

Scripsit

Hand & Heart: Calligraphers embellish family celebrations

*request the honour of your presence
at the marriage of their daughter*

Celebrate

בשנת
שנת חמשה
לבריאת עולם למ
במדינת ציו גרזי איך ד
אריאלה תמר בת זלג מש
ואוקיר ואיזון ואפרנס יתיכי ל
ומפרנסין לגשיהון בקושטא זיהו
מדאורייתא ומזוגיכי וכסותיכי וסיפ
אריאלה תמר בתולה דא זהות
בכסף בין בזהב בין בתכשיטין במל
קבל עליו גזא ההון דגון במאה זקוקי
עוד מאה זקוקים כסף ערוף אחר
אמר ההון דגון אחריות שטר כי
ספרע מכל שפר
כסין דאית
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And Robert,
taking Taiya by the hand, a
I, Robert, take you, Taiya, to be
I promise to be a lo
and faithful husband
as long as we both shal*

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Editor's Note

Early in 2008 the Washington Calligraphers
Guild published an issue of Scriptsit featuring
members who letter for the federal government—
the calligraphers behind the coveted invitations
to White House and State Department events,
elaborate awards from federal agencies and even
U.S. postage stamps. Titled “Pens & Protocol,” the
issue showcased hand lettering commissioned by
Official Washington.

This Scriptsit, “Hand & Heart: Calligraphers
Embellish Family Celebrations,” reveals the city’s
personal side and the lettering artists who help
commemorate life’s milestones. It features five
professional calligraphers who devote their
hands, hearts and considerable talents to creating
unique invitations, marriage certificates, ketubot,
family trees and other cherished heirlooms.

—Lorraine Swerdloff

The Washington Calligraphers Guild

P. O. Box 3688, Merrifield, VA 22116 · www.calligraphersguild.org

Hand & Heart: Calligraphers Embellish Family Celebrations

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request the honour of your presence
at the marriage of their daughter

Wedding Guests
ELIZABETH AND CHRISTOPHER BA...

Doctor and Mrs. Donald
request the honour of your
at the marriage of their

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meeting for worship for the marriage
ueller and Julio César Postigo M
Friends Meeting House, Houston
of the Live Oak Monthly Meeting
Society of Friends.

a birthday bash

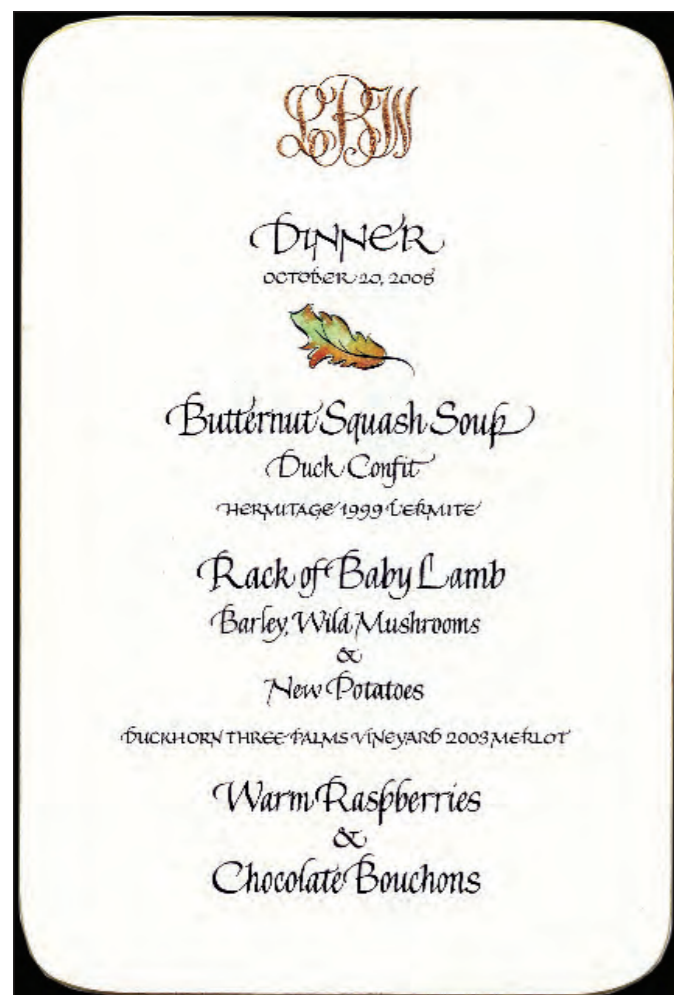


Dinner and Dance
will follow the ceremony

petitive athlete,
the dedicated
loving friend.
your goals,
and to help
reality-



Lee Ann Clark



On a typical day, Lee Ann Clark wades through hundreds of chickens and turkeys on her Maryland farm, pouring feed and collecting eggs, then slips off her boots and picks up a pen to letter elegant invitations for formal weddings in the Baltimore area and across the country. Some days Lee Ann drives to modest homes delivering poultry and eggs, and some days she drives to the official residence of the Vice President of the United States to letter last-minute place cards prior to an important dinner.

Lee Ann moves easily between the two worlds. After earning a degree in graphic arts from the University of Akron in Ohio in 1981, she worked as a graphic designer for five years before moving to Seattle with her new husband, Gaylord.

“Once in Seattle, I didn’t find a graphics job I liked and decided that I needed to focus my efforts, especially since I was expecting our first child and wanted to find something that would allow me to work at home,” she said. “I had always enjoyed lettering, even back in high school, and decided to specialize in calligraphy. When I landed a couple jobs and realized how little I knew, I contacted the Write On Calligraphers Guild in Edmonds, Washington, which introduced me to a whole world of classes and the annual conferences.”

At international calligraphy conferences Lee Ann



studied with such lettering luminaries as Marsha Brady, Leana Fay and Carl Rohrs, and in Seattle with long-time area teacher Dewey Henderson.

