 2/3 salary. I used personal leave to receive my full salary. This leave ended August 24.

During my leave, I enrolled in a masters program because I knew my job was expendable with the new budget cuts coming. The university just happened to start offering a Master of Public Health in Public Health Leadership. I signed up as I figured it would be easy to find a job working for the state in



that field if my job was eliminated. This way I would stay eligible for full retirement.

I had to have surgery during my leave that will affect my ability to perform all of my job duties. During post-op, my doctor said I probably wouldn’t be able to shoot sports any more which is about 80 percent of my job.

I filed ADA paperwork and let my vice president know I was temporarily going to be unable to fill all of the duties my job entails. I was trying to give him a heads-up so he would hire my student worker to do my job while I’m gone. Her job had been eliminated due to budget cuts, but they hired her back, which I’m grateful for.

I saw my doctor August 10 and she released me to go back to work on September 14, being limited to desk duty. From a campus-wide email sent out after I contacted my vice president, I deduce I will be let go as they are not required to keep a person that cannot do their primary job. Photography is my primary job, and I can’t do that from my desk and they don’t have the budget to give me a new title. I understand, and I’m prepared to leave my position. I have an ethical issue with shooting photos that depict safety on campus that does not exist. I’ve been thinking about this a lot.

For those worried about their job stability, I’d suggest preparing for your jobs to be eliminated, just in case. You will know your university and their needs. Our university is going to have to use mostly stock and posed photos as the CDC guidelines re-implemented at our university August 3 are not working. From photos I’ve seen on campus since August 3, it seems the proper use of mask and social distancing are not taking place. I do think they will hire a new university photographer eventually.

I have already been contacted about working for companies in a public health role and I have yet to take a class. I think I’ll be okay. ■

See more on this story and related topics at the UPAA blog



UPAA Spirit Comes Through Online



UPAA virtual symposium presenters were straight from the top of the photography A-list. From left to right: Dixie Dixon, sponsored by Nikon, Canon Explorer of Light Peter Hurley, and Pulitzer Prize winner Deanne Fitzmaurice, sponsored by Think Tank. (screenshots from Zoom)

By Gabriel Mayberry

Dumping the sand from our shoes after Dave Black’s inspiring beachfront presentation, we sat in our dorm room at Grand Valley State University stirring ideas around for the 2020 UPAA Symposium. We had been amazed at the work Amanda Pitts and her team put into the symposium and wanted to make ours just as special for the UPAA. It would be a challenge as the clock was a day away from beginning its countdown. We wanted to provide yet another inspiring week for UPAA members to come together, learn, and collaborate with each other in a truly breathtaking environment.

Quickly, names of industry experts flew around the room as options for presenters. We set our goals high in order to make 2020’s symposium one to remember. Each month we met to knock out another set of to-do lists. Slowly but surely an idea started to take shape. Our plans were big and our motivation to help our members was at the forefront of our minds.

With the great help of Amanda and the Board, speakers for the 2020 UPAA Symposium began to be finalized. Peter Hurley agreed to do a live portrait demonstration at Brigham Young University. Dixie Dixon excitedly outlined an interactive session on the

Salt Flats at the Great Salt Lake. Many other speakers began to accept, and our excitement kept growing. We were ecstatic to highlight the best of BYU and UVU through a series of awe-inspiring presentations and interactive demonstrations.

Then a seemingly insignificant news story hit the headlines. We didn’t pay much attention to it at first, believing that it would all blow over in a matter of weeks. But on March 6, Utah state government leaders announced the first case of COVID-19 in the state. Immediately thoughts of postponing the symposium began to creep to into our minds. ►

Together Even When Apart

“We’re not shoulder-to-shoulder, but we’re webcam to webcam.” With those words, UPAA president Glenn Carpenter opened the 2020 virtual symposium.

Nate Edwards of Brigham Young University assembled this composite from members’ Zoom screens. “I feel we are pretty blessed to live in a time where we have the technology and resources to still reach out to each other and come together, even though we are far apart,” said Nate. “This was probably the easiest and fastest group photo I have ever taken. Thanks to the “mute” button there was a lot less heckling and talking as we are all accustomed to,” he joked. “And the other nice thing was, if you missed the group photo, people conveniently took their own Zoom screen shot and sent it over. And, this is probably the first group photo I have ever taken without a camera! This photo will always be a sweet memory to me of this uniquely special symposium.”

(composite by Nate Edwards, photos by everyone)



Annual Print Competition Comes of Age

By Glenn Carpenter

March 11 cemented that fear with the announcement of Utah Jazz All-Star Rudy Gobert testing positive for COVID-19. At the same time the NBA shuttered, Jaren Wilkey and Jay Drowns were photographing the WCC and WAC conference tournaments in Las Vegas when they were rushed away from the venues for fears of the virus breaking out.

Disbelief reigned on Friday, March 13, as our two universities canceled hundreds of photo assignments within hours. Our hard work spent on the 2020 UPAA Symposium began to crumble.

The UPAA Board monitored the situation and told all members to be on standby for further announcements regarding the symposium. As we waited for the world to restart, member after member informed us of their respective universities freezing their budgets for the remaining of the fiscal year, preventing them from traveling. Exactly one month later on April 13, the symposium was canceled. Disappointment was an understatement, especially for Jay, who worked for years to get the symposium back to Utah.

