

Josephine Herrick Project

Exploring Photography in Rochester

The Rochester Vet Center
Spring 2019



The Josephine Herrick Project
presents

Exploring Photography in Rochester
Featuring the Photographs of 7 Veterans

Rochester Veterans Center
Spring 2019

Front cover image by John Steele
Back cover image by George Dietter



JP | JOSEPHINE HERRICK PROJECT

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

Through our powerful photography programs, the Josephine Herrick Project (JHP) works to transform the lives of people who face social, physical, and economic barriers. We partner with schools, human service agencies, health care facilities, libraries, and community organizations to deliver customized and hands-on digital photography courses taught by professional photographers. Then we exhibit the work our program participants create, bringing their vision to a wider audience beyond their own families and communities.



For these participants, the camera is a transformative tool. Learning to photograph builds self-confidence and visual literacy. It encourages people to think creatively and critically. And it spurs them to engage actively with their communities, tell their own stories, and advocate for themselves—effecting change in their own lives and in the world around them.

JHP was established during World War II by pioneering photographer Josephine Herrick to teach photography to wounded service personnel returning from battle. Since then, our programs have expanded to serve a variety of marginalized and vulnerable communities for whom photography provides a way to share their stories with a wider audience.



Our programs for veterans provide the opportunity to come together with people who have experienced similar hardships abroad and at war, and to create an environment which encourages veterans to relate to each other. Those in our programs experience a range of challenges, including mental health issues, physical disabilities, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Josephine Herrick Project | 64 Fulton St, NY, NY 10038
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U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

About This Project

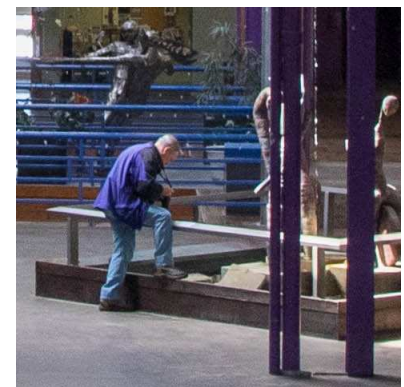
Nearly two years ago, two partners from Image City Photography Gallery began to work and teach alongside a group of veterans from the Rochester Vet Center. This work would eventually turn into a photography course that would include seven veterans. The culmination of this project are the images in this book and a gallery exhibition held in May 2019.

The photography class took place in the spring of 2019. During this time the program worked closely with two of the counselors at the Center, with classes alternating biweekly. The first Thursday of the month, veterans traveled to areas in and around Rochester to practice using the camera. On the third Thursday, the class met at the Vet Center for lessons and to critique photos, answer questions, and discuss issues concerning photography.

The network of Vet Centers are part of the services offered through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. They understand and appreciate veterans' war experiences while assisting them and their families toward a successful post-war adjustment as part of civil society.

The Josephine Herrick Project and the Veterans Centers have worked closely together for many years.

