

PROMINENT WOMEN FOCUS OF PHOTO EXHIBIT

Holliston resident stages display at the State House

By John Johnson
STAFF WRITER

Photography became a tradition and a business in Robert Bachrach's family when his great-grandfather took a picture for *Harper's* magazine of President Abraham Lincoln delivering the Gettysburg Address.

It remains, Bachrach said, the last remaining photo of Lincoln giving the now famous speech.

Today, Bachrach, a Holliston resident, operates the family-run photo studio that his great-grandfather started during the Civil War.

He has been running the Boston studio since 1982, and caters to every conceivable clientele.

"We (take photos) of children, families, business people, weddings," he said. "Just about anything you can think of."

And on occasion, he said, the studio will put together large exhibits, often at the Boston Public Library.

Bachrach's latest project is on display in the Grand Hall of the State House in Boston and is held in conjunction with "The Women's Educational and Industrial Union" which is

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currently celebrating its 125th anniversary.

Bachrach approached the group about doing a photo exhibit spotlighting some of the state's most influential women.

"Coincidentally they were celebrating their 125th anniversary so they thought it was a great idea," he said.

Bachrach got the idea after doing a photo exhibit for the Boston Public Library on the most influential people in the state to coincide with the

millenium.

"This was a very broad-based group," he said. "There were business leaders, leaders of education and religion. It could have been anybody from not-for-profit or for-profit companies as well."

In all, 250 Bay-Staters were profiled with only one drawback.

"With the criteria I used, which was blind to gender, most of the people we photographed were white men," he said.

So, hoping to highlight the state's female leaders, he set out to do a new exhibit exclusively on women.

"We all divided the responsibility and started setting up appointments," Bachrach said. "The WEIU drew up a list of people that was beyond reproach and we provided the labor and materials necessary to create the portraits."

When all was said and done, after three months of photographing the women, 125 had been profiled.

The list includes Joyce London Alexander, magistrate judge for the U.S. District Court; Martha Coakley,

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district attorney of Middlesex County; Judy Norsigian, executive director of the Boston Women's Health Book Collaborative; Anne Hobson Pilot, principal harpist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra; Jane Swift, acting governor of Massachusetts; and Kip Tiernan, founder of Rosie's Place.

"This was a very interesting project," Bachrach said. "It highlighted a wide range group of people with varying talents," he said.

The exhibit opened on June 18, and was unveiled to a crowd of nearly 300 people following a speech by Gov. Swift.

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Exhibits like this one, Bachrach said, are a great part of the family business that he found himself drawn to shortly after college.

Bachrach went to school for music, but the world of photography provides enough artistic expression.

"This really is a fun business," he said. "And it was a natural progression for me to be here."

Although he loves running a traditional photo studio, the exhibits are what provide the added artistic edge.

"You get to pick and choose who you want to photograph," he said. "And they are a great way to advertise."

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