

# Downtown Plano's 30-year Love affair ends

Photographer  
calls it a wrap  
for his studio on  
the brick street

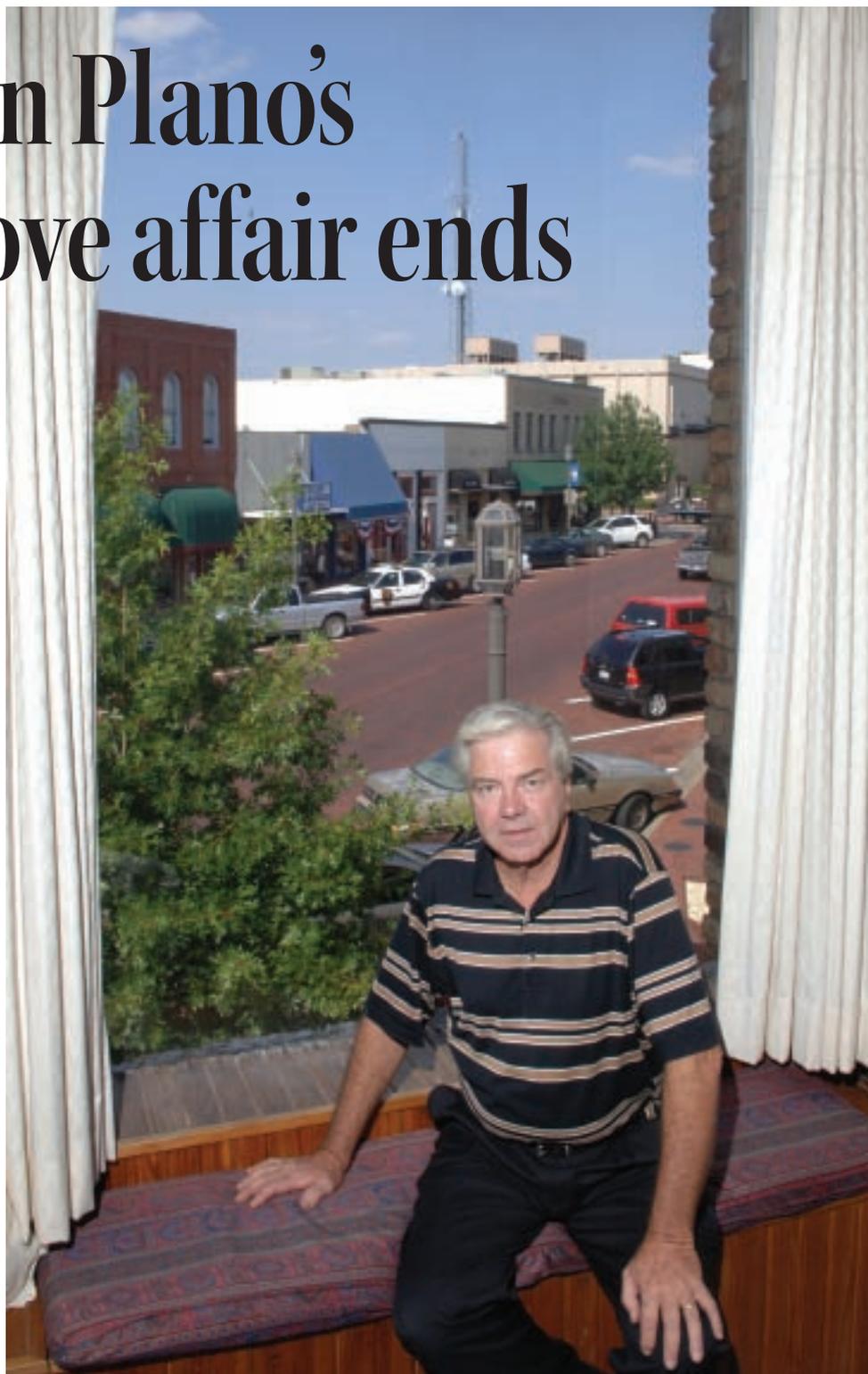
By Britney Porter

Squeezing more than 30 years of Love in a 30-minute interview is no easy task, especially when Ernest Love is as passionate about photography as he is about his wife, Tammy. And she knows it. She, in fact, supports him in this love affair.

After all, he has photographed Bob Hope, the cast of "Dallas," evangelist/author Josh McDowell, and western swing band the Light Crust Doughboys. He has also photographed Gov. John Connally, Sen. Florence Shapiro, and Sen. Sam Johnson ... not to mention mayors and local police and firemen and women.

For 35 years, Ernest Love has captured smiles and stories that conjure up nostalgia. As of July, however, his two-story photography studio on 15th Street in downtown Plano became available for retail lease.

