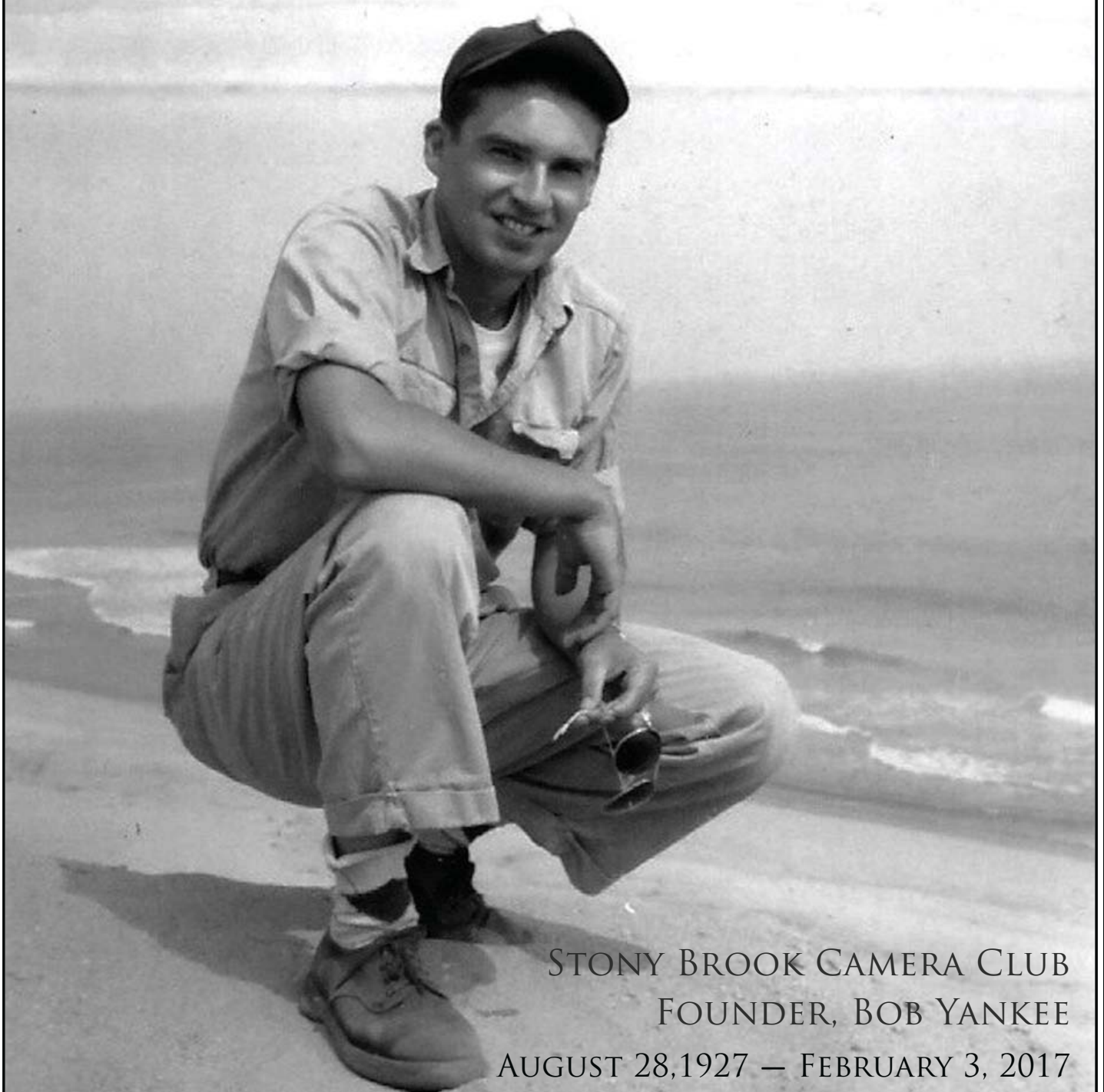


# Reflections

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE STONY BROOK CAMERA CLUB



STONY BROOK CAMERA CLUB  
FOUNDER, BOB YANKEE

AUGUST 28, 1927 — FEBRUARY 3, 2017

# Tribute Issue

# SBCC: In the Beginning—How It All Began

By Bob Yankee

During the latter part of 1969, the new directors of the Stony Brook Nature Center, Cynthia and Chuck Thomas, decided that they wanted to increase the public awareness of the Sanctuary. As part of this initiative, Cynthia instituted a series of evening programs, open to the public. I was approached through my wife, Loretta, who worked for Cynthia, to put on a slide show of pictures I had taken at Stony Brook. This was a very basic show—one projector and narration by myself of what I felt were attributes of the sanctuary.

After the show, as I was packing up my equipment, Cynthia announced, without any forethought, that the Sanctuary was going to have a photo competition comprised of images taken at Stony Brook and would accept one or two slides from each entrant. I didn't pay much attention to what she said, but after everyone had left, she confessed to not knowing anything about how to run such a competition. I stated that I, likewise, had no idea of what she had in mind but agreed to meet with her to help solve her dilemma.

At the time I was a member of Gateway Camera Club and had some idea as to how the competitions were conducted. So, on a Saturday morning over coffee, we tackled the problem. Cynthia's real objective was to get people to visit the sanctuary more often and take pictures of the geese and ducks, etc. And, she was thinking of instamatic-type photographs—nothing more. Snapshots, if you will. As we talked, her initial idea developed further after I suggested thinking about the addition of a camera club as an adjunct to the Stony Brook Nature Center. We decided to give it a shot.

At the next meeting, Cynthia announced the possibility of forming a camera club. About 25 attendees indicated an interest, so we formed a committee to come up with a plan and some rudimentary bylaws. This effort was presented at the next evening session and accepted. Stony Brook Camera Club was born!

In January of 1970, I was elected its first president (be-

cause I was the only one who had ever belonged to a camera club), and John Fuller became the treasurer. Dues were established. We joined NECCC and were off and running. At that time, we were a small club and stressed family membership, with many teenage members participating.

