

# Sherwin Greenberg – Focused Insight

By John H. Conlin

He was a beautiful person, an artist, a gentle man and a congenial personality. Sherwin Greenberg began his lifelong enthusiasm for photography in a class taught by Joseph Manch at Seneca Vocational High School. Sherwin died in January 2011 at age 88. After a distinguished, award-winning career as an image-maker, he retired from commercial work in 1985. Tom Buckham, in 2003, referred to him as “Buffalo’s leading commercial photographer-filmmaker.” After retirement, Sherwin continued his love for photography and cheerfully donated his expertise to local nonprofits.

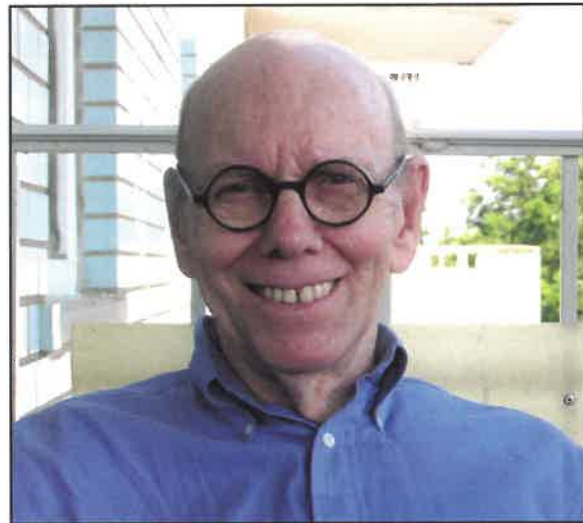
*Western New York Heritage* was the beneficiary of that largesse. Through his longtime friend Russell Baker (Marketing Director at *Western New York Heritage*), Sherwin was enlisted in 2004 to document the Goodrich-Landow Pioneer log cabin, restored at the Clarence Historical Museum. His eagerness to capture the details and the spirit of the project led me to think of his work as “focused insight,” that is when the image and the idea come together as one in the camera lens, never glitzy, always matter-of-fact.

In the spring of 2006, Sherwin offered to do a pictorial essay on the oldest brick building in Lockport, the Col. William Bond House. During the drive to Niagara County, he inquired about the other stories being prepared for that issue. Upon hearing that there was to be an article on Lawrence Bell of Bell Aircraft, Sherwin casually mentioned that he had once worked for Larry Bell as a photographer during World War II. Elaborating on that experience, he said he had the privilege of accompanying the first American jet plane, the Bell XP-59, on its top secret rail journey from Buffalo to California; and that he had photographed its first successful flight at Muroc Dry Lake, a momentous event in the history of aviation.

Later in 2006, Sherwin jumped at the opportunity to photograph Frank Lloyd Wright’s Heath House inside and out. He delighted in capturing the subtleties and rhythms of the design. While doing so he mentioned that it was not the first time that he had photographed that house.

He had done so for the now famous 1940 Henry Russell Hitchcock exhibition on Buffalo Architecture. While working for Jay W. Baxtresser, who had the contract, Sherwin had taken most of the photos for that important event in local architectural history. For the Heath House issue (Fall 2006), Greenberg also produced the stunning cover image of the house’s distinctive “pendant diamond” art glass window.

From November 2007 to January 2008, the Burchfield Penney Art Center honored him with an exhibit called “A Life in the Arts: Sherwin Greenberg.” All who knew or worked with this remarkable man are the better for that experience.



Photographed in 2008, Sherwin Greenberg passed away on January 6, 2011. He enjoyed a long career as a noted photographer and filmmaker, and was a member of the Buffalo Society of Artists and MENSA.

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