

GIFT OF HOPE

“Sometimes I do get to places just when God’s ready to have somebody click the shutter.”

- Ansel Adams

Byron Dudley was fortunate to have parents who encouraged his photography interests and let him roam free with his camera at a young age.

After a successful 30-year career in education – interrupted by a cancer diagnosis – Byron took advantage of an early retirement to give full attention to his photography.

But the cancer recurred. This time the treatments left Byron sick and depressed. From that experience and inspired by a trip to Zion Canyon, Byron came up with the idea to produce a 2008 Calendar of Hope. It would feature his landscape photos and some of his journal thoughts as he walked through his second experience with cancer.

Byron’s intention with this beautiful gift was to renew hope and inspire those touched by cancer. “Hope is essential in the will to live,” says Byron, who had at one time lost his optimism and put his dreams on hold.

Ticket out of the house

Byron was just twelve years old when he bought his first camera—a Kodak Bantam that used Kodachrome film—with money from his *Chicago Daily News* newspaper route. His home in La Grange Park, Illinois, was adjacent to the Salt Creek Forest Preserve. It was also just fifteen miles west of the Windy City. Byron began a serious pursuit of photography in the woods of Northern Illinois and on the avenues and lakefronts of downtown Chicago.

Byron’s parents were quite supportive of his interests. “I discovered at a very early age that a camera was a ticket out of the house,” says Byron. “It allowed me a great deal of freedom both in the woods and in the city.”

At age 15, Byron headed west – alone with his camera in pursuit of photography. For six glorious weeks, he hitch-hiked and photographed the spectacular scenery found in Colorado and Wyoming.