In a matter of days, nine months' worth of planning went from full speed ahead to completely derailed. It began to sink in that there was no symposium to plan, but an idea of something to replace it was on the periphery.

Slowly we began to entertain an idea of, "What if we move online?"

We kept stirring around in our group text and emails. We couldn't imagine how to replicate a symposium virtually and we needed to prove if an online conference would be possible. So, Jaren sent a pitch to our President, Glenn Carpenter:

"With all that is going

on at our universities, the community that we have built with the UPAA is more important than ever. We have an opportunity to address some of the back-burner projects that we have never had enough time to address, until now. While we are all looking at how to adapt to these changes, I think that we have a great opportunity to serve the UPAA by offering weekly webinars on a variety of topics."

And it worked. Our first UPAA Live had 65 members call in from across the country.

As members tuned in every Thursday to UPAA Live, we kept on structuring our newly reimaged 2020 UPAA Digital Symposium. Jaren told

the UPAA in one live session, "I'd much rather be an optimist in life... any challenge that you have is an opportunity for growth." So that's who we became—optimists. Optimism drove us through the logistical and technical challenges we faced. We knew that even if we couldn't replicate everything about the symposium, we could still be a catalyst in bringing members together. That virtual fellowship began to reflect the true spirit we have in the UPAA.

To our relief, Amanda was once again our champion in renegotiating contracts with our corporate partners and sponsored presenters. Though we were disappointed that we couldn't learn from Peter Hurley in the brand-new photography studio at BYU, we were elated when he was able to break down his process virtually. And Dixie Dixon's excitement to teach us no matter the location gave us hope for our other presenters. One by one the slots were filled, the prizes were shipped, and the 2020 UPAA Digital Symposium took shape.

After dozens of trial runs and meetings with the Board, we booted up our laptops and turned on our webcams on the morning of June 15. All that was left was to hope the symposium we built from the ground up (again) would be a success — and we felt it was. We were elated to see members interacting directly with presenters and building a relationship with each other online. Notes, ideas, discussions,

questions, and friendships drove each Zoom call.

As the week wound down, we took part in a moment we relate to more than anyone — our "group" photo. While

Nate Edwards took our photo, I believe all four of us reflected on of what we just achieved. We planned not only one, but two symposia. We let go of our fears and fed our optimism in creating an entirely new experience for our UPAA members.

In his concluding thoughts of the symposium, Jay mentioned, "We thought it was really successful. We really enjoyed seeing the comradery of the UPAA and appreciated the information we all received. But nothing replaces the person to person experience we all enjoy, and we can't wait for the opportunity to be together in person again." ■



"We thought it was really successful. We really enjoyed seeing the comradery of the UPAA and appreciated the information we all received..."

—Jay Drowns

For almost fifty years, the UPAA Annual Print Competition was the primary vehicle for sharing our work. We carried our six mounted prints to the symposium, or wrapped them carefully for shipping. The results of the competition determined the Photographer of the Year. Winning entries went on tour as an exhibit to other universities.

All that has changed, of course.

It will surprise no one that the APC has been on the agenda at the UPAA board meeting for the last six or seven years. Members have been asking to move the competition to a digital format, most notably because of the cost of making and mailing prints. Symposium hosts have also noted the difficulty of finding gallery space for 300 prints, and the amount of time the competition committee spends hanging, scoring, and tabulating.

Other members make equally compelling arguments in favor of actual prints: printing is part of the craft of photography, and a final print is the ultimate medium for fair judging versus un-calibrated projectors and tiny phone screens showing a 1600 pixel file.

The UPAA Board moves in a slow and deliberate fashion by design. Frequent changes

only serve to create uncertainty and confusion. Changing the competitions does have an impact in other areas, and the board has been leery of making changes that seem like a good idea but end up changing the meaning or continuity of awards like the POY.

The Fall 2019 UPAA board meeting was no exception. The APC was a primary topic of conversation. Entries in the APC in that summer's symposium were down significantly, with several members blaming the cost of getting high quality prints made and shipped. As we approached the meeting, each of us created a plan on what the next iteration of APC and POY might look like. We even reached outside the organization for guidance.

The ideas were wide ranging. Plans ranged from keeping it as is, to adding a new competition just for POY to be judged by a panel of Master of the Profession recipients or guest presenters. The board spent most of that Sunday in a spirited discussion of the various options.

The result was the 2020 Annual Photo Competition, a digital version of the print competition using our online contest module. The similarity to the Monthly Image Competi-

tion meant that UPAA members could easily enter photos from the entire year, and vote from any location. Unlike the print contest, in which only symposium attendees may vote, now all members may vote in the APC from wherever they are.

In order to maintain continuity in the Mark Philbrick Photographer of the Year Award, the board decided to keep the same scoring formula, with the same balance between the APC and the aggregate of the Monthly Image Competitions.

The results? In the 2020 APC, we had 327 entries, up from 180 in the last year of print entries. We didn't require any space for displaying the prints, and all of the tabulation and scoring of the contest and the POY was completed in about ten minutes.

