



AN ICON *Transformed*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOE LIPKA
PART II

*P*enciled on the wall of a one room schoolhouse in eastern Oregon, I found this handwritten homespun graffiti, “Oh, the memories.” It’s a phrase which could be interpreted as lamentation or celebration. This phrase and both meanings came to mind as I was photographing the Cary Elementary School. The slide of this building into decline was soon to end and a renewal was about to commence. Walking around the peeling paint, forgotten furniture and abandoned text books, I could feel decades of memories.

*W*orking in and around buildings which are abandoned can trigger emotions of sorrow and loss. I experienced a surprising and unexpected reaction as I walked through the Cary Elementary School. It came to me that this building was completely worn out because it had been successful in its purpose. Indeed, the now abandoned schoolhouse that educated the youth of Cary for decades was on the cusp of a new purpose. I felt the enthusiasm and hope that is a part of every new adventure. The litter remaining in the building will be removed and modifications will soon follow. Those changes will realize the resolute desire to continue using this building as a new and fresh educational venue.

*T*he essence of this building will be held intact while physical changes will be made. Even with the changes, memories of the past will still be with us as new memories will be added by new students. As a consequence, sometime in the future someone will be able to walk the halls of Cary Elementary School and say, “Oh, the memories!”



































JOE LIPKA

Joe Lipka was born in Lorain, Ohio (near Cleveland), in 1951. He attended University of Notre Dame in Indiana, earning a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and Master of Business Administration.

Joe's introduction to photography wasn't by design. Hoping to secure an elective in his senior year at Notre Dame, he arose at 3:00 AM to stand in line for one of the 21 seats available for Beginning Photo. Unfortunately, other students had the same idea and he found himself 22nd in line. Happily, the fellow ahead of him was in the wrong line and Joe secured the last seat. The creative aspect of this mechanical and chemical process led him to take six photography courses from Richard Stevens at Notre Dame

His informal training has come by way of workshops with Bruce Barnbaum, Stu Levy, David Bayles & Ted Orland, and Edna Bullock. "More importantly, I've participated in The Brooks and Joe Annual Photo Safari — the best ever, longest running, smallest and most unknown photographic workshop in the U.S.A., Canada and Inner Mongolia."

Joe's "triumvirate of personal favorites" are Edward Weston, Walker Evans and Eugene Atget. "Music is important to my creative process. Jazz and classical music are my favorites when working on the computer. My taste in music is catholic, and includes baroque, country, classic rock and jazz."

While Joe makes a living as a business analyst/consultant ("my family has always insisted on wearing shoes, living indoors and eating regularly") he spends much of his personal time and resources on photography. He has two grown daughters, Catherine and Victoria, and lives with his wife, Debi ("a fine judge of good photography"), in Cary, North Carolina.

His photographs have appeared in ninety five juried shows, seventeen solo exhibits, the LensWork family of publications and Black and White Photography Magazine (UK). He was the first photographer awarded a "Best in Show" in The Raleigh Fine Arts Society's Annual Artist's Exhibition and was also selected to exhibit in the Merry Moore Winnett Triennial Exhibition.

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