

Biography of Photographer Jack H. Stuler

Jack Houghton Stuler was born in Homestead, Pennsylvania in 1932. When he was a young boy, his family moved to Phoenix, Arizona due to his mother's health. In 1951 he joined the Navy and was stationed in Japan and San Francisco during the Korean War. This is when he met his good friend Ed Davies, who influenced his early interest in photography. He started making photographs to record his experiences in the armed forces, mostly in Japan, San Francisco and Northern Sierra Nevada region of California.

After completing his tour of duty, he returned to Phoenix. Deciding that photography was more than a hobby, he enrolled in Phoenix College. In 1959 earned his Associate's degree with an emphasis in photography. With two years left in his GI Bill he went on to attend Arizona State University, where he earned Bachelor's degree in Art in 1961, and his Master's Degree in Fine Art (MFA) in 1963. This was significant, because he was awarded the first MFA in Photography in ASU history.

As an undergraduate, he worked as a teaching assistant for Van Deren Coke, who was one of his first instructors and mentors. Ed Peplow, a photojournalist department instructor, and Harry Wood, the art department chair, were also influential. Wood, a supporter of photo studies as a legitimate discipline along with Peplow instilled the idea for Stuler to pursue teaching in photography. He was hired as the first full-time, dedicated photography instructor of the newly formed photo department at ASU right out of graduate school. He was dubbed with the nickname "The Father Of The Photo Department", and continued to grow the program until he retired.

Stuler's national reputation as a leading fine art photographer began in 1963. The year he was included in a major exhibition curated by Nathan Lyons at the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York. The exhibit, "Three Photographers" featured 3 of his images. Soon after that exhibition, Stuler's work was featured in a solo exhibition at Focus Gallery in San Francisco, and his photographs appeared in *Art in America* and in *Photography in the 20th Century*, and *A Concise History Of Photography*. In 1990, Nazraeli Press published a monograph of his work titled *In The Nature Of Things*.

He has exhibited in more than 20 solo exhibitions nation-wide. His work is collected by public and private entities, and remains in permanent collections world-wide, including Bibliothèque Nationale de France; MIT Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; George Eastman Museum in New York; Portland Museum of Modern Art; Phoenix Art Museum; and Center For Creative Photography in Tucson, Arizona. His art has been chronicled frequently by the print-media in newspapers and other print publications throughout his career, highlighting his contributions to the photography industry.

For thirty-five years, Stuler worked to develop and maintain the Arizona State University photography department. It remains one of the top programs in the nation. He continued to find time to produce a consistent and creative body of work, earning him

continuous and documented recognition as one of the country's premier fine art photographers.

A room of the Northlight Photography Gallery, on the campus of the Arizona State University, was named the Jack Stuler Gallery, honoring his nearly 4 decades of dedication and determination. A "**Retrospective**" exhibition of his work and in celebration of his retirement, with corresponding catalogue of the exhibition was held in the Harry Wood Gallery on campus. After his retirement at ASU in 1997, Jack stayed on part-time as Professor Emeritus.

Jack Stuler passed away on March 22, 2015, surrounded by his loved ones. He photographed, developed, and printed his own work exclusively. A non-profit foundation has been created in his honor by the Stuler Family Trust. More information, as well as some of his work can be viewed at JackStulerFoundation.org.

Written by Sabina Kelly, 2017