“I took a pointed pen workshop in Seattle with an artist named Buddy Blackwell and really liked it,” Lee Ann said, “so I jumped at the first chance to study with [master penman] Mike Kecseg, whose pointed pen variations I had been admiring for several years. Very few people were doing pointed pen in Seattle, so I started developing my own style and found my niche.”

She began working with, among others, a Seattle stationery store called Real Card Company, lettering custom luxury invitations and personal stationery. When the owner launched a nationwide line, she sent Lee Ann so many commissions that calligraphy expanded to a full-time business.

“Brides generally select invitations from a book and choose the typeface,” she explained. “But Real Card was one of the few nationwide vendors offering the option of hand lettering. There are clients who appreciate the

It is with much love for our daughter
 Sydney Frances
 that we invite you to join us
 when she is called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah
 Saturday, the tenth of October Two thousand and nine
 at a quarter past ten in the morning
 Temple Judea
 Manhasset, New York
 our celebration continues following the services
 Glen Head Country Club
 Glen Head, New York
 Beth and Bradley Cohen
 Cocktail attire

With the pointed pen, Lee Ann Clark hand letters formal and contemporary scripts for invitations and related stationery.

Please join us to celebrate the Bar Mitzvah
 of our son
 Jonathan Bradley
 Sunday, the sixth of September
 Two thousand and nine
 at half past six o'clock in the evening
 Hilton Short Hills
 Short Hills, New Jersey

Doctor and Mrs. Alan Philip Garderson
 request the honour of your presence
 at the marriage of their daughter
 Jennifer Ann
 to
 Stuart Paul Sperling
 (son of)
 Doctor and Mrs. Michael Henry Sperling
 Saturday, the twenty seventh of May
 Two thousand and six
 at six o'clock in the evening
 Cavalier Golf and Yacht Club
 Virginia Beach, Virginia
 Dinner and Dancing to follow

difference and want to spend the extra money to have their invitation done by hand." Added Lee Ann, "The hard part is trying to offer a specific style because I'm constantly changing my script to keep it fresh and contemporary. To me, the beauty is in the life and movement of the letters."

Lee Ann continued lettering for Real Card and many of her other West Coast clients when she and Gaylord, along with their two daughters, moved near Baltimore in 2003 to take over a former farm that has been in Gaylord's family for generations. Because they had no farm experience—Gaylord comes from a commercial fishing background—they researched options and decided to raise heritage turkeys and free-range chickens.

"We knew nothing about poultry but educated ourselves as much as possible before moving," she said.

Once they settled in, Lee Ann networked with the Washington Calligraphers Guild (later serving as vice president) and the Hampton Scribes, a small Baltimore

guild. She also contacted area stationery stores and soon they were sending her work. "This area certainly likes the classic styles for formal events, so I had to study my copperplate script and English roundhand," she said.

"My name started getting around with the help of other Guild members, but I was quite surprised the first time I got a call from the social secretary for the Vice President's residence." Lee Ann was hired as a contractor by Vice President Cheney's residence manager, who passed her name on when the administration changed.

"Different administrations favor different styles, and it has been interesting to be able to continue to work with the office," she said.

Whether she's lettering a young couple's wedding invitation or the menu for an official dinner, Lee Ann's process is the same: after roughing out the project on a grid layout pad, she does the finished lettering in one size on lined paper (rather than draw guidelines, she uses an inkjet printer to add light blue lines). Lee Ann

Mr. and Mrs. John Frederick Cosgrove
 Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Serat Adams
 request the honour of your presence
 at the marriage of their daughter

Kelly Serat
 to
 Mr. James Samuel Garrison

Saturday, the third of June
 and six
 o'clock
 Church
 California

Doctor and Mrs. Donald Krivosha
 request the honour of your presence
 at the marriage of their daughter

Kelly Ann
 to
 Mr. Daniel Ralph Piha
 son of Mr. and Mrs. Larry Piha
 Sunday, the twenty ninth of August
 Two thousand and ten
 at half after five in the evening
 The Westin Seattle
 Dinner and Dancing to follow

Black tie preferred

Stationers help clients decide on the method of reproduction, including digital printing, engraving, thermography or letterpress (such as the example above). Among the stationers that hire Lee Ann are Alpine Creative Group, Real Card Studio, The Pleasure of Your Company and Peridot Paper. Right: Custom maps are among the event stationery items that Lee Ann creates.



scans the lettering into Photoshop as a high-resolution bitmap file (the scanner ignores the blue guidelines) and cleans up problem areas before creating separate files for each line of lettering. She imports them into InDesign, Adobe's page layout program, where she sizes and places them appropriately.

"By creating a file for each line, it's easy to make adjustments, which happens frequently, as there are often last minute changes," she said. Once the artwork is approved, she sends a PDF file to a printing firm that duplicates the invitation using digital or offset printing, letterpress, engraving or thermography.

"Being skilled in doing graphic design on the computer makes me more productive as a calligrapher, and it allows me to retain more creative control of a finished project," said Lee Ann. "From experience I have learned how much time to budget for lettering a job,

H
The Haenle's Wedding Lunch
Aunt Carol
Soup of New England Cheddar
and Cauliflower Floret
Rag Apple Sauce 2006 Chardonnay
Yadkin Valley, North Carolina
Salad of Organic Mesclun Greens
& Lemon Thyme Chicken
Dr. Konstantin Frank 2007 Semi-Dry Riesling
Finger Lakes, New York
Country Breads
Roz Neuhauser's Wedding Cake
Fortune Cookies Starbucks Coffee
June 27, 2009 - The Neuhauser Home - Blue Hill

By lettering each guest's name by hand (above) on the printed menu, Lee Ann's appetizing artwork also served as place cards.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Boone Denny
request the pleasure of your company
at the marriage of their daughter
Elizabeth Ann
to
Lieutenant Colonel
Paul Thomas Haenle
United States Army
Saturday, the twenty-seventh of June
Two thousand and nine
at twelve o'clock in the afternoon
Beth Eden Chapel
Naskeag Point
Brooklin, Maine

cleaning it up and laying it out.”

