

Eleanor (Ellie) Cohen Jacobs

Biography

At age 90, Eleanor is still going strong. A native New Yorker by way of the Bronx, then Manhattan, and now, Litchfield, CT, her parents were both immigrants from Lodz, Poland. Throughout her life, Eleanor has been a painter, freelance writer, businesswoman, art broker, and entrepreneur.

In 1953, following her first two jobs at Columbia University's Teachers College and J. Walter Thompson, she met her future husband, Raymond Jacobs. After a two-year courtship, they married in 1955. Their first daughter, Susan, was born in 1959, and their second, Laura, in 1962.

Raymond was a brilliant photographer at the beginning of what became a very successful photography career. He opened a whole new world of creativity and adventure to Eleanor. After he had studied photography with Lisette Model, Raymond urged Eleanor to take painting classes with Lisette's husband, Evsa Model. She remained in his class for ten years. This was her first experience in a true teaching/learning environment in which the value of the individual was totally understood and recognized as being unique, and it transformed Eleanor and her passion for art was solidified.

Eleanor was by Raymond's side throughout his photography career, as he took off with commercial advertising and reportage work in the late 1950's and 1960s. In 1969, after Raymond had stopped working as a photographer, the couple changed direction completely when they opened and ran the Earth Shoe company, which became a counter-culture symbol of the 1970s. The company expanded to 123 shops across the United States, Canada, and Europe. By 1976, sales had grown to \$14 million but the company dissolved in 1977.

Following Earth Shoes, Eleanor worked for Sotheby Parke Bernet art auction house, Hirschl and Adler Gallery, and then became a private art dealer. She retired in 1993. As a freelance writer of humorous personal essays on a variety of timely subjects and letters to the editor, Eleanor has been published repeatedly in the Litchfield County Time.