

Morgan celebrates two decades of Las Vegas photography

By Lee Brown
Sentinel-Voice

When you walk through the doors you are greeted by an extended hand and the words "Welcome to Morgan's Photography."

"That," says owner Bob Morgan, who is celebrating his 20th year in business in Las Vegas, "is one of the most important factors to our success. Greeting people and treating them right."

It was 20 years ago that Morgan, a U.S. Air Force veteran, began what has become one of the, if not the most successful African-American photography businesses in Nevada.

After earning a degree in Advertising, Illustration and Photography from Syracuse University in 1970 while still serving in the Air Force in Florida — Morgan was transferred to Las Vegas where he got the opportunity to fulfill



MORGAN

a life-long dream of owning his own business.

"I had a business down in Florida — a photography studio — that I ran while I was still in the service," Morgan said. "I guess it's always been a goal of mine, because my parents were in business also. So I came from a business-oriented situation, as far as family was concerned."

Morgan's parents owned their own business for nearly 20 years themselves.

"One of the things that my parents taught me was that if you treat people the way you want to be treated, good things will happen to you," he

said. "The key is treating people right and giving them good service. I've done that for the last 20 years, and I've seen a lot of photographers come and go. I've always produced a quality product."

Though he was in the Air Force, Morgan, who is originally from Albany, Georgia, admits that he dabbled in photography for many years. Before being transferred to the desert of Las

Vegas, Morgan had an interest in a photography studio in Miami — he sold his interest in the Miami studio to his partner.

"It was a second vocation," Morgan said of photography. "My primary vocation was the Air Force, and like most people have second jobs, that (photography) was my second job."

"So I was actually full-time Air Force and full-time photography studio owner."

Upon his arrival to Las Vegas in 1977, Morgan says

he immediately got his business license and converted his garage into a studio. After doing a little advertising around town and shooting various community events, his business began to grow.

"We did some advertising in the newspaper and a lot of advertising on base (Nellis Air Force Base). I was shooting a lot of weddings through the base chapel and getting a lot of referrals. That's how it all started," he said, adding that word-of-mouth referrals also did a lot for his business.



Bob Morgan stands among a variety of his work.

Photo by Morgan Photography

"When I first started out, what I started doing was displaying some of my work in the library and the mall. I wouldn't let anybody know that I was a black photographer," said Morgan, who at the time was working with a white photographer. "Then it just dawned on me," he said.

"Why should I cover up the quality work that I was doing, hiding behind someone else. So I came out and let everyone know that Bob Morgan of Morgan's Photography was not just necessarily a 'black photographer.' A lot of my clientele were white and Hispanic, as well as black," he said.

Morgan, whose studio performs all types of photography services, including video, admits that being one of very few black photographers in the area has presented its problems as far as business is concerned. At times, he says, the color of his skin has cost him to lose business.

"It (racism) hasn't affected me to the point that it has kept our business from being successful," Morgan says. "There have been times, however, that I have gotten calls and people would say they wanted to come over and see our work, and once they got to the studio, they'd walk in and say they were there to see

American — photographer.

Though situations like that still happen from time-to-time, it doesn't overly concern Morgan. He is confident in his work.

"It doesn't matter because I think that I am one of the best photographers in the world — not only in Las Vegas," he said.

Morgan would like to give a little of his success and knowledge back to the community by setting up a program to teach minority youth the ins and outs of photography.

"I would like to start teaching photography to young men and women in the black community," he says. "I want to set up a program to introduce them to photography, introduce them to the business end of photography, and show them how they can be successful in it and make a living at it."

"A lot of people get the misconception that photography is cheap, and that anyone can do it, and that because you have a camera in your hand you can take a picture and make money at it. Well, that's not necessarily true," Morgan adds. "You have to be skillful, you have to know lighting, you have to have an eye for photography. I want to set this program up so that we can get these kids in, and at the same time we'll set up a dark room and teach these kids from step one to advanced photography."

His goal is to get the program off the ground this summer, hopefully at the West Las Vegas Arts Center.

Morgan says he considers his studio, currently located at 727 S. 9th Street, Suite B, more-or-less a family business, as his daughter, Cisely, is office manager. He adds, however, that he hopes it will remain a family business in the future.

"I'm hoping and praying Morgan's Photography will be a legacy here in Las Vegas," Morgan said, though. "Even if family members do not carry on the business, I hope the name will be carried on by having another young photographer join me and learn the business."

FREE Seminar on Living Trusts "How to Avoid Probate & Minimize Estate Taxes – So Your Estate Will Pass on to Your Family, Intact"

Attend One of These **FREE** Seminars

LAS VEGAS
Wednesday, April 16
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
(Coffee & Donuts)
Green Valley Library
2797 N. Green Valley Pky

LAS VEGAS
Wednesday, April 16
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
(Coffee & Cookies)
The Orleans Hotel & Casino
(Bienville Room Salon H)
4500 W. Tropicana Ave.

LAS VEGAS
Thursday, April 17
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
(Coffee & Donuts)
Sam's Town Hotel & Casino
(Searchlight Carson Room)
5111 Boulder Hwy

LAS VEGAS
Thursday, April 17
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
(Coffee & Donuts)
Arizona Charlie's Hotel & Casino
(Palace Ballroom "B&C")
740 S. Decatur Blvd.

LAS VEGAS
Saturday, April 19
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
(Coffee & Donuts)
Summerlin Library & Performing Arts Center
(Conference Room)
1771 Inner Circle Drive

Refreshments Served – Plenty of free parking. Please arrive early, seating may be limited.

Attend One of These Seminars and You'll Find Out...

- ✓ How to plan your estate to make sure it passes on to your family, intact.
- ✓ How to protect your estate if you become incapacitated during your lifetime.
- ✓ The right and wrong way to leave property to your children.
- ✓ How to plan your estate to minimize federal estate taxes.
- ✓ The advantages and disadvantages of certain trusts and wills.
- ✓ How to maintain privacy of your family's personal affairs.

When you attend one of these seminars, you will receive a **FREE, 1-hour consultation** (worth \$250) with an attorney...so you can find out how estate planning will benefit you.

Barker, Brown, Busby & Sutherland, P.C.

430 S. Third Street • Las Vegas, NV • 89101
Attorney Tom Sutherland speaks to local residents about living trusts and estate planning. Mr. Sutherland is a member of the American Academy of Estate Planning Attorneys. His seminars are "informative and easy-to-understand."

Don't Delay – Call (702) 386-1086 Now to Reserve Your Seat!



**AAA- California State
Automobile Association
Nevada Division**

- Homeowners
- Auto
- Membership

Evening & Weekend
Appointments Available



Danene S. Kelley

**FREE Quotes call 870-9171, ask for ext. 241
3312 W. Charleston Boulevard**