When asked about her favorite nib and paper, Lee Ann laughed. “For a long time, I was fond of Borden & Riley’s Denril vellum—it was so smooth, and easy to see my rough layouts underneath, and as I truly dislike light tables, this is something that I favor. But when it didn’t work with my new favorite pointed nib, the Leonardt EF Principal, I had to make a change,” she said. “So I started using Borden & Riley’s Comp Smooth bond. Then when the Leonardt nibs degraded in quality, I switched to the Brause EF66. Now that the Principal is back in shape I am not sure what combination I

will use. It is a constant dance of trying to find the right combination of paper, nib and ink.”

Lee Ann said she enjoys the challenge.

“When I started this journey, I had little idea how much my life would change. Moving from Seattle to a farm in Baltimore has had many challenges, to be sure, but it is likely that I would never have had the opportunities presented to me as a calligrapher had I stayed on the West Coast,” she said.

“I remain closely linked with both Washingtons and their respective guilds and look forward to what will come next.”

Mr. and Mrs. Joel M. Shaps
invite you to celebrate the marriage
of their daughter
Brandi Michelle
to
Mr. Joel Steven Weinstein
on Saturday, the twenty-first of August
Two thousand and nine
at six o'clock in the evening

With great pride and much love
we invite you to join us when our daughter

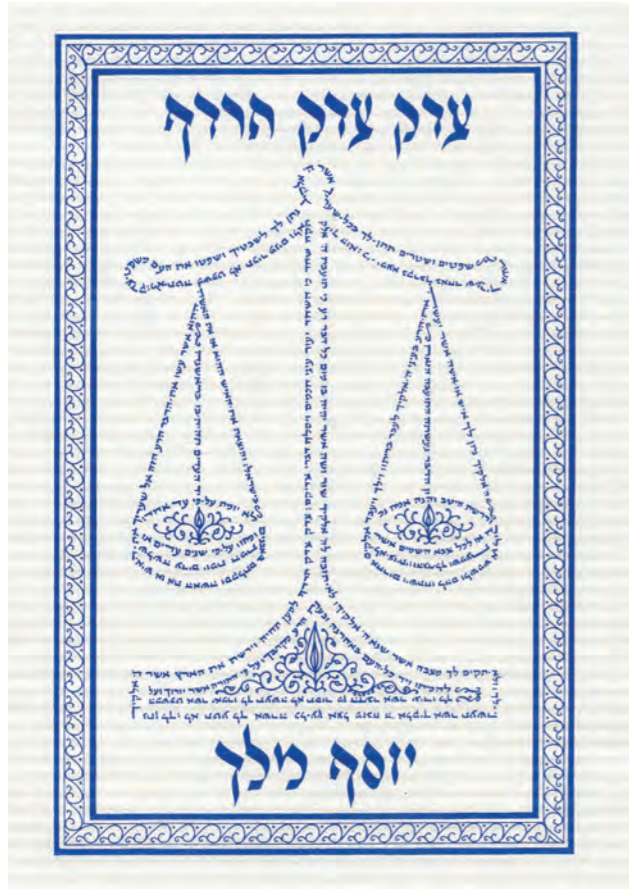
Ginger Eden

becomes a Bat Mitzvah
Saturday, the twenty-fifth of October
Two thousand and eight
Seven o'clock in the evening
Cipriani Wall Street
55 Wall Street
New York City

Dinner and Dancing following services
Patrice and Richard Sanders

Formal attire

Patty Leve



Baltimore calligrapher Patty Shaivitz Leve specializes in creating Jewish marriage contracts, called ketubot in Hebrew. The traditional ketubah (singular form) is a legal Jewish document which dates back 2,000 years. It is signed before the wedding by two witnesses, stating how a wife is to be taken care of financially in the event of divorce or the husband's death. Traditionally written in Hebrew, the text is often surrounded by a decorative border, and may be among the oldest contracts conferring legal status and financial rights to women.

Because a husband and wife often display their ketubah prominently in the home as a daily reminder of their vows and responsibilities to each other, the ketubah is a significant and popular form of Jewish ceremonial art. Engaged couples may contact a calligrapher who specializes in Hebrew writing to create a custom ketubah, or they may shop in stores or websites that sell Judaica for a printed ketubah with blank spaces for a calligrapher to complete.

While studying graphic design at The Cooper Union in New York City, which included two years of serious calligraphy study, Patty created her first ketubah as a wedding gift for a close friend.

"I learned Hebrew calligraphy from a scribe on the upper West Side of New York City, and then developed my own hand based on Sephardic scripts," Patty said,

noting that she prefers rounded letters to other styles of Hebrew writing which are more angular.

Soon after graduating college, she took a summer class with Sheila Waters, founding president of the Washington Calligraphers Guild. "That was the first of many classes and workshops that I have taken with her," said Patty, "and although I have studied with other wonderful instructors, Sheila has been my main mentor and teacher for the past 25 years."

Patty writes with Mitchell nibs and either Best Bottle sumi ink or Winsor & Newton gouache on 140 lb. Saun-

ders Waterford hot-press paper. For the Hebrew writing she uses left-hand nibs because "they make it easier to start the letters at a steep angle, which helps to achieve the proper thickness of the horizontal stroke in relation to the thinner vertical stroke."

INTRICATE BORDERS

In addition to lettering in Hebrew and English, Patty loves to design intricate borders. "I get inspiration for borders from so many places. In my studio I have books of illuminated manuscripts that I often turn to for ideas

Washington Calligraphers Guild member Patty Leve decorated the front of a bar mitzvah invitation with tiny Hebrew lettering, part of a Jewish tradition called micrography. She also used micrography in her daughter Ariella's ketubah (opposite page).



when creating a new piece," she said. "And whenever I travel, I take pictures of patterns and designs, including things like wrought iron gates and decorative ceilings."