Is Love retiring? No, he and Tammy will be using their home



*For three decades photographer Ernest Love has monitored historic downtown Plano from the second-floor window of his studio on 15th Street.*

near Lake Lavon in Princeton, TX, to continue the business. "My photography will be mostly on location or at the customer's home for family portraits and things of that nature," Ernest said.

The couple plans to upgrade their landscaping around their home to shoot scenic outdoor photos, too. But a beautiful backdrop has never been Love's motivation to produce extraordinary pictures; it's simply the man's desire to draw

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emotion from his subjects ... and his bystanders. In fact, Love said what he enjoys most about photography is being able to photograph children and experience their parents’ tears of joy.

Tammy agreed, “We get to see people at the happiest time of their lives. You can stop time in someone’s life with a photograph of his or her child.”

Ernest and Tammy said that in the photography business, clients become friends. Said Tammy, “Over the years, we’ve gone through many things with all of them ... weddings, pregnancies, small talk about our children growing up ...”

Ernest and Tammy laugh as they talk about their two teenage boys being camera shy. “It’s very difficult to photograph my boys since they’ve become teenagers. It was even more difficult before,” said Ernest, as his gaze drifted off to a special memory. “Once they were fighting over this tricycle, and I had to take 40 pictures to get one good photo.”

Tammy laughed. “They have probably been our most difficult clients – our own children!”

Then another snapshot, or memory, almost brings Ernest to tears. “I have a daughter from a previous marriage,” he pauses. “I’ve photographed weddings for a long time and until my daughter got married ... until I had the feelings of a father of the bride, I wasn’t able to capture the love that parents have for their son or daughter,” he said.

Shooting weddings is how Ernest launched his career in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s. While attending the University of North Texas to pursue engineering, his uncle gave him a 35 millimeter camera, and in 1969, Ernest photographed a television set of man walking on the moon.

“I processed it, and the next day a lady

at work ... I was an engineer at Collins Radio ... said, ‘I want you to take pictures of my daughter’s wedding.’ I asked her, ‘What makes you think I can take wedding pictures?’ She said, ‘Well, if you can take a picture of man walking on the moon, you can take wedding pictures!’ ”

The wedding photos turned out beautifully. After that, Ernest had weddings booked every weekend and saved up enough money to open his first studio in Plano in 1971. The first person he photographed was Father Smith of Saint Mark’s Catholic Church.

Photographers today may be surprised

“Digital looks great in magazines, but I’ve had several prints made digital whether they were this large,” said Ernest pointing to a 20-by-24 frame on the wall, “or larger and you can tell.”

“Plus, if you end up transferring all of your equipment over to digital, the cost is phenomenal,” Tammy said.

Speaking of equipment, Ernest has several props that have been used in families from one generation to another. “I will have some parents call me requesting that I use a certain prop because I took a photo of their child’s father with that particular prop.”



*Tammy and Ernest Love will miss their downtown studio and the clients that have become friends.*

to learn that Ernest does not work with digital cameras. He prefers using Mamiya RZ 67s.

“We just do it the old-fashioned way,” said Tammy.

One prop is an antique school desk. A child sits in the desk and holds an apple. “Some of them take a bite out of the apple!” Tammy and Ernest say in unison.

Their memorable name and long-

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Even as more photographers switch to digital equipment, Ernest has remains loyal to his Mamiya film cameras.

standing service have made the couple popular in Plano and surrounding communities. “There is one family in Allen and their last name is Smith. Judy Smith is her name, and they had an only child, Jason. I started taking his photograph when he was one year old, and I took his picture every year on his birthday until he was a senior in high school,” said Ernest. “Then I took his senior portraits, and his portrait every year that he went to Texas A&M University, including his senior portrait when he graduated. And then I did his wedding portraits. Now, he has a little girl who is 3 years old and I’ve taken her portrait each year of her life. ... That makes you feel old!”

“You are old!” Tammy interjects.

“You’re only as old as you feel,” said Ernest, “and I can’t feel anymore!”

That’s not true. Ernest said toward the end of the interview that he feels “blessed to have so many wonderful customers and hopes to continue to serve them.”

“Ernest is right,” said Tammy. “It’s hard to make the change, but this chapter of our life is closed.”

Closed but not forgotten. Plano’s Love Photography will be an affair to remember.

*Love Photography is now located at 6895 Southpoint Dr. in Princeton. Call Ernest or Tammy Love at 972-424-7794 or 972-424-7415 for more information.*

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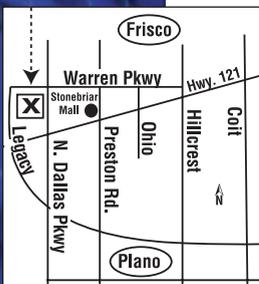
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