

Keep Your Precious Memories Framed For A Lifetime

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With the Holiday Season fast approaching Paducah Parenting will include several articles on unique gift ideas in the coming months. The first in this series highlights shadow boxes which are a great way to preserve memories and create a unique, memorable gift.

I opened The Right Angle Frame Shop & Gallery in 1984, and have been practicing my craft for over 23 years. By profession I am a nationally certified picture framer, by nature however, I am a storyteller. For me, everything has a story.

When I was a little girl, my Daddy was away at war. At our home there was an 8" x10" black and white framed photograph of my Dad in his army uniform. Each night my Mother would take down his picture from the dresser and I would say "...and God bless my Daddy and please bring him home safely to us."



God was good to us and brought him home, not only from WWII but from Korea also. This was my first encounter with a picture frame and a memory I will always cherish.

My Father, now 89-years-old, is a retired Army officer. I have seen him cry on two occasions, once at my wedding and the other when I gave him this wonderful acrylic shadow box. Backed with rich navy blue suede, the box contained his officer's dress hat, his shoulder epaulets, various honors and metals, including his purple heart. The box is now displayed proudly in the entryway of his home and is one of his very special treasures.

This Christmas give the most meaningful gift you've ever given.

Every family and individual has unique memories, some of honor, some of joy, and some of accomplishments: pictures, medals, diplomas, baby shoes, and even golf score cards. Rather than tucking them away in a drawer, framing them would create a wonderful keepsake that will in itself become a family heirloom to keep in full view beautifully preserved.

From the Civil War to Iraq, military honors and flags are not only a part of our family's history but that of our Nation's. Triangular flag boxes are available just about everywhere, but consider how much more meaningful it might be to include photographs and other valued items inside a larger display box. Having these precious things custom done by experienced framers will ensure your treasures will retain their current condition for many lifetimes.



Another Personal Memory

As a life-long "Army Brat," after WWII, my Mother and I were one of the first American families to go to Germany. My father was in Nuremberg for the war trials. At four-years-old, I carried a small white straw purse containing a package of *Lucky Strikes*. You see, cigarettes were better than money for buying things in Germany right after World War II.

'Mam'Selle' is a dolly I purchased all by myself with my "money" from an Italian street vendor in 1947. Now she is framed with an ornate white wood frame and backed with satin brocade. Instead of just letting her suspend lifelessly inside the box, we gave her a little more personality by making her lift her skirt a bit and dance for us. Little added touches such as this are the mark of good frame shop and you should ask to see examples of the store's work before you entrust your heirloom to them for framing and preservation.

My Teddy Bear

'Cherry' is my first Teddy Bear. My father sent him to me from the front lines in Germany when I was born. After a long and happy life, Cherry spends his retirement sitting restfully in the corner of his own little shadow box. Cherry too, has a story. For many years he was kept safely away, as he

was very special to me. As my children came along, they knew about Cherry but were not allowed to play with him, as he was "Mommy's bear".

When my daughter Jennifer was five, she awoke from a bad dream and didn't want to go back to her bed. Remembering what my Mother had done with me so many years ago, I took Cherry from my bottom drawer and placed him beside her. "Cherry," I said, "is a very special bear. If he lies quietly beside you, he won't let you have any bad dreams." After a few peaceful nights, Cherry had done his job and went back into his drawer. It was three or four years later that Jennifer was concerned about her little brother. She woke me in the middle of the night



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saying, "Mom, I think Doug needs Cherry." Now that my children are grown, I can look upon my bedroom wall and be reminded of all those wonderful years gone by. I see Cherry everyday and he always makes me smile.

Framing memories is so important.

Not only is it a history preserved, it is a legacy for your family to treasure for years to come. Think about what you might have in a drawer, in the back of your closet, up in the attic, or under the bed. Take it out and recall the memories. Bring it in and share your story with us. We will treat it as if it was a story of our own, and create a wonderful new environment for your special piece. I hope all my customers receive as much joy as I do through their framed items.

Some suggestions of things you may have hidden away:

A coming home from the hospital outfit, along with the little bracelet and the card saying "Baby Girl...", her little silver spoon or cup, and first photograph framed together, can be a wonderful addition to the nursery. Preserved and framed properly with archival procedures and materials, years from now, she would be able to hang it in her own daughter's nursery.

Several years ago, my staff framed a Christening dress with a brass plate engraved in beautiful script with the child's name. Two years later, we took the dress out for a second Christening, added another brass nameplate, and replaced the dress. Twice more and our client said that would be the last time. Four little girls and they were at their limit! Careful sewing with silk thread on acid-free materials facilitated the removal without damage. Professional mounting techniques, archival materials, and ultraviolet glass, will keep that little dress in pristine condition until it's ready for the grandchildren.

That little drawing from preschool stuck to your refrigerator right now with magnets, combined with a photograph and a tiny plaster handprint might someday become one of your fondest treasures.

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Over the years my staff and I have framed every sport item imaginable, from high school to signed professional jerseys and jackets. We have framed two full size NASCAR uniforms, and twenty personal shadow boxes for Tony Stewart. We've framed record albums, stamp collections, vintage quilts and baby quilts, ribbons, prizes, awards, coins, wedding bouquets, heirloom china, baby shoes, antique toys, golf balls, duck calls, turkey feathers, cheerleader pom-poms, ballet shoes, baseball bats, fishing flies and even an Olympic torch! We've framed African masks, Mardi Gras masks, and Halloween masks.

A shadow box can be simple or it can be made to present a superbly elegant effect by using fabrics such as silks or suede. Each item requires a special treatment to bring out the very best in the piece, and to ensure its

preservation. Multiple items in one box can be creatively arranged and can make a huge statement, and a wonderful gift. As has been said, "It's the thought that counts." A gift this Holiday Season of a treasured item framed for someone you love, truly amplifies that statement.

Finding the right frame gallery.

What is important to you should be very important to the frame shop you entrust it to. Make sure that the shop has extensive experience in framing three-dimensional

objects, and is aware that these are your priceless items to be taken care of. My store specializes in preserving treasured memories while creating a beautiful piece of personalized art. Even three-dimensional objects, although sometimes labor intensive, present no problem for an experienced framer. There is a way to frame just about anything.

For more information on preserving your memories with shadow boxes and framing please contact Jackie at The Right Angle Gallery & Frame Shop, now located at 4645 Village Square Drive, right behind The Home Depot. They offer a no-obligation, design consultation and competitive cost estimate for any project. Look for their Shadow Box Special valid through November 3rd. +



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