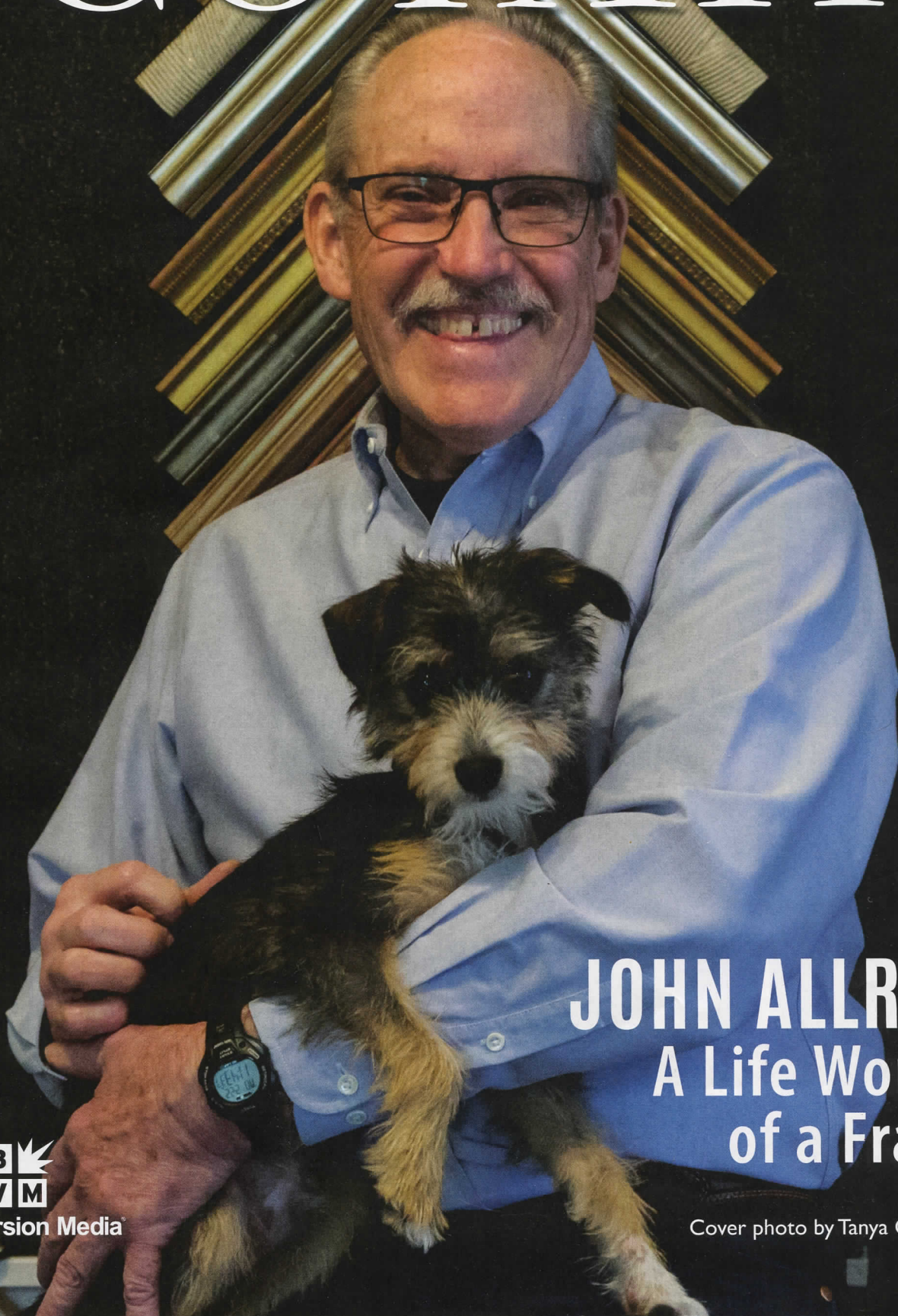


NEIGHBORS OF

APRIL 2021

COTATI



**JOHN ALLRED:
A Life Worthy
of a Frame**



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Cover photo by Tanya Constantine



JOHN ALLRED: A Life Worthy of a Frame

BY JOHNATHAN WILLIAMS | PHOTOS BY TANYA CONSTANTINE

Just as the greatest works of art are framed to preserve their memory, so too can the storied lives all around us be commemorated and remembered by telling their tale. Some of these tales are longer than others, but all are worth consideration. In Cotati, there are many notable stories that deserve to be commemorated, whether they are those of family or of individuals. John Allred, who has been a large part of the Cotati community for over 28 years now, is one such story that is worthy of being told.

Born in Texas, John's family moved to California early on in his life. With a father who worked in the cattle business as a livestock auctioneer, John grew up around cattle and horses. Even before entering high school, John was already working with his father at a livestock yard in Galt, California. He also spent summers traveling




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along with his father to all the auction yards from one end of the Central Valley to the other. After graduating from Oakdale High School, John attended the Modesto Junior College as an Art Major. After taking every available Art course at MJC, John went on the move. After leaving Oakdale, he lived in Modesto, then Fresno, and eventually moved Stockton to attend Humphrey's College and take a few engineering courses. Ultimately, John decided that civil engineering was not for him.

