

Celebrating an individual's roots through art

BY CHRIS MILLER

Who are you? That's the question Living Celebrations owner and president, Sheryl Entwistle wants to answer with an intensive, collaborative process that tells life stories in the subject's words through museum quality art pieces referred to as "Masterpieces."

Just as each person is unique in their own way, so is each of Entwistle's Masterpieces. "We capture their personality, their essence," said Entwistle. Living Celebrations decides on what medium to use only after a required in-depth eight-hour interview with the one being celebrated and their family and friends.

Entwistle noticed when she would attend birthday parties as she was getting older, people would want a sentimental gift, not a sweater. Unlike scrapbooks or memory albums, Living Celebrations focuses on using old-world technologies such as, calligraphy, hand made paper, and hand bound books.

Each collaborative Masterpiece consists of numerous artisans and craftsman contributing to the project. Achieved calligraphers, a letterpress printer, Emmy award-winning writers, and a recognized illustrator by the Society of Illustrators all make up the highly talented creative team that brings the story to life. "People working for us are top in their fields," Entwistle stated. "No one is part-time. This is what they do."

According to Entwistle, People respond emotionally to the concept as well as the finished product. "The Masterpieces are

made on people today, not the deceased," said Entwistle. "We find it's at funerals when we memorialize people. A collage is put together and it looks like too little too late. Tell people now."

Entwistle finds that the unsung heroes are the most interesting such as the life-long mother and housewife, and the retiring executive and father. Entwistle created her own Masterpiece using information of her childhood, her travels, and her troubles along the way. "I wanted to write it for my grandchildren's grandchildren. People I'll never meet," she explained.

Creating each Masterpiece starts with a simple but vital wish to celebrate a lifetime of achievements and memories for you or a loved one while the opportunity presents itself. After contacting Living Celebrations to commission a concept, the initial interview process begins. Entwistle creates a concept and a 3-D mock-up that she sends to her team to be tweaked for the one-of-a-kind legacy gift to be started. Each gift will take approximately six to nine months for completion.

"Many have cried when I've shown them a Masterpiece, they're so touched," Entwistle said. The sentimentality of these honorary art pieces is what makes them an unforgettable gift for the recipient as well as the giver, according to Entwistle.

Living Celebrations envisions their works of art to be treasured and passed down from generation to generation.

"It's about the attention to the individual's personal detail, because life is in the details."