Patty starts a new border design using circle templates, T-square and ruler to make detailed geometric drawings in pencil on tracing paper. "It takes many attempts before I get the right proportions, and until I get the border design to start and end in a way that is aesthetically pleasing."

In addition to making ketubot, Patty has designed custom invitations for bar and bat mitzvahs and for weddings. Her approach to designing an invitation is similar to that of a ketubah. "I like to make the name of the person integral to the design," and she often uses tiny lettering to incorporate pertinent sayings from the Bible.

The highlight of her career was last winter when both of her daughters got married and she created an original ketubah for each. "Every border is a challenge but also an opportunity to impart a blessing to the bride and groom," Patty said. "Ariella loves butterflies, bows and hearts so I incorporated those into her ketubah, along with flowers and vines, to symbolize life, love and growth" (see page 11).

To create the circles in that ketubah, Patty used a large compass with an extension arm that holds a ruling pen. To paint the background of the border, she mixed a batch of gouache, carefully adding water until the proper consistency was reached (too much water would buckle the paper). Laboring untold hours on tracing paper, Patty had worked out the intricate border design, which she transferred onto the painted background by rubbing the back with graphite. She then painted the design in gouache.

"Shadowing helps give the decorative border a three-dimensional look," Patty said, "but it was a challenge to paint and have it look realistic. I followed Sheila's suggestion and held round objects up to a light source to see where the shadows fell."



Patty Leve created a custom ketubah in honor of her daughter Allison's marriage (opposite). She also lettered the wedding invitation and its cover monogram (above).





Patty Leve designed these bar mitzvah invitations to look like small manuscripts. The illustrations reflect the Torah portion each boy was to recite during the Jewish ceremony as well as the holidays around the time of their bar mitzvah. Below: A piece she created with words from Song of Songs.



For her daughter Allison's ketubah, Patty used a compass to create the arch (see page 13). She filled it with vines and grapes, symbolic of growth, and she carefully placed 18 flowers around the border, to convey the Jewish blessing of life.

Running along the outside of the border is tiny Hebrew lettering, part of a Jewish tradition called micrography, which Patty integrates into many of her ketubot. The minute calligraphy in Allison's ketubah is from the Biblical Song of Songs.

"The contrasting size adds an extra element of interest," Patty said. For the gilded names and flower centers, she applied gold leaf over Instacoll, a polymer alternative to traditional gesso.

LIMITED EDITION KETUBOT

For 20 years Patty specialized in designing original ketubot, with clients all over the country. The second phase of Patty's ketubah business started 10 years ago when she designed a ketubah that a commercial printer then reproduced. She has since designed a number of limited-edition ketubah prints, and sells them on ketubah websites, through Judaica vendors and on her own website.



The cover and inside of the bat mitzvah invitation for Patty's daughter Allison. Below: Cover art Patty created for a client's bar mitzvah invitation.



"Designing a ketubah is always a challenge and a tremendous endeavor—people can't imagine the number of hours I put into each one," Patty said. She sells her printed borders with and without ketubah text inside. Those containing text have blank spaces to be filled in with information pertinent to the wedding, such as names, date and place.

Most of the time a purchaser asks Patty to fill in this information so that the writing matches perfectly with the printed text. She is sometimes hired to personalize other artists' ketubot.

