Unique photography exhibition by Jim Heemstra showcases Iowa State University alumni

Ames, IA – The Iowa State University Alumni Association and University Museums announce the upcoming spring 2014 exhibition for the Brunnier Art Museum VISIONS Across America: Portraits of Iowa State Alumni by Jim Heemstra. This free exhibition will open April 3 and run through August 9, 2014.

About the exhibition

From November 2011 to November 2013, Des Moines freelance photographer Jim Heemstra and VISIONS magazine editor Carole Gieseke traveled to all 50 states, meeting with more than 120 Iowa State University alumni for the VISIONS Across America project. This portrait exhibit is a culmination of this project.

When Heemstra and Gieseke set out on their two-year journey across the United States to produce ISU alumni stories and photographs for VISIONS magazine, they had no idea how emotionally tied they would become to those alumni – and how deeply they would be changed by the experience. From Ann Schexnyder in her New Orleans home that, six years after Hurricane Katrina, still had no hot water or electricity … to Ike Harris, a former CEO who now lives on the coast of Florida and allowed Jim to photograph him in a suit and tie walking barefoot in the sand … to Bob Gannon, a “world rounder” who flew his single-engine airplane around the world two-and-a-half times because he was curious about how other people lived – these are the people they encountered in their travels, and these are the people whose portraits show the stunning diversity, strength, and character of Iowa State University alumni.

“One of the challenges of this VISIONS Across America portrait project was trying to show each person in a unique environment,” Heemstra said “I had to make the environment work to tell the story of where people live and what kind of lives they lead. I hope each person I photographed enjoyed the experience as much as I did.”

“The logistics of this project were sometimes overwhelming: connecting with people we’d never met in places we’d mostly never visited, not knowing what we’d find and if our ideas would work,” Gieseke said. “Sometimes we’d have a great idea all planned out only to scuttle it because the environment wasn’t what we expected.
Sometimes we’d have a great idea only to arrive and immediately get a thousand-times-better idea. Sometimes magic happened, sometimes not. It’s just all part of the process.”

The exhibition includes 116 inkjet prints, both black and white and color. Some of the portraits are as large as six feet wide, and each is accompanied by a personal narrative.

**About the artist**
Jim Heemstra lives in Des Moines, Iowa, and has been a freelance photographer for more than 40 years. His work has been featured in VISIONS magazine since 1989, and he has been the sole photographer for the Iowa State University calendar since 1992.

The exhibition is organized by the ISU Alumni Association with participation of University Museums. Exhibition support is generously provided by Lora & Russ Talbot, Michele and Steve Whitty, Marcia and Steve Stahly, and ISU Printing Service.

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**Image: Rachel Beardsley (New York) photographed by Jim Heemstra**

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**Opening reception**
Friday, April 4, 2014 from 5:00 to 8:00 in the Brunnier Art Museum, 295 Scheman Bldg., Iowa State Center

VISIONS Across America exhibition reception
The ISU Alumni Association and University Museums invite you to join them in celebrating this exhibition opening at the Brunnier Art Museum with special guests photographer Jim Heemstra and writer/editor Carole Gieseke. Enjoy light refreshments, conversation, and a brief program at 6:30 p.m.

**Educational program**
Sunday, June 8 at 2:00 p.m. in the Brunnier Art Museum, 295 Scheman Bldg., Iowa State Center

VISIONS Across America: The journey by Jim Heemstra and Carole Gieseke
What’s the secret to putting together a two-year, cross-country photography project on a no-frills budget? Join photographer Jim Heemstra and VISIONS magazine editor Carole Gieseke as they share their experiences meeting and photographing Iowa State University alumni in all 50 states. Expect plenty of engrossing (and often hilarious) behind-the-scenes visuals.

**Admission and hours**
Iowa State University’s Brunnier Art Museum is located in 295 Scheman Building in the Iowa State Center. Admission is free; however, there is a suggested donation of $3 per visitor. The museum’s regular hours are Tuesday through Friday 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 1-4 p.m., closed Mondays and university holidays. Free parking is available north and south of the Scheman Building in the Iowa State Center lots.
Directions
From I-35, take exit 11B (Hwy. 30 west). From Hwy 30, take the University Blvd. exit and turn north. Pass by Jack Trice Stadium and the Iowa State Center parking lots; turn left on Center Drive just south of Hilton Coliseum. Follow the signs to the Scheman Building. The Brunnier Art Museum is located on the second floor of the Scheman Building.

Media Information
To schedule interviews and/or to photograph events, please contact Allison Sheridan (515-294-3342 aclone@iastate.edu) or Carole Gieseke, Chief Communications Officer, Iowa State University Alumni Association (515-294-6560 cgieseke@iastate.edu)

Additional images available upon request.

For more information on University Museums, call 515-294-9500 or visit our web site at www.museums.iastate.edu.

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