**Rochester Vet Center | 2000 S. Winton Road, Bldg 5, Suite 201
Rochester, NY 14618 | www.va.gov | (585) 393-7608**

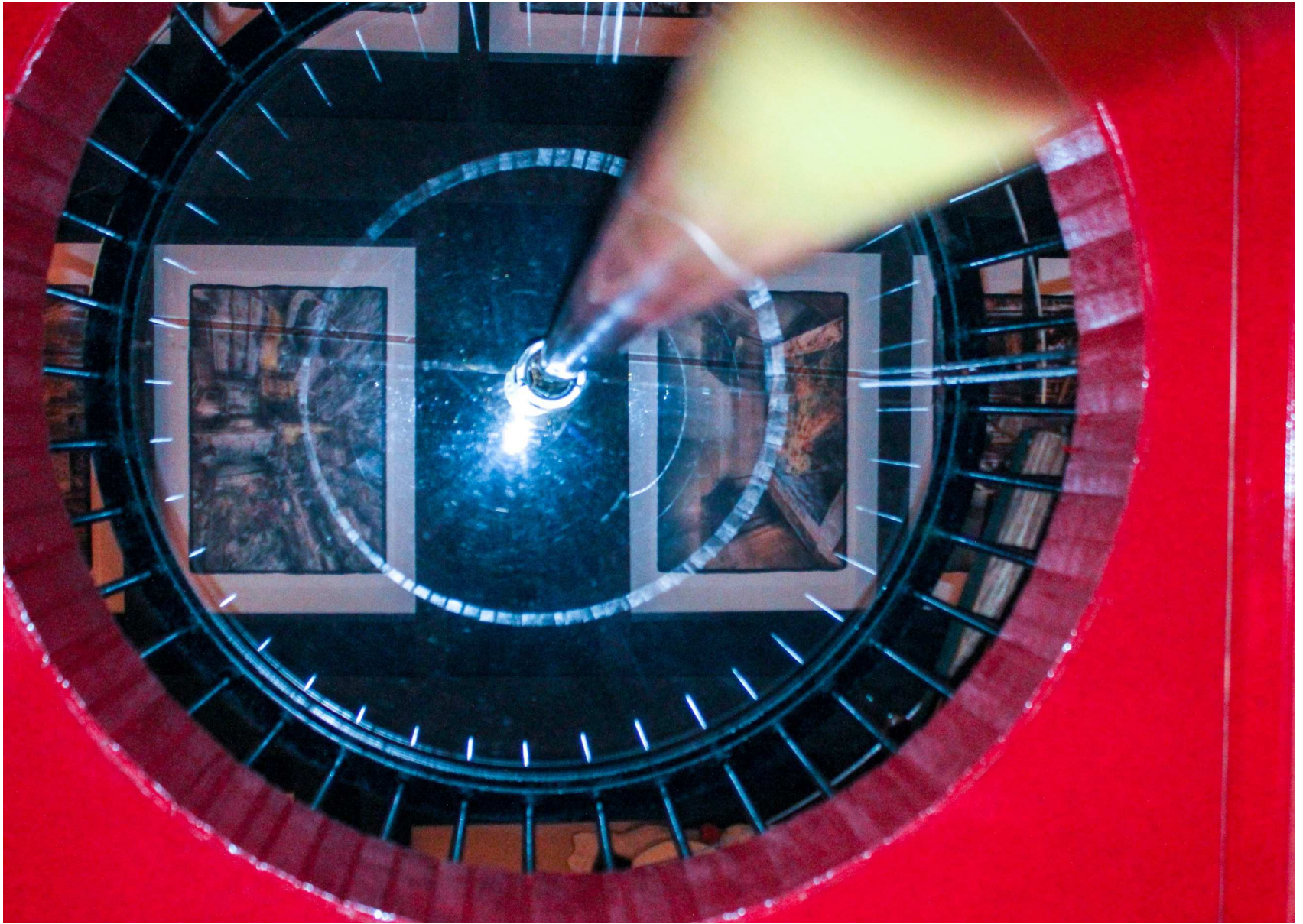


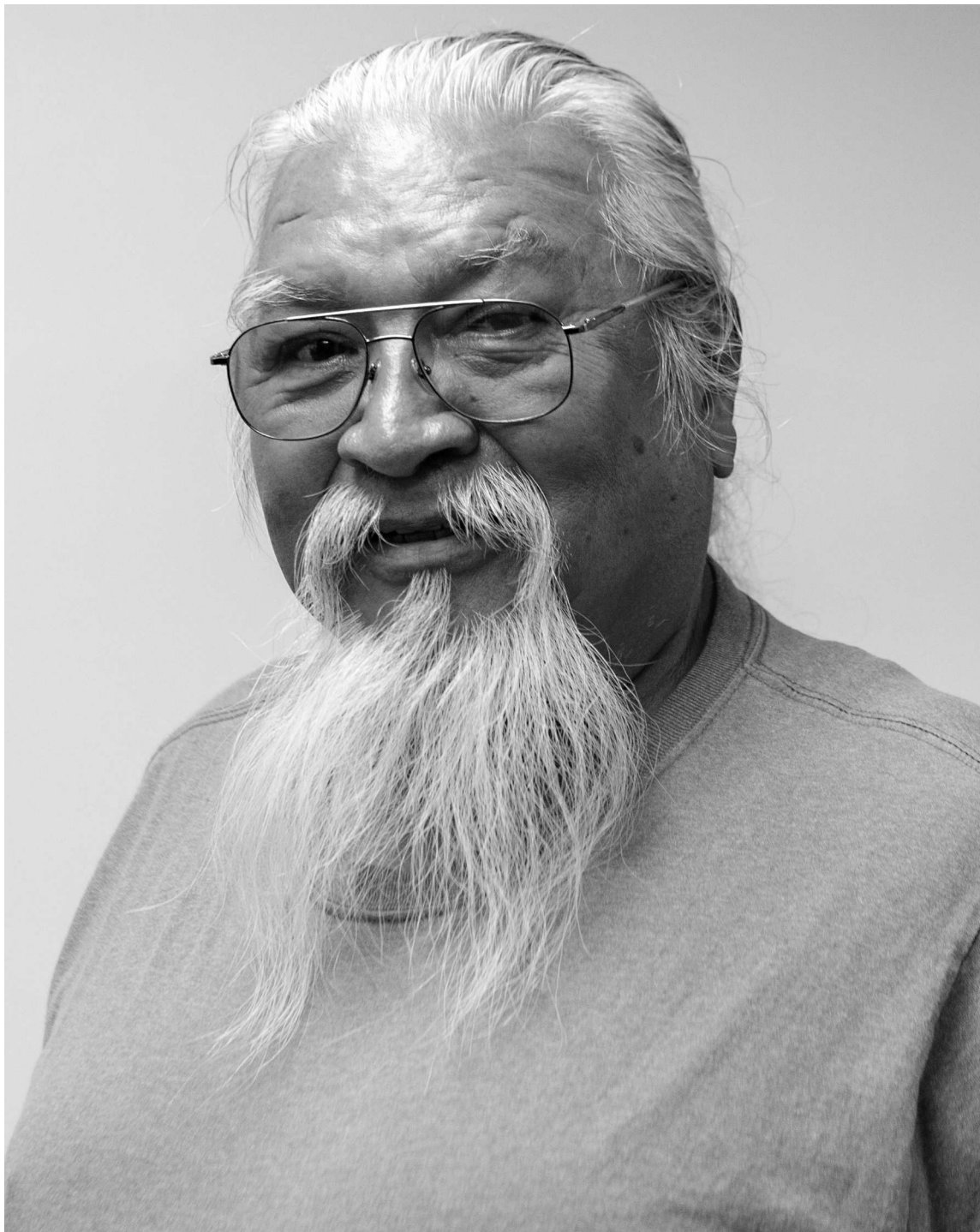


Chad Young

I was raised in a small town south of Rochester, New York, near Letchworth State Park. I am an army Iraq veteran. I find photography relaxing and interesting at the same time. Photography makes time stand still and we all have a different appreciation. I enjoy photography and feel it gives me a better appreciation of nature and my surroundings. The class has taken me to places I wouldn't have otherwise visited and enjoyed.







Frank Gibson

Being a Residential Indian School survivor growing up, then returning back to the world from Vietnam at a young age, I thought everything would be normal only to find out I was the one that wasn't. Photography was always something I wanted to do, just to show other pictures that were etched in my mind.

The Josephine Herrick Project was a godsend, as it has worked wonders for me. I can't say enough good things about the program as I'm sure my classmates would feel the same way. With a camera in hand, my silence isn't as quiet and my solitude isn't as lonely. Thank you JHP for the help.







George Dietter

As a combat veteran I have suffered for years with nightmares, flashbacks, and depression. Medication and counseling have helped but they can only do so much. Since joining the photography group, I have made new friends with similar problems. I have learned a new hobby I can take everywhere I go. It has filled a void. It relaxes me and gives me a great deal of pleasure. It serves as a positive antidote to PTSD that I can use for the rest of my life.







John Steele

I was deployed to Iraq in 2011. Prior to being deployed, I enjoyed taking pictures, but knew next to nothing about photography. While in Iraq, a photo album was sent to me with pictures from home. After some of the bad days, I would look at my pictures of my daughter and family or photos from vacations I had been on in the past, and it had a tranquil effect on me.

I was injured and medically retired after twenty-nine years of service in the army. I have been dealing with PTSD, and the photography group at the Vet Center has been therapeutic. I especially enjoy getting out into parks and exploring nature and wildlife.







John H. Zajac

I am an 11-year veteran of the United States Navy Seabees and have completed two tours (Iraq 2010 and Africa in 2015). I have been interested in photography but never had the opportunity to explore it until this class was offered. I joined because after the birth of my son, Jason, I knew I wanted to capture moments in his life to look back on. Through this class I have gained a new respect for photography in general and I have learned so many tips and tricks to improve the quality of my photographs. This class made me realize the importance of slowing down, taking in each moment and looking deeper into it. It also made me realize how much I didn't know about taking photographs and that photography is something I want to continue to learn and educate myself in.







Luann Van Peurseem

Served in the USAF in Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom. As a combat veteran working as a transportation specialist, I learned to look at things from a survival standpoint.