The board will continue to evaluate and refine this competition and all the others. We are encouraged by the success of the 2020 APC and hope to see it continue next year. We are always interested in feedback from members, new ideas, and suggestions on how to make the competitions better, and how to bring the UPAA into the future. ■



On That Midnight Train to Georgia

By Shannah Montgomery

The University of Georgia, located about an hour northeast of Atlanta in Athens, is looking forward to hosting the 2021 UPAA symposium. It is our sincere hope that we will be able to offer an in-person event, but we are going to closely monitor the situation in terms of both health and safety and also travel restrictions for our fellow photographers. After the tremendously successful virtual symposium held this year by BYU and Utah Valley University, we know this is a viable option should it become necessary. But right now, we hope you have “Georgia on Your Mind” and we look forward to seeing you here.

We are fortunate to have a video team as well as a group of photographers housed in various divisions of our campus. Because of this tremendous in-house resource and with the support of the UPAA board, we will be offering a video track along with a photography track. There will be some overlap for shooters who do both, but the video track will be targeted towards other full-time university videographers. We’re excited to

branch out and grow our UPAA community!

Stills or video, we are all storytellers at heart. The 2021 symposium will appeal to photographers and videographers by tapping into our passion for telling the story. We’ll bring in renowned speakers (as of right now, we’ve secured the amazing Ami Vitale) and include hands-on sessions with our members who are out in the field every day conquering challenges we all face. We want this to be a week of inspiration and rejuvenation!

As our plans come together we’ll keep you posted via social media and the blog. If you have suggestions or thoughts please send them our way.

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Sanford Stadium, University of Georgia
(photo by Andrew Davis Tucker)

2020 Annual Awards

Lifetime Membership

Les Schofer
Lora Gordon
Donny Crowe
Bill Bitzinger

Chris Hughes Distinguished Service Award

Matt Cashore

Board Appreciation Award

Carri Jenkins, Brigham Young University

Nikon Shoot Out

Marc Campos, Occidental College

Libris Photoshelter Grant

Shannah Montgomery, University of Georgia

UPAA Publications Awards 2020

General Publication

1st Place

The Citadel

2nd Place

Bates College

3rd Place

Colgate University

Honorable Mention: University of Georgia
Graduate School

Posters

1st Place: Illinois State

Honorable Mention: Elgin Community College

Publication Covers

1st Place

The Citadel

2nd Place

Franklin and Marshall College

3rd Place

Illinois State University

Honorable Mention: University of Georgia Graduate School

Viewbooks

1st Place

Illinois State University

Multimedia Competition

1st Place

Brigham Young University “Capstone in Mongolia”

2nd Place

University of Georgia “Study Abroad in Cortona, Italy”

3rd Place

Missouri State University “Onward, Upward”

4th Place

Virginia Commonwealth University “Invest in Me”

✿ 2019-2020 ✿

MIC

Monthly Image Competition

by the numbers:



Monthly Image Competition

Think Tank MIC Award

Steven Bridges, University of Tennessee

Annual Photo Competition

Campus Environment

1st Place

Matt Cashore, University of Notre Dame

2nd Place

Steven Bridges, University of Tennessee

3rd Place

Matt Cashore, University of Notre Dame

Honorable Mention: Phyllis Graber Jensen Bates College

Honorable Mention: Joe Howell, Vanderbilt University

Photo Essay

1st Place

Jay Drowns, Utah Valley University

2nd Place

Ruby Wallau, Northeastern University

3rd Place

Johnny Andrews, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

Honorable Mention: Jay Drowns, Utah Valley University

Honorable Mention: Johnny Andrews, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

Student and Associate

1st Place

Madeline Mortensen, Brigham Young University

2nd Place

Tyler Jefferson Richardson, Brigham Young University

3rd Place

Ryan Campbell, Brigham Young University

Honorable Mention: Madeline Mortensen, Brigham Young University

Honorable Mention: Tyler Jefferson Richardson, Brigham Young University

Sports Action

1st Place

Joe Howell, Vanderbilt University

2nd Place

David Kadlubowski, Grand Canyon University

3rd Place

Jason A. Getz, Kennesaw State University

Honorable Mention: Eric Bronson, University of Michigan

Honorable Mention: Rachel Keating, Western Illinois University

General Features & Illustrations

1st Place

Joe Johnston, Cal Poly

2nd Place

Nate Edwards, Brigham Young University

3rd Place

Jaren Wilkey, Brigham Young University

3rd Place (tie)

Steven Bridges, University of Tennessee

Honorable Mention: Justin Torner, University of Iowa

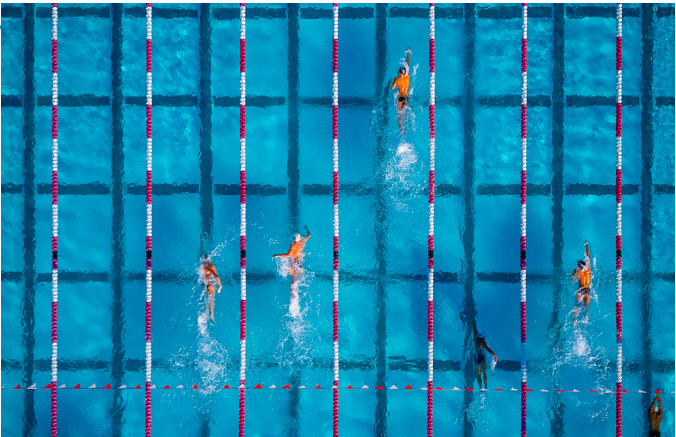
Honorable Mention: Jay Drowns, Utah Valley University

Honorable Mention: Nate Edwards, Brigham Young University

SADDLE UP & RIDE WITH THE EQUESTRIANS



A day in the life of the Equestrian Team. Members travel to the team's barn, more than an hour outside of campus, to practice four times a week before and after their classes.