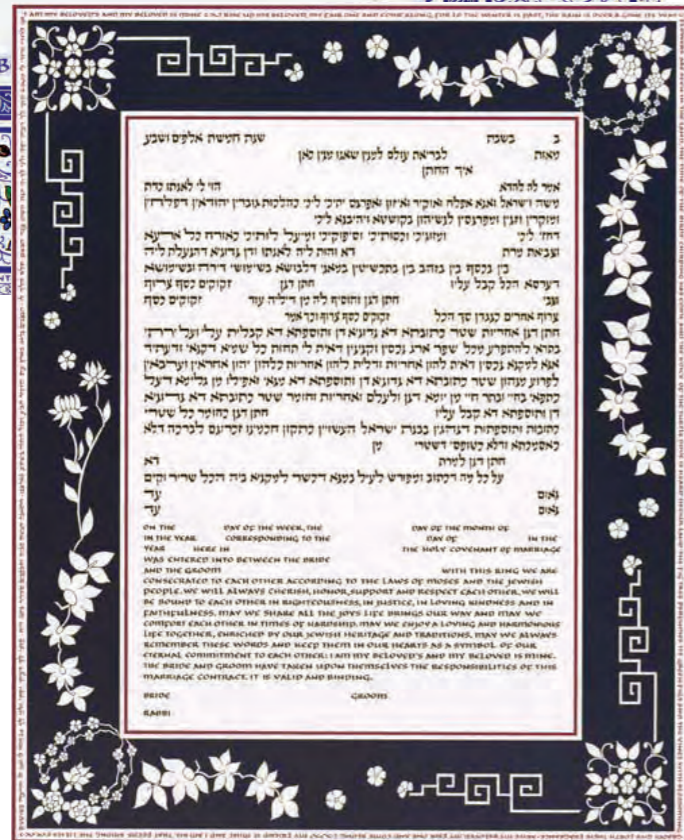
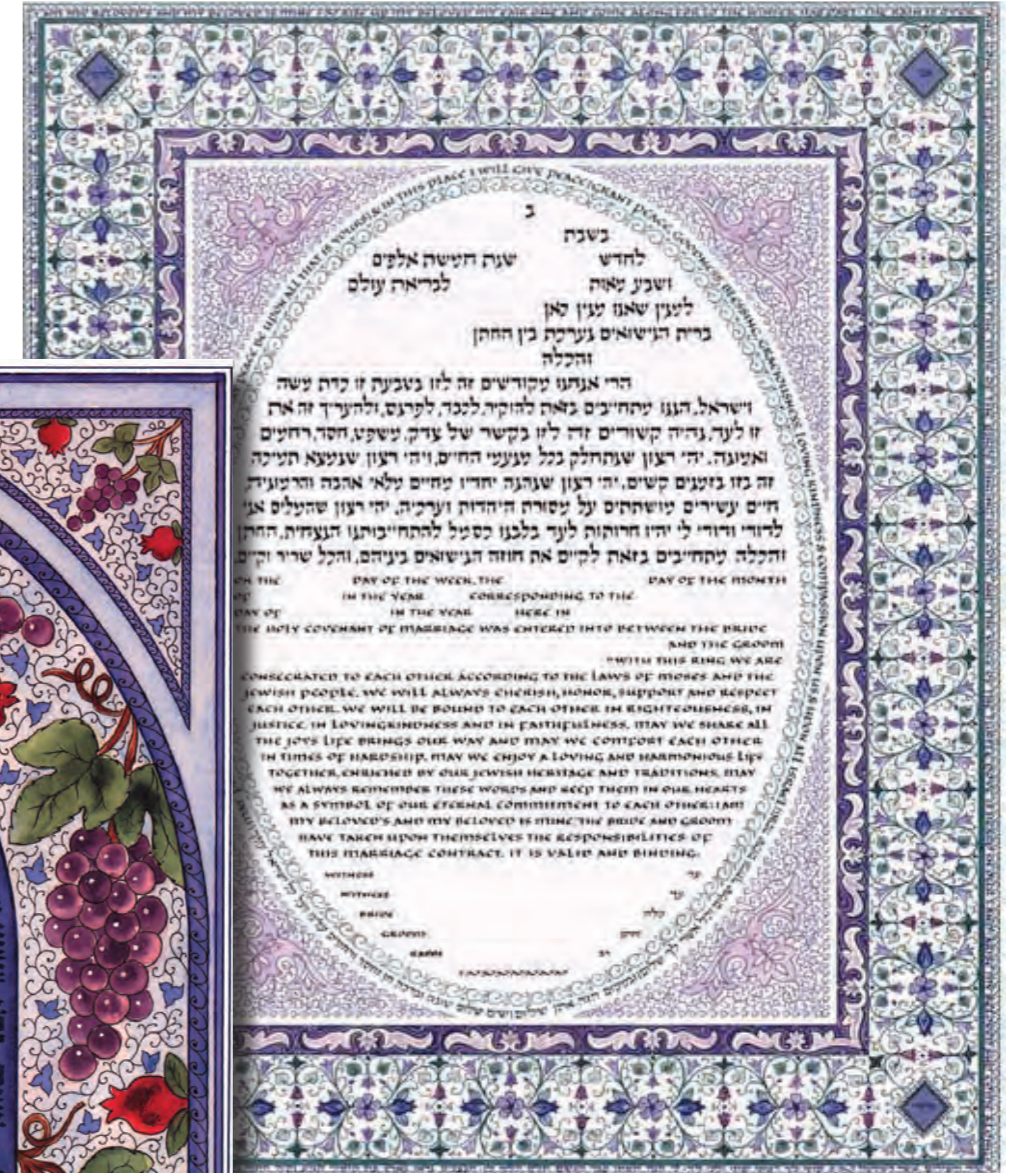
She also sells prints of just her borders, into which she lays out and hand letters individualized text.

"By offering prints, I can make a beautiful ketubah available to many more couples" and allow them to customize the wording of their ketubah without the expense of commissioning the artwork from scratch.

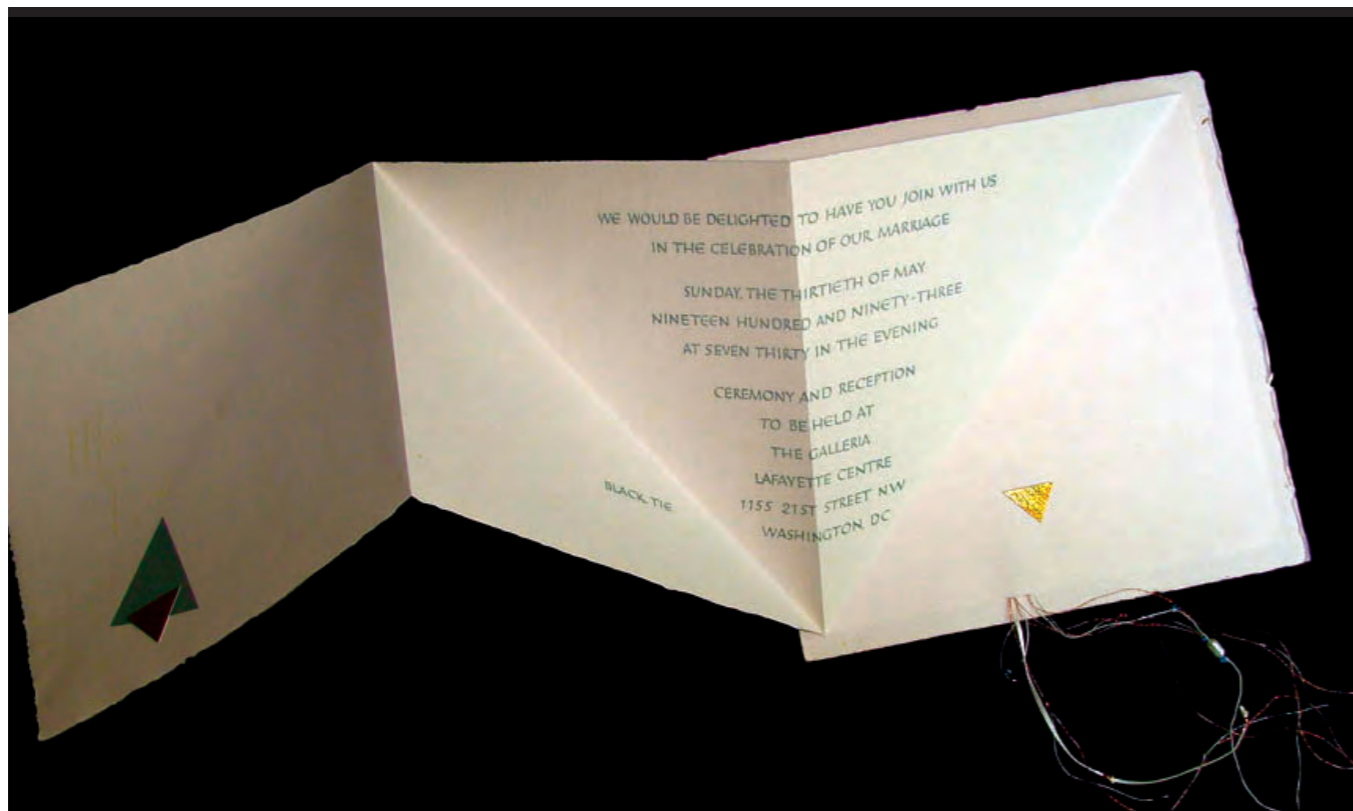
"I love working with people who are getting married—it's a very exciting time of life for them," Patty said. "I also love doing Hebrew calligraphy because it connects me artistically to what is most important to me spiritually. I feel blessed to have found a way to earn a living doing something I love." ♦♦