We started entering NECCC competitions in the spring of 1970, and won some medals and ribbons right out of the gate. Within a year or so, we had a reputation throughout New England as the friendliest, most open club around, with some pretty good photographers among us. We became involved not only with NECCC but with PSA as well as the Franklin Art Association (FAA). For years, we participated in the FAA arts day

on Franklin Common each summer. We hosted NECCC competitions, not every year, but quite often. In truth, we grew pretty fast in the early years, not in membership numbers, but in our reputation as photographers.

Coming out of the very early days of the club were "mutual aid" nights, now known as "image study." The final

meeting of the year was a pot luck supper, now our wrap-up meeting. During the very first year, we had a member's salon, which was a public show of members' images. This evolved into the Members' Show. Our executive committee had only advisory powers. It met whenever, maybe twice a year at most. All decisions were by vote of the membership.

Has SBCC changed over the years? Oh, yes! Technology has been a compelling influence to much of the change. Post processing is now a strong driving factor. We are a much larger club now, and that probably means more organization than in the past. Have the changes been beneficial? Well, no organization can remain static; you either go backward or you go forward. I believe we've gone forward at a very rapid pace, and that is good.

I guess John and I are the only ones left from the nativity. My how time does fly! ■



Photo contributed by Ann Bertulli

# Remembrance - Bob's Eulogy

By David Yankee

February 8, 2017

**G**ood Morning. Thank you for being here with us in this place that holds so much of our family history. I would like to share with you some thoughts regarding a few of the important facets of my Dad's life, with hopes of seeing threads that run through not only his life, but those of his family and friends—connecting us all.

## ***Humor***

I feel compelled to begin by addressing the issue of my Dad's sense of humor. I would guess that all of us here have, at one time or another, been subjected to it. Reflective of, among others, Twain, Wodehouse, Skelton and Python, often gently chiding or self-deprecating, he demonstrated an eye for the absurd as when, upon observing a locksmith at work on the door of a 24-hour convenience store he asked the cashier why a lock was necessary. Or when he was going about asking where he could buy "those cool baseball caps, with the bills on the back, like the kids wear."

