



THE

Cove

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A SOCIAL PUBLICATION FOR THE RESIDENTS OF ADMIRALS COVE

meet **Karen & Carolyn**

Lifelong friends helping
families document the past
one book at a time





creative corner

Tell Me A Story

Preserving a lifetime of memories for the generations to come

By Philip Roseman
With Karen Philip and Carolyn Snider

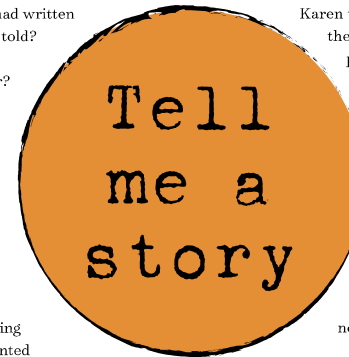
How many times have you wished you had written down that story that your grandmother told? Has your grandfather ever told you his stories about serving in the Korean War? Most families wish they had written down those special tales, but never seem to get around to it. Karen Philip and Carolyn Snider have created *Tell Me A Story* so that those stories can be preserved forever.

Karen and Carolyn met in the first grade. It's hard to believe that they first collaborated when they were 17 years old. Karen's little brother was approaching the date for his Bar Mitzvah and she wanted to honor his special day. Wanting to design something unique, Karen decided to enlist some help from Carolyn, who was her closest friend and the most creative person she knew. The pair sat down and started brainstorming about a great way to memorialize the event without tapping Karen's pocketbook as most 17-year-olds do.

With their creative muscles flexed, they came up with the perfect idea. They would create a poster with a collage of old photos, including some fun captions and a smattering of creative lettering. They laid out all the pictures, grabbed a pair of scissors and glue, and assembled the gift on the kitchen table. Karen's brother loved the poster and the girls collected their compliments on a job well done from everyone that had the opportunity to see the work of art.

A few years later, Karen headed out to study law, and Carolyn's path led her to a business career. However, the two remained close over the years and elected to retire from their current occupations to raise their children. For the next several years, they both found themselves putting together their share of family parties and special events, many of which were a collaboration between these two special friends. It was clear that they had a knack for it as they soon found their friends asking for help to arrange memorable events for their own families.

While it started out as an informal process, the more events Karen and Carolyn put together, the more people asked for assistance. This led to the creation of *P.S. Designs* and gave process to the planning. Over the next 10-years, they created events for young and old, and their creativity, attention to detail, and original ideas were met with rave reviews. Through *P.S. Designs*, they witnessed the interactions among generations within families and highlighted the traditions being passed down.



www.story-designs.com

Karen then moved to Admiral's Cove in 2018 and the pair started to wind down their event planning business. Not ready to retire completely, they got the inspiration for *Tell Me A Story* during a conversation with a friend about his 85-year-old father. As Karen asked questions about his father's business life, she quickly realized that no one in the family recalled the facts in the same way. Karen and Carolyn discussed that if the real story didn't come out soon, it would be lost forever. This conversation became the foundation of their new business, *Tell Me A Story*.

The general concept is simple; collect someone's story from a series of interviews, consolidate it into a meaningful story with related photos and produce a book that could be read now and then passed onto future family members. But, of course, the first step was to get the business off the ground, and Karen and Carolyn got together to figure out what they needed to do to turn their new idea into a working model.

They spent the last couple of months of 2020 working out the details. Carolyn designed the entire website having self-taught herself graphic design some years ago. Karen, who was already a published writer, took some additional writing courses to perfect her skill, and by January 2021, *Tell Me A Story* was launched.

The process for someone interested in having a book created starts with getting all parties on the same page. The project's terms are spelled out, and a gift card is designed for the client to deliver to the person for whom the book is being written. Karen then sets up a series of interviews conducted through Zoom to start collecting the story. Meanwhile, the client organizes the photos that will be included and forwards them to Carolyn. A first draft is then put together and reviewed by the book's storyteller. Once any corrections or updates are completed, the book gets laid out with the scanned photos and their respective captions. It then goes through one more round of reviews and finally heads off to the printer.

