

# Former Teacher Finds Second Calling As A Pet Photographer

By [Leslie Pearce](#), Peninsula Chronicle

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*Photo by Leslie Pearce*

YORK-Debbie Leanne Portraits was born out of a teacher's hobby and began in 2009 in Hawaii. The business has been calling Yorktown home since 2018. Debbie Leanne Portraits, owned by Debbie Leanne Jones, specializes mainly in family pet portraits.

"We help create the legacy our clients want to be remembered by, capturing their relationships and connections in photos," said Jones. "We capture the essence of who our clients really are, and what is truly important to them."

Jones caters to what her clients' desire most in a photograph.

"It is never about us and our work, it is always about what's important to our clients," she said. "It's that little thing that shines through, such as holding hands between sons and their military dad after soccer games. I think what makes us unique is that we take more than just a pretty picture."

Jones is a native of Australia. After marrying, she and her husband, Doug, moved to Texas to start their new life together. Their marriage has involved a 20-year tour with the United States Air Force, three children, a son-in-law and new grandson, 12 different addresses, including three in Hawaii, and four dogs and four cats.

Eighty percent of her business is photographing pets. However, she does other photographs as well including high school senior portraits, professional headshots, and other projects. Her portrait studio is located at 5730 George Washington Highway in Yorktown.

The business started as a side gig while she was teaching. In her classroom in Hawaii, she had photos of her kids displayed on her desk. Teachers and parents started asking her to take their family photos, and, through word of mouth, Debbie Leanne Portraits began.

Jones also started her business in part because her Nana, her mom's mother, only had one professional portrait made in her lifetime. That portrait had to be shared amongst many siblings. Jones thought it was important for people to have more professional portraits.

"Our future goals for the studio are to continue serving the Peninsula with beautiful heirloom artwork clients can treasure for a lifetime," said Jones. "We will also continue to support and raise money for local non-profits and small businesses here in Hampton Roads."

Jones is most proud of her studio's involvement in the community. A recent project called "Tails of Love: Letters of Love, Loyalty and Devotion," took two years to complete due to the pandemic.

"But thankfully, 2022 was the year we were able to come together and create our inaugural coffee table book with the Heritage Humane Society," Jones said.

Fifty families were a part of the project, with the book released in December 2022. Debbie Leanne Portraits also puts together an annual pet calendar. Those interested in being considered for the 2024 calendar can sign up beginning in August 2023.

"We love impacting our community through campaigns like our coffee table books, galas, and pets of Hampton Roads calendars each year," said Jones.

For more information, check out <https://debbieleanne.com>.