

In Memoriam

Len Tuchin 1927-1985

On January 7, 1985 SSCC member Len Tuchin died at Holy Cross Hospital of kidney failure brought on by a massive heart attack suffered on January 5th. At the time of the attack, Len was presiding over the club's annual equipment auction at Sligo Creek Community Center. Len was 57. He is survived by his wife Carole, his mother, and a sister.

Len was born in Philadelphia and graduated from Temple University dental school. He resided and had his dental practice in Washington, D.C. until the early 1970's when he moved his office to the Silver Spring area and his home to the Rockville area.

Len joined the SSCC in 1966 and was one of the longest continuously active members of the club (19 years). His first major position as a board member was Monochrome Program Chairman (1969-70). The next year he was elected Vice President (1970-71), and the following year he was elected President (1971-72). For the next three years (1972-75) Len served as a Director. Besides his officer/director main duties, Len also gave various workshops and presentations throughout his association with the club. His last presentation, and his most memorable, was given on December 20th in which he shared the exhilarating adventures of his recent African safari. Len recounted how this fascinating journey, led by Carl Purcell, had been the greatest experience of his life and how thankful he was to have had the opportunity to take part in it.

Len also served SSCC as its *auctioneer extraordinaire* for the club's annual equipment auction. Len served in this capacity for at least nine years (and probably for several more). Len's knowledge of the equipment being sold and his expertise of getting people to bid gave our auctions an air of true professionalism. For Len, this function was also a labor of love – an endeavor he thoroughly enjoyed. Like his presentations, the auctions gave him a captured audience to ply his much-loved ad lib humor and quick-witted anecdotes. Len Tuchin auctions, therefore, became memorable "events" looked forward to and not to be missed.

For most club members though, Len will be most remembered for his photography – its precision, its beauty, its sensitivity, and at times its humor. Len's concentration was mostly in monochrome prints, the medium for him most intimately related to his pre-photography artistic pursuits of oil painting and charcoal sketches. It is these superb pieces of photographic craftsmanship that he submitted for several exhibitions around the Washington area throughout the 1970's. Some of these were part of group exhibits with other SSCC photographers and at least two were one-man shows.

In his photography Len was also an avid competitor of the highest class. During his membership Len was awarded Photographer of the Year at least five times (four for monochrome prints and one for color prints). He became SSCC Master of Photography (for gaining 300 points) in 1978 and ended his career with 705 points – the highest on record for any SSCC member. Besides the club and interclub competitions, Len also competed for several years in the Kodak International Snapshot Awards contest carried locally by the Washington Star. Len won several awards with the Star and even succeeded in

getting one print accepted as a Kodak finalist, which became part of their show that toured the country in 1969-70 and which hung here locally at the National Geographic Explorers Hall.

Although Len's mastery of photography seemingly placed him on a plane far above the average club member, Len himself remained a warm, sensitive, modest, and dear friend to practically everyone with whom he came in contact. Len was forever encouraging others that his own particular successes held no mystery – and that others too were capable of producing images comparable or better than his own. Len's own philosophy encouraged fellow photographers to experiment freely, to carry a camera with them always, to get involved with their subjects, and to shoot with their hearts as much or more so than with their minds and their eyes.

To say that Len Tuchin will be sorely missed by the entire SSCC seems somehow to be a gross understatement. Because for many of us, Len was the epitome of excellence in photography. His creative genius will surely leave a vacuum not easily and not soon filled. But even more than his photographic achievements, Len's inspiration, his personal warmth and charm, and his glorious humor will surely live on long after all else is forgotten.

God keep you Len, you were the best!

Stan Klem, president