

Peak Digital Imaging Society History of the Club

The Peak Digital Imaging Society (PDIS) was established in Colorado Springs, November 8, 2000. The co-founders were Bill Young and Mark Kirkland, both photographers.

In August of 2000, Bill was searching for the best digital camera to meet his needs. He walked into Shoemaker's camera store, Colorado Springs, where he was greeted by Mark. Together they tried out many different cameras, practicing various lighting situations with the same shot. Bill remarked: "I bet I am not the only one who wants to learn about different cameras before purchase." After this challenging practice session, Bill purchased a Nikon D-990 camera.

A bond formed between these two photographers, resulting in a camera club with monthly meetings. Here they started their journey in photography. Eventually, two PDIS members were honored as "Colorado Professional of the Year" recipients.

Meetings started in Old Colorado City, with a small free room, sponsored by a bank. Within six months, the group grew from three members to fifty, relocating to various venues until approximately 350 members were on the mailing list – including photographers from Egypt, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, and Mexico. Club dues were *never* initiated by a leadership team to pay for speakers or various meeting places. All participants volunteered their time. Meetings continued through the years including Zoom support with Cas Foste during the Covid-19 pandemic.

PDIS hosted some well-known photographers and speakers, such as John Fielder, George Lepp, Dan Burkholder, David Munch, John Paul Caponigro, Hal Gould, and others.

Bill Young - former president, and Mark Kirkland – former chairman, promoted education with seasoned photographers, competitions which were judged, workshops, and framed photographs shown in galleries. These co-founders were guided by a simple mission: "To interact with others who want to bring joy to their digital imaging experience." Result? Local art galleries, stores, and meeting places were graced with extraordinary fine art by PDIS members.

Because of this balanced approach, PDIS attendees developed their knowledge, skills and understanding within the expanding world of photography - leading to the process of digital imaging and editing. So, amateur camera buffs emerged into their own specialties as photographers.

Some members sold their artwork, started clubs of their own, rented art studios, pursued outdoor adventures, matted and framed their own artwork, established websites, created their own careers, and became mentors in leadership positions. For example, PDIS member, Robert Gray, recently served as president of the Pikes Peak Arts Council.

Throughout PDIS history, competitions were held three times a year. Selected judges were invited to critique photo print entries. They volunteered their expertise, opinions, and time. Once a year, PDIS members learn how to think like a judge by choosing winners through collaborating and judging based on photography criteria. Recognition is awarded to PDIS members who display exceptional examples of art.

PDIS proudly exhibits a Black and White Show in a local gallery each year. This show, initiated by Cas Foste many years ago, continues to be a favorite among our artists. She curates these shows and encourages photographers to learn specialized techniques of black and white digital images. These exhibits have been seen at places like Red Brick Walls (historic building), Business Art Center (now called the Manitou Art Center), Dream Catchers, Plaza of the Rockies, and the Cottonwood Center for the Arts.

During the past 23 years, there have been three presidents – Bill Young, Cas Foste, and Linda Case. Each change of leadership brings a new perspective to the club, while maintaining the original mission and values of the founders. Currently, the club meets at Library 21C for monthly meetings, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

PDIS history would not be complete without noting their community outreach program: “PDIS Prints for Children.” Members mount their 11 x 14 / 14 X 11 prints on butcher paper in June and display them at Library 21C – Children’s Library during July and August. After this exhibit is removed, these prints are donated to Hope & Home, foster care service in Colorado, during the October meeting. This program was initiated in 2023, by Linda Case, and will take place again in the summer months of 2024. Academy Art & Frame Company sponsors this project.

PDIS continues to thrive and welcome new members who are resilient and relevant, as they contribute to this photography club. A 2024 Calendar is available on the PDIS website.

Original Interview given by Bill Young, Co-Founder and former President of PDIS

Interview given by Cas Foste, former PDIS President

Written & updated by Linda C Case, current PDIS President

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