I believe he felt his best efforts were those which provoked eye-rolling and groaning from his audience. He loved those bits. Some all too well. It has been remarked that I tend to similar comedic proclivities. For this I am, like Dad, proudly unrepentant, though I will say for both of us, that however many wincing and groans we may have induced, there was no pain intended.

## ***Music***

Dad played trumpet in combos and big bands, second chair, called the jazz chair, playing the melodic, bluesy, sweet and sultry solos on the ballads and slow dance tunes, swinging chord work, riffing and accents with the section on the up-tempo numbers. He would practice after supper—I remember his tone, warm and mellow. Our house was filled with the sounds of jazz, and, after a nudge from Mom and Brian, classical music and opera, drawn from a huge and ever-expanding record collection. That my dad had the best stereo system around gave me a level of coolness among my friends for it also sounded great blasting Neil Young, Zeppelin and the Stones. My parents actively encouraged Brian and me to find our own musical tastes and voices, taking us to see many legendary and inspirational performers, and getting us started on our own instruments. The best music, jazz or otherwise, is a cooperative endeavor involving discipline, sensitivity, openness, creativity, communication and teamwork. Pretty much like everything else. Thanks, Dad.

There also was an unspoken, yet important lesson in Dad's record collection. On the record jackets I saw the faces of people Dad admired and respected. People he took us to see. Basie and Ellington, Miles, Ella, Dizzy and Bird were in the den—along with Woody Herman, Stan Kenton, Chet Baker, Gerry Mulligan and Buddy Rich. All mixed together. Turns out the record collection in the den was a good place

to start as I became aware, as we all do, of the ever-looming issue of race in our society, for not building an unnecessary wall is far easier than tearing one down. Thanks, Dad.

## ***Photography***

Dad worked hard at the art, craft and practice of photography, and he delighted in sharing his knowledge and enjoyment with others in camera classes and conversations. He truly loved seeing others find joy, fulfillment and success in photography, and the fellowship he found in the photographic community.

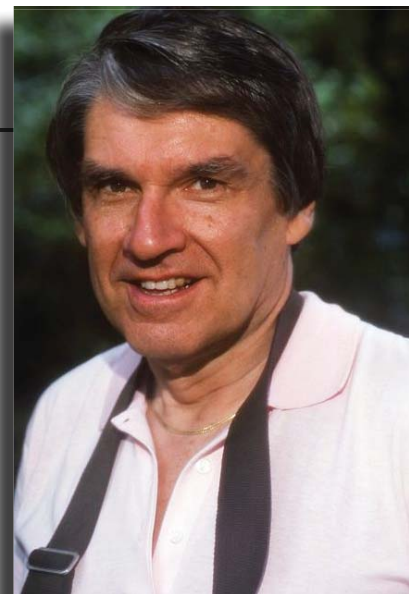
His own work is both distinctly personal and highly evocative. The images of his favorite subject—the outer Cape—capture singular moments of beauty amid the ever-changing, turbulent and ephemeral interplay of light, sea, sand and sky: the land fragile and temporary, the ocean untamed and immeasurable. One gets the sense of great forces at work, a spiritual quality pervades his work. Many of his images look out to sea, to that often indistinct line dividing sea and sky—the horizon—inviting the question of what lies beyond. Against the vastness, there is often in the foreground a beach, a mooring or a boat, providing a means of returning, an anchor, a connection to home, to something solid and abiding. These images tell us much about him. Seeing the wonder in the moment yet aware of its fleeting nature, comfortable with and curious about the mysteries of the horizon, and calm and sure at the center, at home. In this way he inhabits his photographs and shares with us his way of seeing the world, finding the meaningful picture amid the roiling, noisy and unknowable background. Thanks, Dad.