Like each person's personal story, Karen and Carolyn want each book to be unique. They use distinctive chapter headings for each project, and when a photograph isn't available to include with a specific part of the story, they conduct some research to help provide additional color to the written text. If, for example, the storyteller mentions a memorable first date at a local movie

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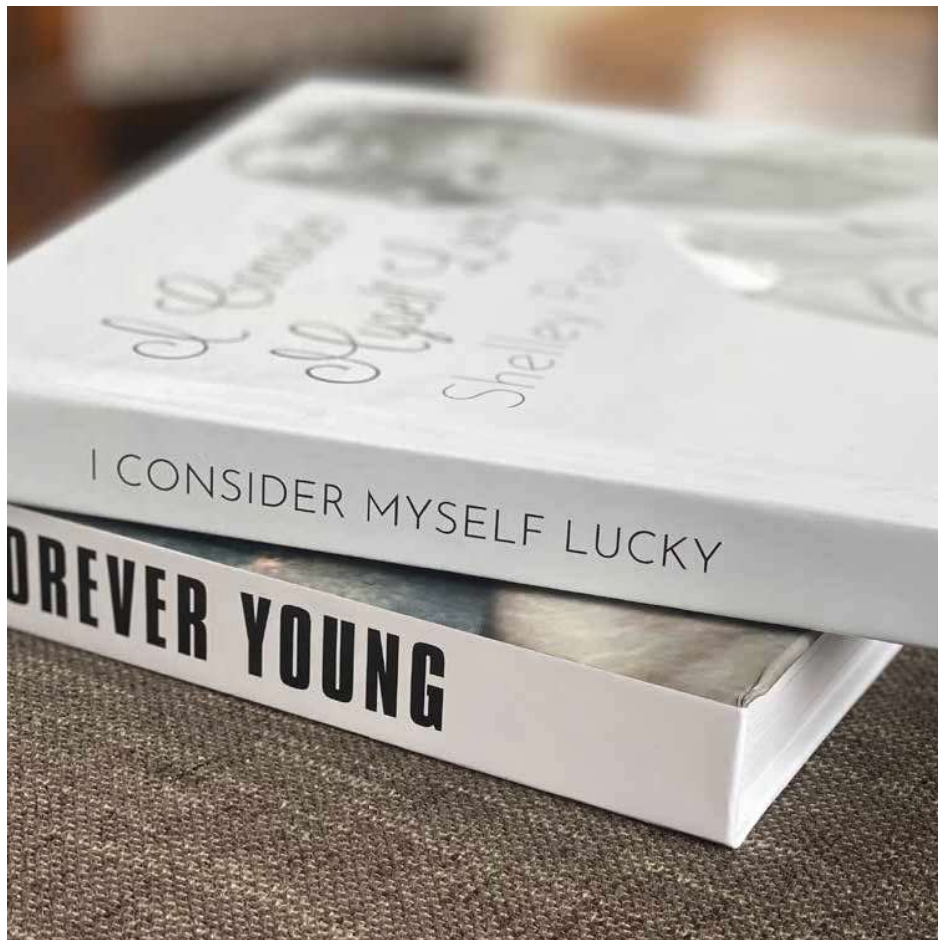
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theater, the team will search online for the movie's original poster or perhaps an image of the original theater. The extra effort not only adds to the enjoyment of the final product but also to the satisfaction Karen and Carolyn get out of creating something special that their client will cherish for a lifetime.

Once a book is presented to the storyteller, most clients will reach out to Karen and Carolyn to share the reactions they and others experienced from the gift. One client, for example, commissioned a book for her mother's 90th birthday. At the woman's party, she opened up the book about an hour before dinner was

served and read the entire story to the rest of the family, ending shortly after everyone finished their desserts. As the attendees at the party all knew this woman at different times of her life, they were all riveted to hear how her life progressed over the past nine decades.

While Karen and Carolyn were moved to hear how engaged the family was, they really weren't surprised. All the books they have written so far don't just include facts and timelines but also feature their subjects' pivotal moments, greatest joys, words of wisdom, and, as it's part of life sometimes, regrets. What Karen



finds interesting is that during the first interview, many storytellers believe that their lives weren't that interesting and are sure they can't remember many details of their lives. However, once started, they are astonished at how much they can actually recall.

If you're interested in learning more about *Tell Me A Story*, check out their Facebook page ([facebook.com/p.s.designs.tellmeastory](https://www.facebook.com/p.s.designs.tellmeastory)) and Instagram ([instagram.com/tellmeastory_ps](https://www.instagram.com/tellmeastory_ps)). You can also check out their website, www.story-designs.com, where you can read more about their package pricing and connect with Karen to get a book started for yourself or a loved one. While most books

are life stories, they can also create one about a specific life event. An excellent example is one they are currently working on featuring Karen's husband and his team's journey as they competed in Race Across America, "the world's toughest bicycle race."

Karen and Carolyn have been best friends for over fifty years now. At the age of 17, the two young ladies put together their first creative effort in the form of a Bar Mitzvah poster that they literally "cut and pasted" together. Now, with modern technology and some creative writing, they continue their unique and creative passions, capturing beautiful life stories that families can pass down for generations to come.