

FRANKLIN LAKES

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Living

DICK & ROSALIE
STANTON | THE PICTURE OF
HAPPINESS

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JANET JOYNER
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DICK & ROSALIE STANTON

THE PICTURE OF HAPPINESS



BY CHRISTINE CHRISTOPOUL | PHOTOS BY JANET JOYNER PHOTOGRAPHY

If you follow the Borough of Franklin Lakes on Facebook or Instagram, visit its website, or read the FLakes Functions section of this magazine, chances are you have seen many photographs taken by longtime resident Dick Stanton. From fun town events like the Egg Hunt or Franklin Lakes Day to important ceremonies such as Memorial Day or Veterans

Day, Dick is usually there, camera in hand, to capture special moments.

Dick and his wife Rosalie have led, by their own account, a charmed life in the town they have loved for 45 years. Married for 61 years, they have watched many friends move out of New Jersey to a different state. But the couple is content to stay in their gracious center hall colonial, the walls of which are

virtually covered with photographs taken by Dick throughout the years.

Dick and Rosalie met at the Flame Motel in Wildwood, NJ, when both were “down the shore” with a group of friends. “I was sailing with a friend, and he wanted to meet up with his fiancé and her friends. We went over to the Flame, and I immediately noticed Rosalie, sitting on top of a dresser.” Dick recalls. “There



were seven of us girls staying in one room,” Rosalie laughs. The whole group went over to the Rip Tide nightclub, but Dick thought it was too loud and wanted to leave. “My friend wanted to continue the evening with his fiancé, so he asked me if I was interested in inviting one of the girls to join us at a quieter place. I said, ‘I like the girl with the Roman nose,’ and pointed to Rosalie.”

The Stantons built a wonderful life together. Dick went to work in the insurance industry, and Rosalie became a teacher at Garfield High School, where she taught English, Journalism, and Creative Writing for many years. “I just loved it there. I had the best students and I kept in touch with many of them over the years,” says Rosalie. “Once I had my own children, I decided to stay home with them, so I left teaching.” After college, Dick started his career in the insurance industry. Eventually he became a partner in an insurance brokerage firm, and ultimately secured full ownership of F.J. Wilkes & Company in New York City. The firm was located in Tower One of the World Trade Center and also had a branch in Toronto, Canada. “Fortunately, we

moved out the World Trade Center ten years before 9/11,” says Dick.

Dick and Rosalie have three children, Cristie, Julie, and Richard. When the kids were growing up, the family spent a lot of time at Ridgewood Country Club and The Indian Trail Club. “When Richard was about ten, I decided I wanted to return to work,” Rosalie recalls. “I could never find good gifts in the area, so it gave me the idea to open a local gift shop. I got together with two partners and opened Presence in Wyckoff.” The partnership was short-lived, but Rosalie bought out the other owners and ran the store for 27 years. “I always had a good eye for beautiful things, and I focused on carrying items that were created by artists and also produced in America. That was very important to me. I really enjoyed my time there and made some of my best friends while operating my business.”

Dick first became interested in photography at age 19 while enlisted in the Navy. “I was stationed with a naval intelligence unit in Berlin. The head of the office assigned me the task of taking a photo of an important informant,” he recalls. “They gave me a camera and

told me where and when to show up. I went to the location and took several photos of the man, but when I gave the camera to the technician to develop the film, he told me there was nothing on it. My commanding officer was furious. He said, ‘I will be meeting with him again in one month and you WILL get a photo.’ I spent the next month learning how to operate that camera, which piqued my interest in photography.”

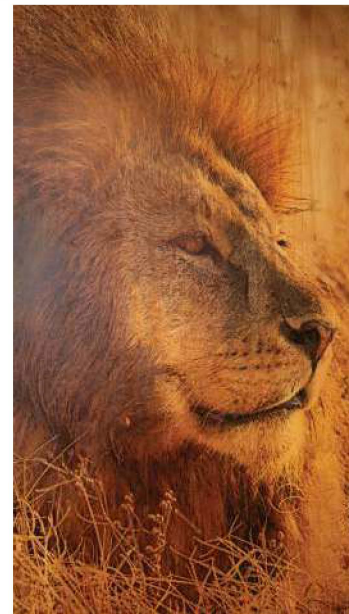
Dick was always the family photographer. “I took lots of photos of our children and all of our family celebrations. But when I turned 65, I became very serious about photography,” Dick explains. Rosalie adds, “A client of mine had written a book about photography, and I mentioned Dick’s interest to her. She encouraged him to join the Ridgewood Camera Club.” Dick says, “My skills were good when I joined the club, but they got much better because I was surrounded by all these talented people who taught me various techniques.”