News & College Life

1st Place

Steven Bridges, University of Tennessee

2nd Place

Matt Cashore, University of Notre Dame

3rd Place

Barbara Johnston, University of Notre Dame

Honorable Mention: David Kadlubowski, Grand Canyon University

Honorable Mention: Barbara Johnston, University of Notre Dame

People & Portraits

1st Place

Steven Bridges, University of Tennessee

2nd Place

Mark DiOrio, Colgate University

3rd Place

Gabriel Mayberry, Utah Valley University

Honorable Mention: Louis Brems, The Citadel

Honorable Mention: Joe Howell, Vanderbilt University

Sports Features and Illustrations

1st Place

Joe Howell, Vanderbilt University

2nd Place

Eric Bronson, University of Michigan

3rd Place

Jay Drowns, Utah Valley University

Honorable Mention: Nate Edwards, Brigham Young University

Honorable Mention: Nate Edwards, Brigham Young University

Honorable Mention: Sarah Ritter, Western Illinois University

Science and Research

1st Place

Steven Bridges, University of Tennessee

2nd Place

Andrew Tucker, University of Georgia

3rd Place

Jaren Wilkey, Brigham Young University

Honorable Mention: Mark Carriveau

Honorable Mention: Joe Howell, Vanderbilt University

Personal Vision

1st Place

David Kadlubowski

2nd Place

Lonnie Timmons III

3rd Place

Cydney Scott

Honorable Mention: Mark Carriveau

Honorable Mention: Darren Van Dyke

Annual Photo Competition Best in Show

Steven Bridges, University of Tennessee

Annual Photo Competition Overall Winner

Steven Bridges, University of Tennessee

2020 Mark A. Philbrick Photographer of the Year

Steven Bridges, University of Tennessee





“This Is My Dream Job”

Steven Bridges wins 2020 Photographer of the Year

By Matt Cashore

▲ Previous page: “Reaching Out,” a photo of a University of Tennessee swimmer who fought depression and became an advocate for student-athlete mental health, was voted Best in Show in the Annual Photo Competition, sealing the sweep of awards for Steven. (all photos by Steven Bridges except where noted)



The 2020 UPAA awards presentation should have taken place on the campus of Utah Valley University. Instead, members watched from home via zoom. While the venue was unexpected, the name on the final slide was not. After winning the overall MIC, the overall APC and even throwing in an APC Best in Show, Steven Bridges of the University of Tennessee is the 2020 UPAA Mark Philbrick Photographer of the Year.

“Since the inception of the MIC, this is the first time that a photographer has won the Annual Competition, Monthly Image Competition, Photographer of the Year, and the (APC) Best in Show,” said UPAA President Glenn Carpenter.

“Behind the scenes it was a crazy afternoon,” Steven recalls of the online awards ceremony. “Joe Howell drove three hours to surprise me and watch everything together. Then my electricity went out twice within 30 minutes of the awards announcements starting. I was just hoping it didn’t happen during the announcement. When the announcement came, my family surprised me with confetti poppers. While it was disappointing not to be in Utah with my fellow UPAA members, it was a blessing to be able and share this win with my family.”

“I really didn’t think I had a chance to win it all. Still, I am a competitor, always wanting to win and not scared of a fight.”



This page, top: Steven’s sons pop confetti as his name was announced as POY. Steven’s longtime friend and fellow Tennessean Joe Howell was on hand to make this photo. (photo by Joe Howell) Bottom photo: Steven in the field as a Marine. (provided by Steven Bridges)

Joe Howell first met Steven in 2001 while Joe was still a staff photographer at the Knoxville News-Sentinel. He describes his friend as, “An undeniable force but a completely chilled out guy.”

Early life and education

Steven, 44 and father of two sons, was born in Little Rock, Arkansas. As a high school student he shot sports assignments for the Searcy,

Arkansas Daily Citizen. In 1999 he earned a Bachelor of Science in journalism from Arkansas State University. His early-career years were split between the El Dorado (Arkansas) News-Times and the United States Marine Corps. “Before my second year of college, out of the blue, I decided I wanted to be a Marine. Why I don’t remember, but I wanted it. I promised my parents I would finish college, so I joined the Marine Corps reserves. The Corps was just as much of what makes me who I am today

as my upbringing and education. The Marine Corps - infantry especially - pushes you beyond the limits of what you think you can handle. Outside of the Corps, every meal is a feast, and every day is a holiday. It makes me realize, in the end, I am just taking pictures. Life is not that bad.”

Arkansas to Tennessee

In 2001, Steven married, moved to Knoxville, Tennessee and began freelancing. He was regularly working with area universities, which led Steven to learn of UPAA. “I was searching university photographer keywords that I could use for a new section on my website. Coincidentally, my best friend and former Vanderbilt photographer Joe Howell, joined the UPAA about this same time. After listening to him talk about the strengths of the group, I decided to join as an associate member. As a part of the group, I would be able to compete in the personal vision section of the MIC. Plus, I thought it would be a good way to network for possible new clients.