See more of Patty's work at www.pattyleve.com





Patty has created a number of limited edition ketubah prints that are sold on ketubah websites, through Judaica vendors and on her own website, www.pattyleve.com. She can then fill in the required information so that the lettering matches perfectly with the printed text.



Joan Machinchick



As a student at the Maryland Institute College of Art in the early 1970s, Joan Machinchick took a calligraphy class and was captivated. After graduation she set up Lake Claire Design Studio, and for many years her focus was on graphic design and illustration, with some printmaking and calligraphy as time permitted.

"Then a caterer asked me to letter some place cards and gradually she referred me to some of her clients who were looking for invitations not available from catalogs," Joan said. "Soon I found myself designing them and doing entire packages that would all tie together."

"Those clients, in turn, referred me to their friends and the caterer kept sending me business. Before I knew it, I was specializing in invitations," she said. "Over the years I've had the privilege of providing wedding and party stationery for some of the most lavish events in the Washington area."

As Joan was building her business—named for a small lake near her home in Annapolis, Maryland, close

Unique folds add interest to party invitations.

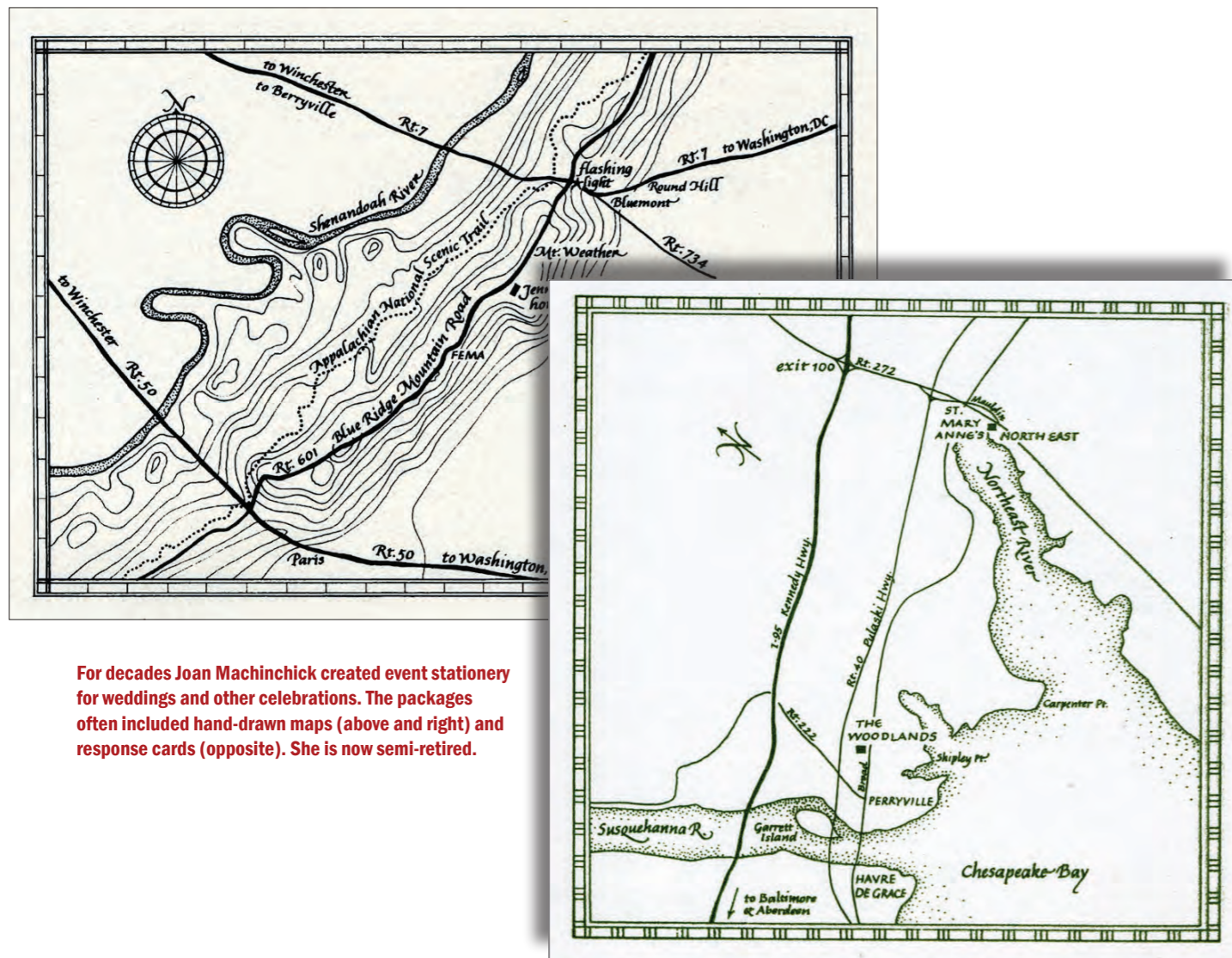
Above: By showing the party's location and the route of the evening dinner cruise, the map on the front cover sets a festive tone. The cover opens to reveal an invitation to a combined anniversary/birthday party.