## ***Supper Time***

A major rule in our house was that we were all to be home for supper at 5:30 each night. This rule directly led to my first attempt at running the length of Lincoln Street in ten minutes, which quickly evolved into my first foray into the exciting and unpredictable world of hitchhiking. I digress. The point is, supper time was important.

Around the table Mom, Dad, Brian and I would discuss the events of the day—school, family, current events. We would all participate, our successes and failures, frustrations and elations coloring the discussion. Having supper together every night is a great way to keep in touch.

The 1960s and 1970s, when I came of age, were times of



*Photo by Ray Guillette*



great division and turmoil in our society, with new cracks seeming to appear every day. The issues were familiar: love and war, rich and poor, black and white, human rights, ecology, theology. . . . Given that many of the cracks seemed to be along generational lines, and my own burgeoning idealism, iconoclasm and impatience, it seemed both likely and natural that Dad and I would argue. Instead, I learned the value of discussion. Dad would state his case with reason and respect for differing opinions. He would often ask questions, which would reveal a larger picture or subtle detail or distinction. His methods were subtly Socratic, the questions led me to ask other questions. I found that the best answer led to a better question. I found that a good answer begot a better question. I learned that conversation based on reason, respect, openness and nuance can be a means of achieving if not agreement, then communication, understanding and empathy. I have frequently gone back to the spirit of supper time through my life, always looking forward to Dad's take on matters great and small, as a guide to working out my own positions. These talks will continue as internal dialogue, for I continue to cherish both his counsel

and his methods. Thanks, Dad.

A respect for reason and learning, an open mind, a love for music and art, a generous spirit and a warm and inclusive sense of humor all spring from a core of compassion and caring. Dad cared deeply for his family, friends, community and planet. Compassion and caring are made possible by both faith and certainty. Dad had faith that what lies beyond the horizon—"that undiscovered country"—holds promise, not dread. He was also very certain of who he was, and where he fit within the larger picture. He was therefore able to share with us his wit, knowledge, spirit and fellowship. Being patient when we struggled to grasp the concept, and giving us confidence as we face the challenges and uncertainties of our own lives. And so we say Goodbye. Yet this is much that we are keeping. Some things with which it will be good to become reacquainted, others to inspire us to move forward, So there are beginnings and prospects even now. As we look to these new horizons, he is looking with us, camera in hand, calm and curious, awaiting the dawn of a new day. Happy. Ready for the next shot. ■



*This photo was taken on a field trip to the Bronx Zoo in the 80's. Bob is fourth from the right in the last row. He is looking to his right. His wife Loretta is in front of him to his left. There are a few members who still belong to the club, but sadly, many are no longer with us. — Submitted by Mike O'Connor*

# Reminiscing

By Andre Bourque

It was always a treat to join Bob for a Cape Cod photographic shoot. The Cape was pretty much his turf for many years. And so he knew of the many out-of-the-way places that he always willingly shared with other photographers.

That's pretty much who he was — eager to share and teach; always an excellent teacher.

Once digital became mainstream in SBCC, Bob delved into the digital world. Since I had long before jumped onto the digital bandwagon and had gained advanced knowledge of it, he sought my assistance from time to time. Whenever I met with him at his home on Willow Street in Franklin, both he and his wife, Loretta, were always cordial and welcoming. Bob and I spent time exploring Photoshop techniques over the next couple of years. He was a good student, though he would always remind me that the old chemical route was best for prints. Interestingly, Bob's keen eye for composition

and use of color contributed to his making excellent digital prints as well.