In 2018, my position at the University of Tennessee became open. Joe Howell said, “You’re going to apply right?” My answer was a solid no. My freelance business was thriving. Why would I leave it? That was on a Friday morning. After a long weekend of debating, I decided I wanted this job. I applied the following Monday morning. Once everything settled out and I accepted the job, I reached out to the (UPAA) board about becoming a full-time member.”

A winning strategy

It didn’t take long for Steven to get serious about participating and competing in UPAA contests.

When I returned from the (2019) symposium, I started a board that I dubbed the “The Wall of Replacement.” On the first of every month, it would start blank. As I created a new photo, it would go on that board. As I got better photos they start to be replace each other. This was a constant reminder of where I stood. Each day I ask myself if that work is just solid, or is it contest worthy? Let me say, solid work for my university is not considered bad, it is a baseline. This board was also a conversation piece for coworkers to discuss my work.

“I really didn’t think I had a chance to win it all. Still, I am a competitor, always wanting to win and not scared of a fight.”

“I set a personal goal to place in the Top 5. I was constantly keeping myself in check with what I had shot for the month and asking myself if it would be good enough to place in the competition. Being a staff of one, Joe Howell was a good sounding board for me. I would show him my work and he would reply, “Winner!” “It’s solid.” or “Great for your school, but not an award winner.”

“Just like sports teams, sometimes you just get on a roll. I was that way through the fall semester. Joe Howell and I had swapped leads a couple of times, while Nate Edwards and Fred Zwicky were right there with us. I guess it was in December when I thought, “Hey, I might have a chance to win POY.” I still knew it was the halfway point in the contest, and one bad month by me or a couple of great months by the others would put me out.” ►



Top: Steven’s self-portrait in his home office. Bottom: Steven’s ‘wall of replacement.



It was a winning strategy indeed.

Steven had all 6 APC entries finish in the points, which earned him an overall APC win (including APC Best in Show), as well as 28 of 48 images entered in the MIC, adding an overall MIC win to his trophy case.

Steven notes that more than half of his MIC-winning images were from self-assigned or found situations, which he says comes from his days at the El Dorado News-Times. “As with most small newspapers, I shot everything from general and spot news to sports. Our biggest requirement was to have two photos for the front page every day. This made me hone my feature-hunting skills that I now use on a regular basis.”

UPAA President Glenn Carpenter said Steven’s quick rise from new member to POY got noticed. “While talking with several retired members the question, ‘Where did he (Steven) come from?’ came up more than once. The talent has been always been there, but Steven really went after this award and it paid off. What he has done is push us all to be better– the bar has been raised.”

“I look forward to going to work because I love what I do,” says Steven. “I may be a photo staff of one (which means I get all the best assignments), but I am lucky to be at a university that values what I do. I am also lucky to be a part of an amazing staff that cares for each other while pushing each other to be their best. Their belief in me and creative support is a huge factor in claiming POY. I could not have done it without them.

I never dreamed of being a higher education photographer. Yet here I am. I go to school every day and I don’t have to take tests; this is my dream job.” ■



Top: Steven going to great heights for the photo. Bottom left: A MIC-winner in the Campus Environment category. Bottom right: Steven emulated the style of portrait photographer Platon for his portrait of Theotis Robinson, Jr., who in 1961 became the first Black undergraduate to attend the University of Tennessee.



The Face of UPAA

Ferris State University Photographer Bill Bitzinger Retires

By Nick Romanenko, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey

He’s been called “The Most Photographed Face in UPAA,” appearing innumerable times on the UPAA Facebook page, the banquet slideshow and, it seems, on everyone’s camera memory cards during symposium weeks. He’s usually the first to welcome new symposium attendees as part of the Ambassadors program. Heck, freakin’ Joe McNally pulled him out of a workshop crowd when he was “looking for an interesting face to photograph.” The resulting portrait is now a prized possession (and was probably the best campus thumbnail ID photo in the country) of Bill Bitzinger, who just retired after 28 years as the campus photographer at Ferris State University.

You all know - or should know - Bill. He was the membership chair on the UPAA board of directors (serving on the board for a total of 12 years), personally reaching out to every new member who joined the organization. He hosted the 2010 UPAA Symposium and was also the editor of the UPAA Annual Book. ►



Bill's smile is always a beacon of friendliness during symposiums, whether in a lighting workshop or enjoying his signature gin and tonic in the hospitality room. Bill was known for always contributing a few boutique bottles of Michigan gin (and impressing at least this gin snob here) for sampling too. And don't forget Bill and his wife Amy Packard's generous endowment of the Bill and Amy Fellowship, which makes it possible for a member to attend their first symposium if their personal or school's budgets are tight. He is a deserving recipient of the FUPPA (Fellow of UPAA) award in recognition of all the service he has done for the organization over several decades.

As a reflection of the current COVID-19 pandemic times, Bill's retirement "party" was a Zoom meeting put on by his Ferris colleagues, and it was one testimonial after another about how much they all enjoyed working with and knowing Bill. As he puts it, "They seemed to enjoy working with me I think because I paid attention to what their stories might want to be and listened to them." Besides his obvious people skills, there was much praise for his photography too. Bill was in fact recognized for his photography work with a UPAA Master of the Profession honor in 2018.