Left: Pop-up invitation for a 50th birthday party.

Opposite page: Foldover wedding invitation is embellished with montage elements and fine metallic threads with seed beads and a fresh water pearl. The names of the bride and groom are on the front (not shown).

Note: Some of the names and contact information in this chapter have been blurred to protect the privacy of Joan's clients.





For decades Joan Machinchick created event stationery for weddings and other celebrations. The packages often included hand-drawn maps (above and right) and response cards (opposite). She is now semi-retired.



to the Chesapeake Bay—she discovered the Washington Calligraphers Guild and its founding president, Sheila Waters, whom Joan calls “my most influential teacher.”

Joan attended many of the Guild workshops and most of the annual conferences over the years and was “privileged to be accepted in Professor Hermann Zapf’s class” at Rochester Institute of Technology in 1986.

But classes didn’t prepare her for the challenge of running a business, which she learned through experience.

“Even though it sounds like a glamorous profession, a calligraphy studio has to be managed like any other business, with clients and deadlines and things that go wrong,” advised Joan.

“I like to begin a job a minimum of six months before the wedding date,” she said. “The bride, often with her mother or fiancé, would come to my home studio for an afternoon of discussion about the event and an opportunity to look at my finished samples.”

At that meeting she would learn details about the wedding, including time of day, number of guests, venue, degree of formality, table decor and colors.

“I’d try to get to know the bride and her likes and interests. We would discuss calligraphy styles, illustrations, papers and myriad other detail,” she said.

Joan would also suggest additional stationery items they might need, such as save the date cards, map/directions/hotel information, escort (seating) cards with envelopes, place cards, menus, rehearsal dinner and brunch invitations, announcements, programs, signage, guest book and snapshot/ephemera boxes, monograms, table favors, gifts and gift tags, informal note cards and thank you cards—and discuss costs.

“Over the years I developed a 30-page worksheet, listing everything clients might need, with all the components that go into each piece and the work involved,” she said.

Joan would follow the meeting with a detailed contract, usually within two weeks. She required clients to return the signed contract with a deposit before she began working or ordering supplies.

“The contract would include a schedule, working backwards from the day of the event to the day of our meeting,” she explained. “This included deadlines for both the clients and me, such as when they were responsible for getting lists or text copy to me and when each item needed to be completed and delivered.”

On the contract Joan requested permission to use their materials for future publicity or publication, and “most were pleased to sign.”

The clients saw, and signed off on, rough drafts along the way, including mock-ups with the papers, ribbons and other materials to be used. “I was receptive to their ideas and flexible enough to change the concept until they were satisfied,” Joan said. “Since we usually started

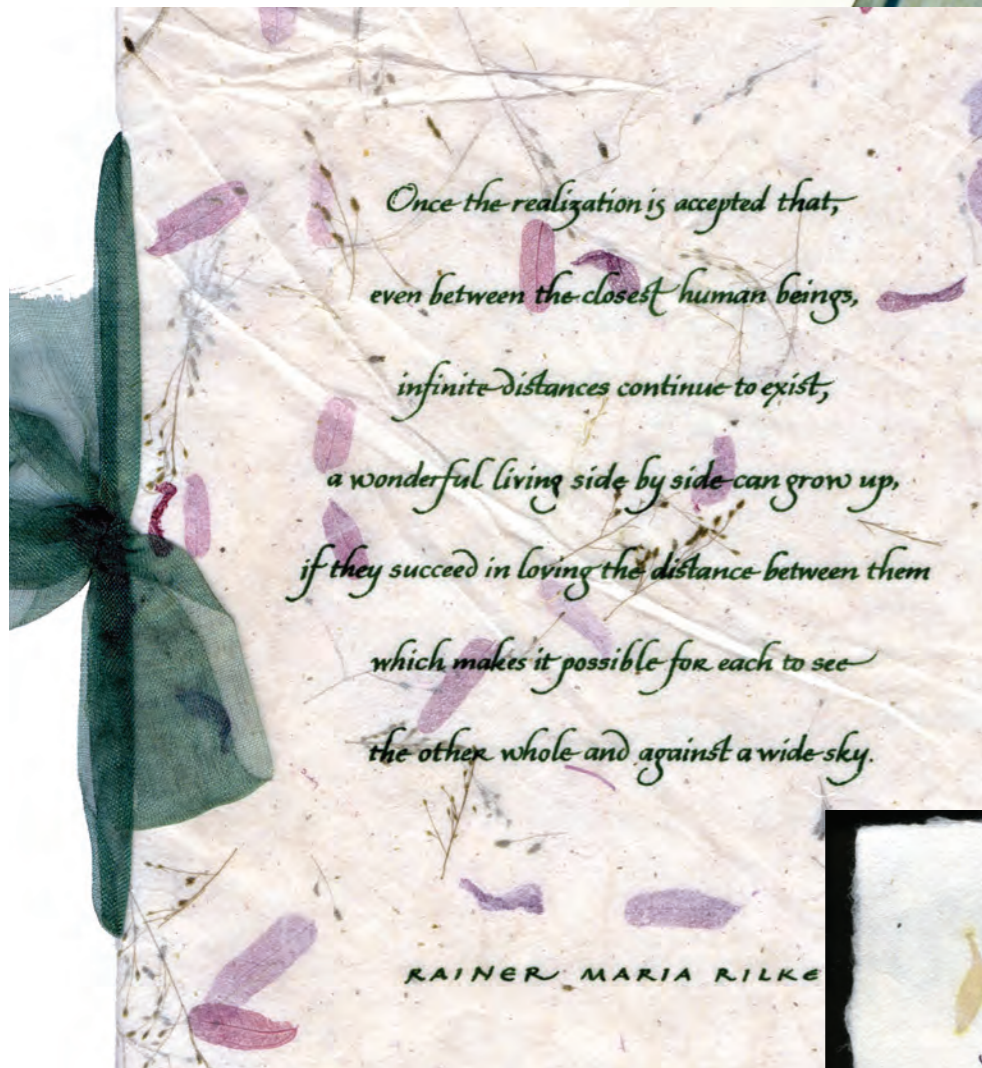
about six months before the event, we had time to make changes without being rushed. Of course, there were always glitches and last-minute changes, but we tried to keep them to a minimum.”