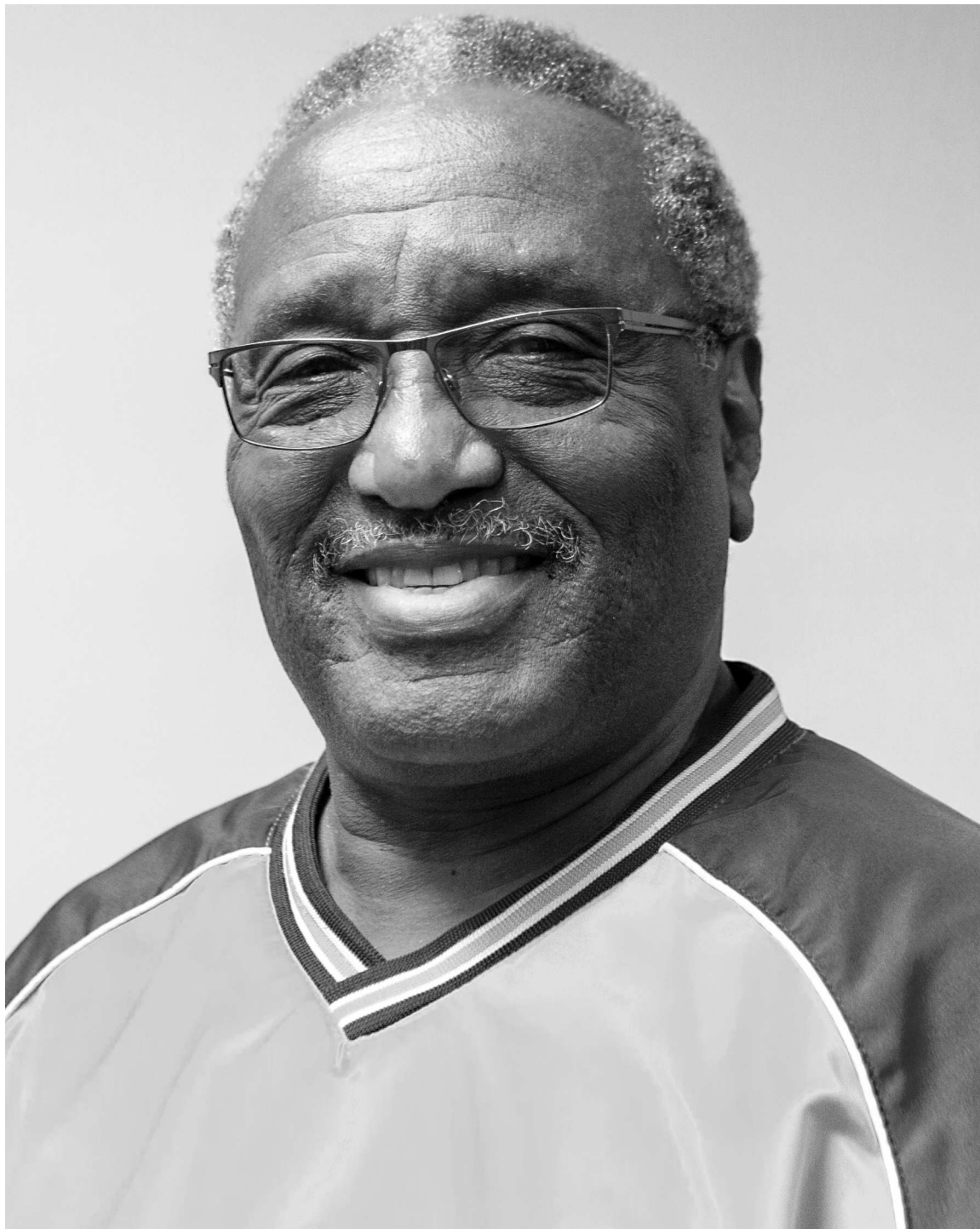
Shortly after starting with the Josephine Herrick Project, I quickly learned that through the lens of the camera not everything is threatening. But, rather to slow down and look at the detail and beauty that surrounds us. My critical thinking takes a back seat.

Since taking part in the program, I have been asked to help with a learn to ski program for veterans by taking pictures of their various levels of skiing accomplishments. Giving them a visual has been just as rewarding for me.

I continue to learn through the photography program where it allows me the opportunity to also interact with fellow veterans of different eras. Sharing each other's views through our pictures.







Plina Wilson III

I am a Vietnam veteran, and I served in country during the years of 1970 and 1971. I was an infantryman during my service in South Vietnam. I returned home with internal issues that hindered my perspective on a productive lifestyle. I went to the Rochester Vet Center for assistance. I've been on a road of recovery ever since. When I heard that the Vet Center was starting a photography course, I signed up immediately. This course has allowed me to be consistent in the use of my camera. I've ventured to various venues as a member of this group (the Eastman House, Equicenter Ranch, the Garden Factory, just to name a few) around the city of Rochester that I would not have visited on my own. My collection of photos from these various venues has allowed me to expand my awareness of the community that I live in. I am very grateful for the Vet Center and JHP for this opportunity to strengthen my efforts to sustain a productive lifestyle within my community.



PW III CHILLI C.C. 4/27/19





JOSEPHINE HERRICK PROJECT
TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

Staff

Miriam Leuchter
Executive Director

Olivia Hunter
Program Director

Teaching Artists

Gil Maker

Dick Bennett

Veterans (Photographers)

George Dietter

Frank Gibson

John Steele

Luann Van Peurseem

Plina Wilson III

Chad Young

John H. Zijac

Special thanks to our program partner, the Rochester Vet Center.



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We would also like to thank our in-kind supporters for this project:

Image City Photography Gallery

Lumiere Photo

Sips Coffee

Canon U.S.A.

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Disabled American Veterans Charity.**