On this being the right time for his retirement Bill exclaims, "Oh God yes. Unbelievable... It's amazing how this has worked out well for me. I feel for the rest of the people I left behind at work but, yeah it worked out OK for this guy." For what it's worth, it's been deemed that Bill is irreplaceable as his position is being eliminated, helping to save a few other jobs in his department during this budget crisis in higher education.

Bill was born and raised in Michigan, and as he says, "I wouldn't want to live anywhere else." His father was a salesman for NCR (National Cash Register), "Some years were better than others" Bill says, while his mother was a middle/high school teacher. Bill grew up in Marysville MI, a small community on the Saint Clair River near Lake Huron. He had an early interest in science, especially astronomy and the environment.

His first interest in photography started, as Bill explains, "My grandfather was a chemist in Chicago and got me interested in photography. He gave me my first camera, a Brownie #2 box camera that shot 620 roll film. He also showed me how to make contact prints from these big negatives in a tiny darkroom he had made under his basement stairs. I still have my first real camera, a Vivitar 420SL. I paid an extra \$50 to get the 55mm f/1.4 lens."



It wasn't a straight path to Ferris State. Bill graduated from Michigan State University in 1977 with a bachelor degree in Biology and spent 9 years working in bio research. A work colleague encouraged him to pursue his dreams, so Bill took the bold move of quitting and started the Lansing Community College Photo program in 1984, graduating in 1986 with an associates degree.

He then worked several years at Park Photographic, which was a big time automobile photography studio, first as a film processor and then as an assistant. During that time Bill had a one-way 90 mile commute, but he stuck with it (and spent a few nights sleeping at the studio). Bill started freelancing at MSU with Bruce Fox in 1990. Bruce had also gone through the LCC program a few years before Bill and an invite to one of Bruce's famous parties turned out to be a great professional connection. As Bill recalls, "Bruce's parties were epic! He lived with 3 other photographers at 800 North Pine Street, which was quickly renamed 'The 800 Club.' They had the top floor of a large house with bedrooms, kitchen, living room and a huge screened porch above a two-car garage that served

double duty as a studio and party central. A full black & white darkroom was in the basement. They hosted at least one party every semester just for fun, an insane Halloween costume party, a New Year's Eve party, a Valentines Day party, a St. Patrick's Day party as well as numerous birthdays. A keg of beer (usually Stroh's), a full BYOB bar and snacks everywhere. 8pm go time, rocking it loud by 10pm and wrapping up by about 2am. I was lucky that I didn't live too far away."

"The first photo I can remember being published was a cover image for MSU Today. It was of my 5 year old daughter playing near a fountain on campus."

Bill attributes getting a lot of his on location lighting skills from working with Bruce at MSU. He also worked with Kurt Stepnitz at MSU during his freelance days.

The university photographer job became available at Ferris State in 1992 when 1980 UPAA POY Steve Voorhees retired. Bill brought a portfolio of campus images from MSU and was able to show that he could do location lighting with electronic flash. Besides the ▶



"Oh God yes. Unbelievable... It's amazing how this has worked out well for me. I feel for the rest of the people I left behind at work but, yeah it worked out OK for this guy."

—Bill when asked if this is the right time for his retirement

challenge of following an accomplished photographer, Bill describes it as an interesting time as morale was low, enrollments were tanking and budgets were tight. A few years later they had a new president and things were on the way up.

Bruce Fox also introduced Bill to UPAA, and he joined in 1994. Bill remembers his first symposium in San Antonio, hosted by John Poindexter. And like many, Bill was hooked by the ‘symposium magic’, the acceptance, the camaraderie, the fact that we’re all doing the same thing and the fact it’s so easy to share and learn”. Years later he ran for the UPAA Board because, “I thought that maybe I could pay back a bit of what I’d been given as a result of belonging to the organization and helping it move forward especially as everyone went to digital. We all were learning from each other.”

Bill has been mostly a one-man-show at Ferris State, but he has had a lot of student help over the years and had a former student of his – Matt Yeoman, work with him on staff during two separate periods. As Bill describes it, “Matt worked with me for about 3 ½ years and I have to say that he and I make better pictures together than we do separately. It was really fun to have him with me on these shoots because this guy has an amazing eye. We would hand the camera back and forth. If he would see something, I said, yeah shoot it, make it work...to the point we referred to those photoshoots as “Yeozynger Photography”. Like “who pushed the button? ... I don’t know, I don’t care you did, ha, ha.” The welding shots in my gallery are an example of that, and they are much better pictures for his efforts. I have never met a more naturally gifted photographer in my life than Matt. He took to this medium like he was born for it. Almost scary good. It was a privilege to show him everything I could and then see him go out and learn more on his own.”



The UPAA family tree: Top photo: Bruce Fox was the start of Bill Bitzinger's career in higher ed photography, and (bottom photo) Bill was the start of Matt Yeoman's career in higher ed photography. Bruce and Matt both share their thoughts on Bill in an article on the UPAA blog.

Besides Matt, several other student photographers under Bill went on to become pro shooters, including Gary Rick, who became a celebrity photographer in Ashville, NC and Tori Thomas-Roetenger, who is a Grand Rapids, MI based concert photographer.

Looking back at his time at Ferris State Bill recalls favorite shoots such as a four-day, eighteen-location gig for the College of Business. “They had twenty two interns all over the southern half of the state and it was truly ‘run & gun’.” He also had some assignment mishaps. Bill recalls, “I forgot about a College of Pharmacy White Coat ceremony. My heart stopped when I got the ‘Bill, we are here waiting for you, will you be long?’ phone call. I think I broke the speed of light getting there.”

