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# Kentucky Museum exhibit features WKU photographer

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One of the photos in the exhibit "The Lewis Lens" at the Kentucky Museum University photographer, Clinton Lewis.

Submitted by Clinton Lewis

If you are ever on Western Kentucky University’s campus, you might catch a glimpse of university photographer Clinton Lewis at work, capturing moments of campus life through the lens of his camera.

To celebrate Lewis’ 15 years on the Hill, the Kentucky Museum is hosting “The Lewis Lens,” an exhibit of his work, through March 2024.

“This exhibit means everything to me,” he said. “It is such an honor to have a gallery in the Kentucky Museum celebrating my 15 years here on the Hill, telling the story of WKU.”



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The graphic features a blue header with the 'LOCAL DIGITAL' logo. Below it is a large orange location pin shape containing the text 'GROW YOUR BUSINESS YOU WITH A LOCAL PARTNER'. The background of the pin is a stylized map of the United States with glowing digital lines. At the bottom of the graphic, the text 'Targeted Display' and 'LocalDigitalKy.com' is displayed in a black bar.

The exhibit features 65 photos that Lewis spent three months editing.

He said he generally averages well above 100,000 photos a year, “so that was a lot of time sifting through hard drives and proof prints to narrow down my final selections.”

Lewis then divided them up into three general categories, including iconic campus images, historic impact photos and adventure photography.

“The exhibit was the brainchild of my wife, Corie Martin, and the museum director Brent Bjorkman,” he said. “They both know that I am too behind-the-scenes to propose this for myself, so they took the initiative and Brent made the Garden Gallery available through March for this.”

Lewis said the gallery is the perfect space for the number of photos in the exhibit and the window overlooking the museum courtyard adds the nature element, which he said is so central to his personality.

“It offers a quiet space to take in the photos and reflect on the past 15 years, which have seen sweeping change on the Hill,” he said.

Lewis said his interest in photography first began in high school, taking pictures with his friends while skateboarding and “trying to recreate what we saw in ‘Thrasher’ and ‘TransWorld Skateboarding’ magazines.”

During his junior year at Bowling Green High School, he worked on both the school newspaper and yearbook staffs and was introduced to photojournalism by David Burton, a WKU photo major who volunteered as a lab tech/mentor at the school.

“Through his passion and getting to know Joe Imel (of the Daily News) on the sidelines of every game, I knew this was my path,” he said.

Lewis started school at WKU in 1995 to pursue a photojournalism degree and in 1997, he started at the Daily News as a lab tech, becoming a staff photographer a year later.

“I stayed until the end of 2005 and bounced around a couple of jobs in an agency and tried freelance, then landed at WKU in 2008,” Lewis said.

He said WKU has been the perfect fit for him, allowing him to blend his favorite styles of photography, including features, news, landscape, architecture and most of all, people.

“Seeing what the faculty and students discover through their research and where their passions take them is so fun to watch and document as it unfolds,” he said.

During his time at WKU, Lewis said he has also had the opportunity to visit Peru, Costa Rica, China, New Zealand and various places in the region that allow him to tell the stories of the students and alumni.

“Being a two-time graduate of WKU and working here, it is special to have a gallery showcasing the place that I love,” he said. “I joke that this gallery tops my previous career high point with a photo of mine being printed on a cookie last year for the opening of the Cliff Todd Center for the College Heights Foundation.”

An opening reception will be held from 4 to 7 p.m. Sept. 8 at the museum, giving guests a chance to view not only Lewis’ photos, but all of the museum’s exhibits.

Remarks will be given at the reception by Imel, Martin, Bjorkman and Lewis.

Hors d’oeuvres and a cash bar will be available and the event is open to the public.

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**Ann Marie Dotson**