

## **Francie Schroeder**

I studied Sociology and English in college. One English professor lugged his cameras around with his novels and I was intrigued. So, after some happy time in the Peace Corps in Brazil I went to Brooks Institute of Photography where I studied classic lighting, films and view camera technique. I traveled some with camera, and I worked for Smithsonian Institution as a black and white printer, as a photographer at the National Zoo, as a writer and researcher for the Archives of American Gardens, a photographic collection, and again as a photographer of their gardens. I also shared a photo studio in Washington D C with my husband.

In the mid 1980's we took a new road and started a specialty tree nursery that continues today. But I never stopped photographing.

Making the transition from film to digital occupied my nights and wee small morning hours for some time. I still love fine silver and chrome prints but the textures that I also love are still there and digital facilitates new possibilities.

With inexpensive, automatic cameras photography became everyman's art. It employs a universal language of light and it skips right over the barriers of spoken language. Part of me has always loved this. Another part of me has felt frustrated by having worked hard acquiring photographic skills and seeing so many pick up a point and shoot and click away. In response to this personal divide I started photographing people taking pictures. Now, after several years I have gone back to look at these pictures. In these days of conflict and division I find them wonderfully uplifting. Each one is an act of appreciation and love. Families are preserving a time spent together, couples are preserving a special moment; all ages, all races are constantly clicking and saying wow, look at that, how beautiful! And that is why I love photography.