The biggest change Bill has seen in college photography, “is the huge increase in the number of photos needed on an almost daily basis. Social media and a much more visually aware audience required a lot of new images. Programs also saw me as an important means to share their classes with potential students and academic peers.” He says he’ll really miss the daily interaction with the students and teachers. “I loved being in the classroom with them as well as just taking my camera for a walk around campus.” What he won’t miss are: “Last-minute requests. Poorly thought out events that someone thought was important. Passport photos. Football Media Day. Asking the client, ‘What will you use these pictures for?’ and they have no idea or plan, they just want them.”

Well, I can attest to the fact it’s easy working with Bill on a shoot as I requested him to do a self-portrait of himself with some of his model airplanes he builds as a hobby, preferably in his 22’ Crest pontoon boat that is docked on the Muskegon River behind his home. He delivered some killer shots the next day, taken with the drone we got him as a retirement present. ■



“Yeozynger Photography,” a collaboration between Bill Bitzinger and Matt Yeoman. (photo by Bill Bitzinger...with an assist from Matt Yeoman)

See more on this story and related topics at the UPAA blog

The Little Drone That Could

By Matt Yeoman

I recently sold my DJI Phantom 4 Pro to buy the DJI Mavic Air 2. The P4P was a great drone with good video quality and acceptable stills with a 1-inch sensor. Technology-wise it was average, with 360-degree obstacle avoidance, a steady gimbal and some autonomous modes that were helpful. I really liked the ability to shoot raw stills with manual exposure controls. The major drawback was the size - that thing is huge! I needed a large backpack to carry the drone, batteries, extra props and charger. It was just too big and became a real effort to carry around. I was looking for something more compact, less of a burden to take with me on the road or around campus. Also, the startup time needed to be much shorter from unpacking, getting it in the air and then packed up again.

The Mavic Air 2 is the little drone that could! It's compact with a 48mp sensor that shoots 4k at 60fps and 1080p at 240fps video. It has front and back obstacle avoidance and added downward sensor with Advanced Pilot Assistance Systems (APAS) 3.0. It also has the new and much safer DJI AirSense, which is an alert system that uses ADS-B technology to give drone pilots enhanced situational awareness of nearby aircraft, analyzing it to detect potential collision risks and alert users well in advance through the DJI mobile app. AirSense will without a doubt make it safer for manned aircraft and unmanned aircraft to co-exist. On a recent flight near Lake Michigan it alerted me that an aircraft was nearby. I started to bring it down and here comes a seaplane at 500ft or so along the coast. I was happy to be out of his way, made possible by the alert.

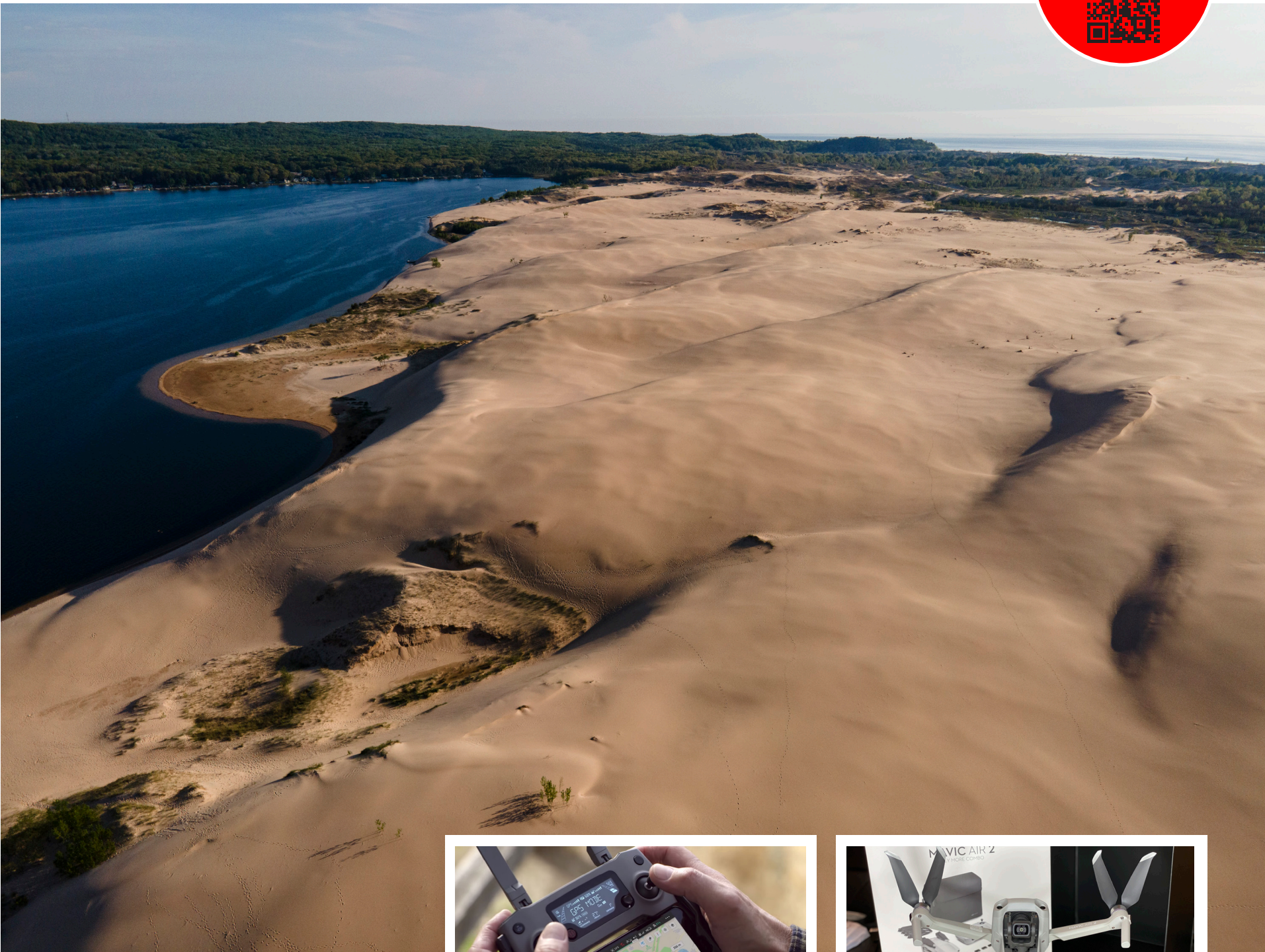
During the unboxing the size quickly became my favorite feature. All of the parts and pieces you need fit into a bag that is tightly packed and still feels safe. I added the fly more kit that includes two extra batteries, triple battery charger, props, ND filter set, power hub to charge usb items from the drone batteries and the bag itself, well worth the \$189 upgrade.