Soon after, John moved to San Francisco prior to the Summer of Love, where he lived for a time before moving north to Petaluma in 1969. Initially, John found himself back in the world of livestock, milking cows on a dairy farm just west of the city of Sonoma. John was then offered and took a job to manage a cattle ranch in Calaveras County. Despite the size of the herd, John realized there was not much money to be made in the cattle industry at that time, and moved back to Petaluma to attend the Santa Rosa Junior College and complete his General Education requirements. Earning his AA Degree, John continued his education in the Psychology program at Sonoma State University. After earning his Bachelor's Degree at SSU in 1974, John furthered his educational pursuit by entering San Francisco State University and earning his Master's Degree in 1976. After obtaining his degree, he became a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and went into private practice in Mill Valley, San Rafael, and Petaluma, in partnership with Harvard Grad Psychiatrist Richard Crews, MD. Alongside this work, John also made house calls in West Marin before public transportation was available. John, along with Dr. Crews and two other psychologists, created and ran a 24-hour crisis intervention service in Sonoma County.

Eventually, John joined the staff at the newly authorized Columbia Pacific University, where he rose to the role of Dean of Admissions. John states that the opportunity to work with students from around the world was a very rewarding experience. However, working indoors was not as enjoyable. Retiring from the university (though keeping his private practice for a time), John returned to his love of art and design. He worked as a graphic designer for two companies in Petaluma, Fine Line Design and DesignLab, and also worked as an independent contractor for LucasFilm, doing inking and painting on animated films like *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, and *Innerspace*.

John entered his current line of work, framing artworks, when he was asked by a friend to help get paintings ready



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for a “one-man” show, by putting frames on the paintings. Enjoying the work, John applied for a job with a framing shop in Novato in 1985, and was accepted with no prior work experience. “I learned a lot in that shop, and it wasn’t long before I was doing almost everything there was to do there,” says John.

John spent one year at that frame shop, then took a job managing a small frame shop and gallery in Petaluma. Though he enjoyed it, John decided to open his own framing business in Novato in 1991, later moving his practice to Terra Linda. John eventually got fed up with the commute and sought to move closer to home. Meeting with Lloyd and Prue Draper, John was able to rent a small cottage they owned in downtown Cotati in 1997, and he has been there ever since. “It’s a very rewarding line of work, I like working with family heirlooms and fine art. I’ve even had the pleasure of framing many paintings by Phyllis Diller! As well as Rembrandts, Goyas and Picassos!” says John.

John joined the Cotati Chamber of Commerce when he opened his shop. He spent over 10 years working with the Chamber, including serving on their board, and has been highly involved with the Cotati Jazz Festival and Pasta and Bingo Nights, among other Chamber events. His relationship with Lloyd and Prue Draper was the catalyst for John to join the Cotati Historical Society in its beginning stages. In honor of his countless volunteering hours in Cotati, John was nominated and named Citizen of the Year for Cotati in 2010. John also currently serves as the President of the Board for the Cotati Historical Society.

A resident of the city since 1992, John currently lives in the Countryside Mobile Home Park near the police station. In addition to loving the neighborhood, John is close his shop, as well as close to the Downtown area. As a musician, John enjoyed performing in and around Cotati, and now knows other musicians who live in the

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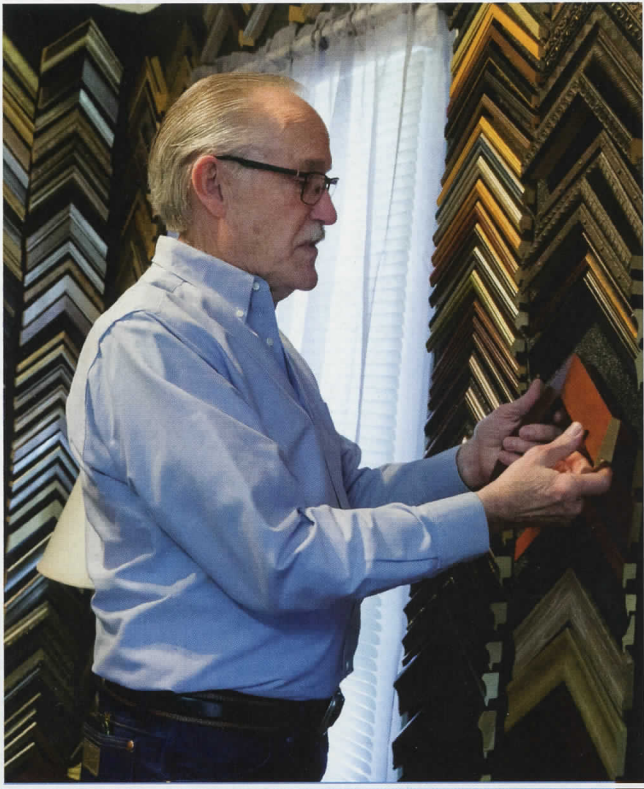
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neighborhood, and loves his neighborhood as a whole. "I just feel so blessed and fortunate; it feels like it's now my 'Hometown!'" says John.

At home, John currently lives with his little pal, Benny, a very young, very attentive Yorkie/Jack Russell Terrier mix. "Benny is so full of puppy energy and he's so smart!" says John.

All in all, John has led a life that has seen its share of adventures and great times. From the young boy helping his father at cattle auctions, to the framing professional who has contributed much to

the City of Cotati, John has led a life that is worth remembering. As John's Grandmother told him: "It doesn't cost any extra to be nice," and John has tried his best to maintain that attitude when working with others. To his fellow Cotati residents, John says: "I am proud of being a neighbor in Cotati. The people here are incredible. I get along with most, and I appreciate my neighborhood immensely. It's an honor to share things with them. Be nice, be supportive, be interested, and always do your best. I encourage others to get more involved and be a part of what I call Cotati's 'Future History!'"

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