Once Dick and Rosalie retired, they began to travel extensively, visiting Africa, China, Russia, Italy, and Spain, just to name a few. In each new place, Dick took spectacular photos and began to hone his craft, experimenting with photo editing and printing techniques. “I really enjoy it and spend a lot of time teaching myself new technology.”

Dick prints his work in various forms, including on paper, canvas, metal, and wood. He has won numerous awards over the years in photography competitions, and his work has been exhibited in several local galleries. He doesn’t specifically set out to sell his pieces, but he does accept commissions and donates many pieces to charities for fundraising purposes. Dick’s photos also adorn almost every wall in the couple’s spacious house, and he jokes, “Rosalie is going to cut me off soon because we have no more room.”

Dick and Rosalie have been involved with a number of organizations over the years over the years. Dick was

Dick's photography is displayed throughout the Stanton's home.



a former President of the Drug and Chemical Club in New York City and also Chairman of the Board at St. Joseph's Hospital. Rosalie belonged to the Dames of Mary Help of Christians and helped organize many galas where they raised over \$6,000,000 to provide scholarships so students could attend college.

Rosalie, a voracious reader, also enjoys writing. "When my kids were young, I used to write stories for them," Rosalie says. "I still think I might have a great American novel in me somewhere." But, in October of 2022, Rosalie's activities were put on hold when, at age 81, she received a devastating diagnosis of stage 4 uterine cancer. "It was really shocking," she says. "I had

surgery, followed by chemotherapy. I was treated at the Robert and Audrey Luckow Pavilion which was kind of full circle for me because Audrey was a very good customer of mine. She used to tell me all about building the center, but I never dreamed it was a place I would need to utilize."

As part of her treatment, Rosalie participated in a clinical trial for Keytruda, an immunotherapy drug that was already approved for various types of cancer but not for uterine cancer. "I wanted to help others by determining if the drug could work on other women like me," Rosalie explains. "It did help treat my cancer, but unfortunately, I developed a liver infection, which is one

of the known side effects of Keytruda. It was a good news bad news scenario because my cancer was gone but the infection caused me to need a heavy course of prednisone to bring down my liver enzymes." Rosalie has been on the steroids for over a year, and it has definitely impacted her quality of life. But she is in the process of weaning off them, and finally starting to feel like herself again. "When I was in the hospital, I really thought I was going to die, but God wasn't ready for me yet. I still have more to do here," she says. "Currently, I am cancer free. I believe we all have a journey, but you can alter it with your choices. If I survive cancer, that's great. And, if not, I have had a good life. It's been a lesson to



appreciate every day and all of the people in my life." Dick adds, "Rosalie is a fighter. She is really something else. She is a wonderful writer, and she does so much to help others. She won't tell you the half of it."

Earlier this year, Dick had his own health scare when he developed a blood clot. He is fully recovered now, and Rosalie says, "We are so fortunate. We were out with a group of friends last night and the youngest man there was 87. Most people don't even live this long,

and we still have a full life." Although their travel has slowed significantly, Rosalie says, "I would like to do one more trip to Italy. I just love every part of that country, and I would like to visit Sardinia." Dick adds, "At our age it's a labor of love to travel these days."

With their health now back on track, the Stantons are enjoying more time with family, including their three grandchildren, and Dick is once again immersing himself in photography. He will participate in two upcoming shows, and of course, you can find him all around Franklin Lakes taking photos to share with the town. "I enjoy taking pictures and I feel good when I can share my work. I photograph for the town because I love it and I want to do something for others. It's payback because, collectively, we have had a wonderful life, and when I leave it, I'd like to have a smile on my face and be able to say I have done something for somebody. If I can continue to do this until my time is up, then that's what I would like to do."

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