On my very first flight it didn't take long before I switched from normal mode to the very fun sport mode. Nimble only begins to describe the difference between the P4P and the Mavic Air 2. The thing feels like a sports car compared to the P4P, fast to get to full speed and turns on a dime. The noise is noticeably quieter, sounds like a small swarm of bees vs. every bee in the entire state, which is great for campus work. I find the less attention you can draw the better it is to just get in the air, shoot what you need and land.

Now to the big test, will the ½-in. sensor hold up to the 1-in. sensor on the P4P? In the few weeks I've had the Mavic Air 2 I am 100% satisfied with the still photos. I think you get a much-improved file from the Mavic Air 2 allowing for some tweaking in post without the risk of falling apart. The 4k video is also significantly better, sharper, smoother and has more dynamic range. I have noticed some noise when shooting at dusk but that could be the codec and compression since the raw video file looks great. I do miss the 360 obstacle avoidance but the new APAS 3.0 is pretty helpful in tight spots and trees. The P4P would just stop unless you flew it manually. I miss the full manual exposure controls versus only being able to adjust shutter speed and ISO not the aperture.

The few shortcomings are well worth the size and weight difference. I take this thing everywhere now! It is easy to throw in a bag or carry over a shoulder or tuck behind the seat. I am always looking for opportunities to fly or capture something unique with a camera and this drone allows me to do that with very little effort. I can stop in a location and be unpacked, fly and packed up again within a few minutes. I love that. If you are looking for an upgrade in technology and image quality or just looking for something more compact and portable, this is the drone for you. I think the quality is more than enough to be considered professional and the 48mp still has incredible detail and sharpness. Lastly, for \$799 this is by far one of the best investments you can make to get into drone photography. When it comes to cameras, small and mighty is the way of the future and this one you can fly! ■

See more on this story and related topics at the UPAA blog



Right: Silver Lake Sand Dunes as captured by the Mavic Air 2. (photo by Matt Yeoman) Bottom left: DJI's AirSense, introduced with the Mavic Air 2, will alert the drone pilot to nearby aircraft. (photo by DJI) Bottom right: The diminutive drone. (photo by Matt Yeoman)



IN YOUR SPACE

Marc Campos of Occidental College in Los Angeles, California won a Nikon Z50 Creator's Kit in the 2020 Nikon Shootout. For almost 25 years Nikon has partnered with UPAA to challenge our members to produce exceptional photography by competing in the Nikon Shoot Out. Each year at the UPAA Symposium an assignment is given to complete in a specific time and in a specific location. Nikon has generously provided a camera as a prize for this competition. The unusual circumstances of the 2020 symposium resulted in this year's shootout topic: Self Portrait Challenge: In Your Space

Create a shot that captures you and whatever space in your house best represents you.

"I cringed at the thought of taking a self-portrait, said Marc, "but then liked the assignment because it was difficult; like most photographers, I am more comfortable behind the lens, so I don't have many self-portraits. With no inspiration and the deadline approaching, I eventually

thought of shooting straight down through my ceiling fan to clean up the background on an already cluttered desk and incorporate some motion. Seeing the motion of a fan blade didn't work, as there wasn't enough

room between the ceiling and the fan blades and I didn't have a wide enough lens for my little Fuji X100T that I used. It took a while to get the camera synced using the Cam Remote app,

but it was very important and set the focus, exposure and to trigger the camera. That, and a C-stand."

"In the end, it was a fun experiment and I was glad I ignored my first instincts to over think the assignment. Thank you Kris and Jason at Nikon!"

See a full list of annual contest winners on page 21.

"Oh my gosh there were so many great shots! I can't believe I won!"