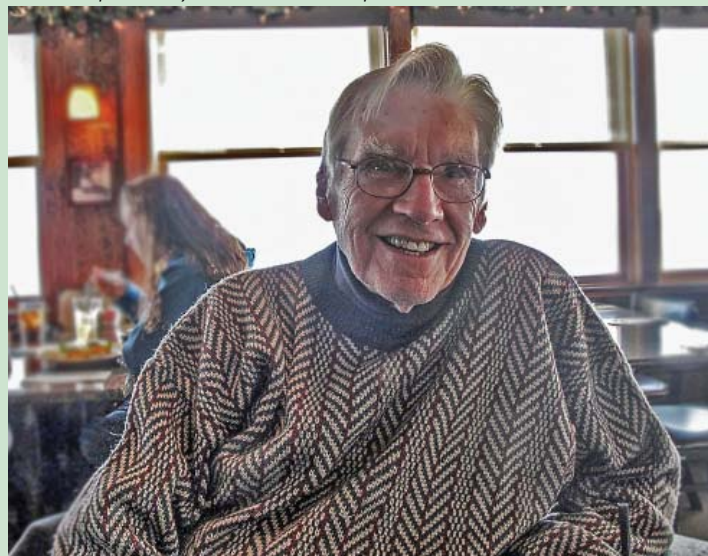
In time, Bob enjoyed publishing collections of his images, and he proudly shared his books with his fans. Nevertheless, during our last conversation, he never gave up telling me that chemical prints were decidedly superior to digital prints. We did finally agree it's not the medium that made a good photograph, rather it is the talent, skills, and a good eye to get the image — and much practice to boot.

Another area I had the pleasure of briefly sharing with Bob was his love for Jazz. My understanding and knowledge of the music is, at best, minimal. However, listening to Bob discuss Jazz during our few rendezvous at Bovis in Providence, to enjoy the sound of Big Band music, he was as creative and knowledgeable of this medium as he was of photography. Bob made it fun! ■



Left: L-R: Diane Robertson, Bob Yankee, Andre Bourque.  
Photo by Anita Vail Bourque

Below: photo by Anita Vail Bourque





# A Treasured Gift

By Cynde Cusack

*B*ob Yankee was a real gentleman, and I just loved getting a chance to talk with him and, of course, see his beautiful work!

Awhile back at one of our meetings, he and I talked about photography and his love for music, poems and mixing the arts. I loved some of his comments and poems that he used with his images. Bob showed me a photo book he had made that had both his poetry and images. He was so sweet to remember that I loved them - he brought me a print out of one of his poems for me at the next meeting he attended. I was so flattered he remembered! It is a gift I will always treasure. ■

*looking requires being there*

*seeing takes time*

*seeing requires feeling*

*feeling requires understanding*

*understanding requires openness*

*openness requires imagination*

*imagination requires letting go*

*letting go requires willingness*

*willingness requires acceptance*

*and love*

*Photo and poem by Bob Yankee*

# Shared Experiences

By Vicki Schepps



Photos by Bob Yankee



Bob Yankee was one of the first club members I met when I joined SBCC many years ago. Little did I know what a significant impact this wonderful man would have on my life. Stony Brook was much smaller back then and strong bonds and friendships had developed among the members. Bob and his wife, Loretta, must have noticed that I felt a bit awkward and uncomfortable in this new environment because they made gracious and kind efforts to make me feel welcomed. I'm so thankful they did.

Bob's images were among my favorites and his insightful, direct comments spoke to what I like about photography and the direction I wanted to go with this hobby. Many spirited conversations followed with no topic left unchallenged. He offered a lot of good advice — appreciate and understand the subject or place you are photographing, and know your camera in such a way that it becomes an extension of your hand. And of course, make it interesting. If you didn't, he might respond by saying "Well. That's about as interesting as watching paint dry." He expected images to be properly exposed and sharp, and used the camera to express mood and share an

emotion. Once, I told him that I really didn't understand how the camera operated and that I wished I could take it apart. The next time I saw Bob, he presented me with  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a camera perfectly cut down the middle. It remains one of my favorite trinkets.

In the Fall of 2001, I signed up for Bob's photography course at Franklin High School. Our first class was shortly after the 9/11 attack and, in a climate of anxiety, he calmly helped us regroup and rediscover the beauty of the world around us. Those classes solidified the strong bond that I feel between photography and Bob Yankee. Bob was always questioning and probing using the Socratic method to help produce thoughtful, emotional images. What is your subject and does that other "stuff" need to be there? What is this picture about? What do you want to tell the viewer? It's not unusual to hear his past students comment that they learned more about photography from Bob's class than anywhere else. He reminded us that you don't need the latest gear and a plane ticket to create good images.

