

Photographer Kilgore finds a ‘calling’

By NANCY McLOUGHLIN

Professional photographer Jamie Kilgore never forgets a face. Her black-and-white portraits of local families, teens, and even pets, are fine art heirlooms. The faces and sizes of her subjects change over time, but for 14 years, a catalogue of Ms. Kilgore’s familiar images have graced the walls of Starbucks, Tazza Cafe, Cosi, Moonbean Cafe, and some of the finest coffee shops from Chappaqua to Ridgefield, Connecticut.

Early in her professional career she worked “on the business side” of National Geographic and then Architectural Digest. Ms. Kilgore never envisioned that she would one day enjoy a career behind the lens of a camera. Capturing the essence and individuality of youth, with an emphasis on family, she documents the subtle transformations of her subjects.

“I was always the one with a camera in my hand,” Ms. Kilgore says, of a hobby that developed into serious study after she began taking dark-room courses at Northern Westchester Center for the Arts and the International Center of Photography in New York City, following the birth of her first child. “I got tingly feelings when the images came to life in the processing fluids and I knew this was my calling.”

Ms. Kilgore’s Katonah-based photographic business took off in 2001, when she literally walked into the Mount Kisco Starbucks and showed the manager her portfolio. “I’d seen other photographs up on their walls and asked if I might exhibit a few of my own.”

Ms. Kilgore’s images “stayed up” for years, expanding into other franchises in Chappaqua and even Ridgefield. Her images of children soon became a mainstay in the hallways at the Mount Kisco Medical Group offices in Katonah. Currently, an exhibit entitled “Beauty in Braces” depicts her subjects proudly showing their braces. It’s displayed at the local orthodontic offices of Dr. Fine.

The photography studio,



JAMIE KILGORE PHOTOS

“I don’t just snap a picture,” says Jamie Kilgore. “I connect with the kids and we are constantly interacting. The ultimate compliment is when a parent tells me that I’ve captured their child’s personality perfectly.” Top, Jamie Kilgore has snapped over 1,000 subjects.

situated on the grounds of her Katonah home, is a hive of activity and the place where most sessions take place. A well-maintained playground inhabits the backyard. By now there have been over a thousand subjects.

“I don’t just snap a picture,” she says, “I connect with the kids and we are constantly interacting. The ultimate com-

pliment is when a parent tells me that I’ve captured their child’s personality perfectly.”

Confidence in capturing the “best” of someone sets a Jamie Kilgore photograph apart from the masses of everyday photographers who (thanks to iPhones and even selfies) take their own photos and enhance them with any number of apps and software. So does her large

signature in the lower corner of each. “I take hundreds of shots in one session,” says Jamie.

Rather than worrying about software programs that might alter or enhance her work, she spends computer time (before or after a session) on wall design. “I think I have a knack for envisioning where the wall galleries will fit best in a home.”

Ms. Kilgore says she loves assisting in making decisions about approximate sizes and arrangements. Clients often send her pictures of their rooms. “I’m inspired by attending professional conferences, teaching seminars, and by meeting new customers,” she adds.

In addition to the families that return to document their lives, all of her negatives and session files are her legacy. Treated as an important archive, she often relies on the memory of her former assistants to lay hands quickly on exactly what might be needed. While she does not sell her photo negatives, she does have the ability to make reprints, she says, recalling occasions when clients have had photos lost, damaged or destroyed.

“I still do lots of holiday card work,” Ms. Kilgore says, outlining some studio sessions. “But the head shots have become a means for clients to put their best face forward on sites like LinkedIn or Match.com. When a client gets lots of hits or inquiries, it’s good for me because word spreads. Let’s face it, everybody wants to look good.”

Ms. Kilgore’s latest installation of Italian landscapes adds yet a new dimension to her body of work, and features two collections currently showcased at the Moonbean Café in Briarcliff. The “Travel Abroad: Italy” exhibit shows images that transport the viewer to the city of Venice, the islands of Murano and Burano in the Venetian Lagoon, and to the village of Positano on the Amalfi Coast. Also featured is a family collection of portraits.

For more information visit JamieKilgorePhotography.com or contact the studio at 232-3642.