Bob and I often went on photo adventures, usually to the Outer Cape. I was able to experience first hand how he

practiced his craft, how to evaluate the quality of light and how to understand what the camera would see. Bob was a photographer who favored "doing it in camera" rather than spending time in front of the computer with post processing.

When we weren't able to go out and shoot, I would send Bob an image and he would respond with a long, honest and specific critique. "Are we still friends?" he might ask, if he delivered tough, constructive commentary, and of course, we were. How lucky was I to be mentored by Bob Yankee! Visits to his home always centered around the latest book or slide show that he was creating. It was a joy to see his meticulous editing skills at work and I loved to sit next to him and add a comment or two about an image.

We learn so much about each other by what we say with our imagery and how we choose to describe it. When I am helping other photographers, describing my own work or alone shooting in the field, it is Bob's words that I often hear. I am so grateful to have had a dear friend like Bob and it is fitting that the successes, shared knowledge and friendships of our camera club are part of his legacy. ■





















## The Artist

*Bob Yankee photos submitted by Ann Bertulli*

















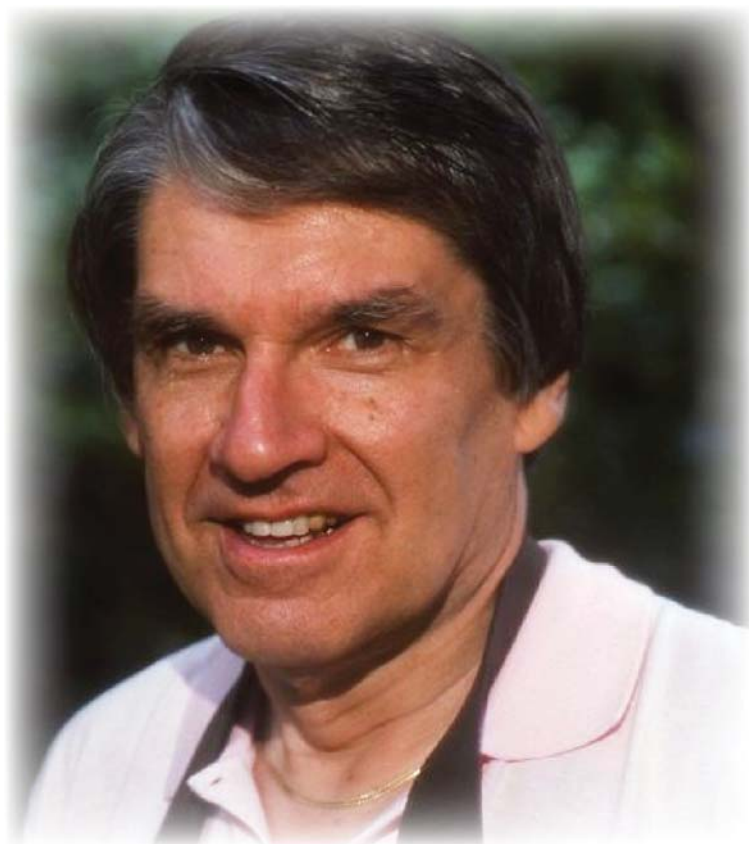
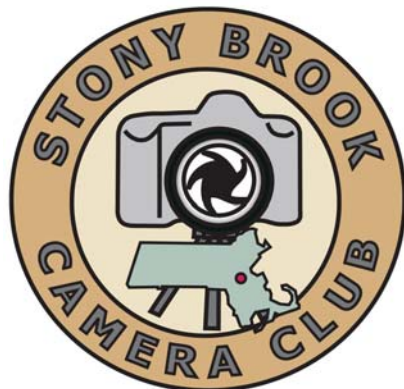
## *Goodbye Dear Friend, You Are Missed...*



*Photos contributed by Ann Bertulli*



# *A Cherished Friend*



# *A Treasured Legacy*



*Photo by Ellen Berenson*