Joan then turned her attention to printing and assembling the invitation and, of course, addressing the envelopes so the lettering would match the invitations.

“Up until a few years ago I was able to do almost all my printing with the Gocco printer,” a tabletop color reproduction system similar to silk screening, “and I did all the construction and assembly by hand.”

Gocco gave Joan several options not available from a commercial printer. “I was able to use and blend multiple colors at no additional cost, and print on some of the lovely sheer Asian papers and handmade papers that a commercial print shop would not have been able to handle.”

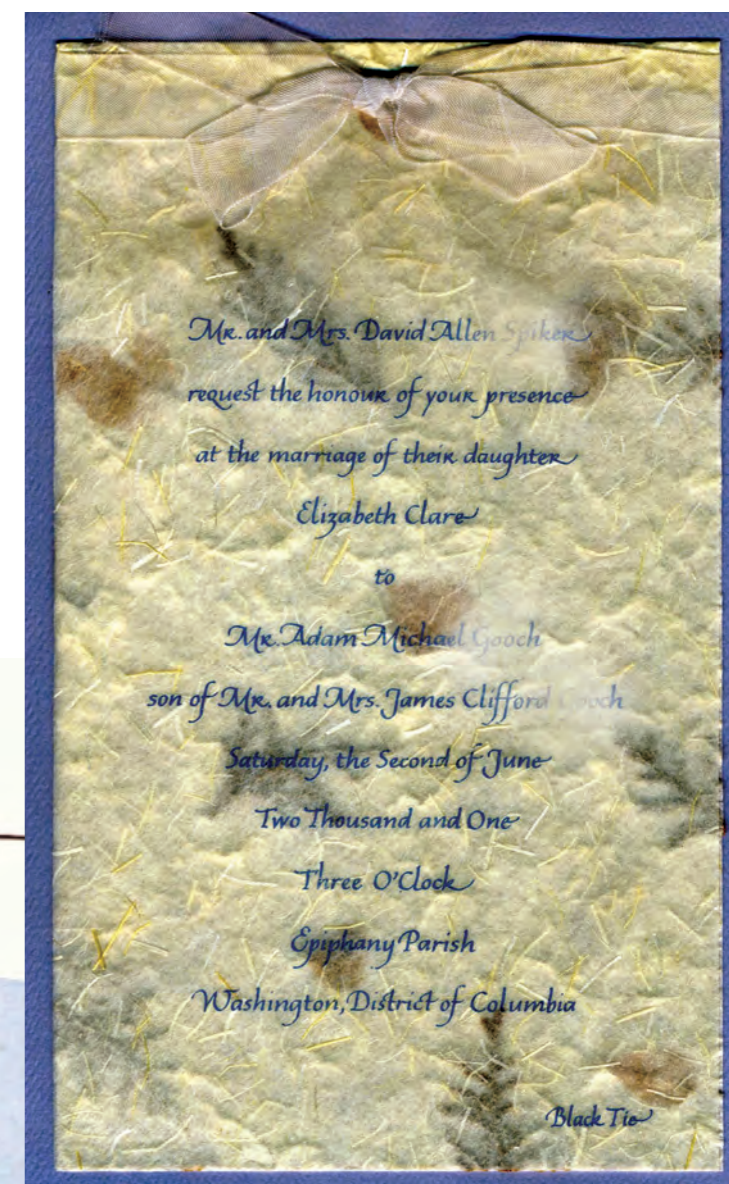
Joan was introduced to the Gocco printer at one of



Joan typically used her Gocco printer to reproduce invitations on handmade paper, such as the paper made by Joan Kopchik (left). She also employed handmade papers to create wedding guest books, which she bound and decorated. In the example at the top, she mounted the invitation in a cut-out window on the front cover. Right: By hand Joan applied Japanese papers and thin strips of shiny black paper along each invitation's top edge "to get a crisp shiny line."



Some of the stationery items for one client, including the invitation, save the date card and brunch invitation. Joan created the guest book on the opposite page for another client using specialty papers with floral inclusions for the covers and endpapers. She stitched the book in the Japanese “stab” style with strong linen thread that she hid behind decorative raffia.



the early calligraphy conferences. “There was very little literature written about it, but I studied everything I could find and did a lot of experimenting,” she said. Joan eventually wrote a book on it—“The Gocco Q & A Handbook”—and gave workshops. But recently the Japanese manufacturer has stopped production.

Joan urges anyone who wants to specialize in event calligraphy to “make sure you know yourself—that you are well-organized and patient, have the time to devote to the job and are able to solve unforeseen problems,” she said. “You must be willing and able to see the project through, even when things go wrong. They will.”

She recommends “always having a Plan B in the back of your mind for when the paper maker has a death in the family or you run out of glue at 3 in the morning when the courier is coming at 6,” said Joan, who is now semi-retired.

“Keep the clients informed of any problems that arise and any solutions you might be able to suggest that would change what they’d contracted for, and always welcome their suggestions.”

Joan emphasizes the important role of an event calligrapher. “You are a small but crucial part of a much larger project,” she said. “You need to be sure that your part always runs smoothly and on schedule, no matter what personal sacrifices you need to make. Don’t be the one to cause the client stress.

“Be willing to graciously accept criticism even when you think you’re right,” she added.

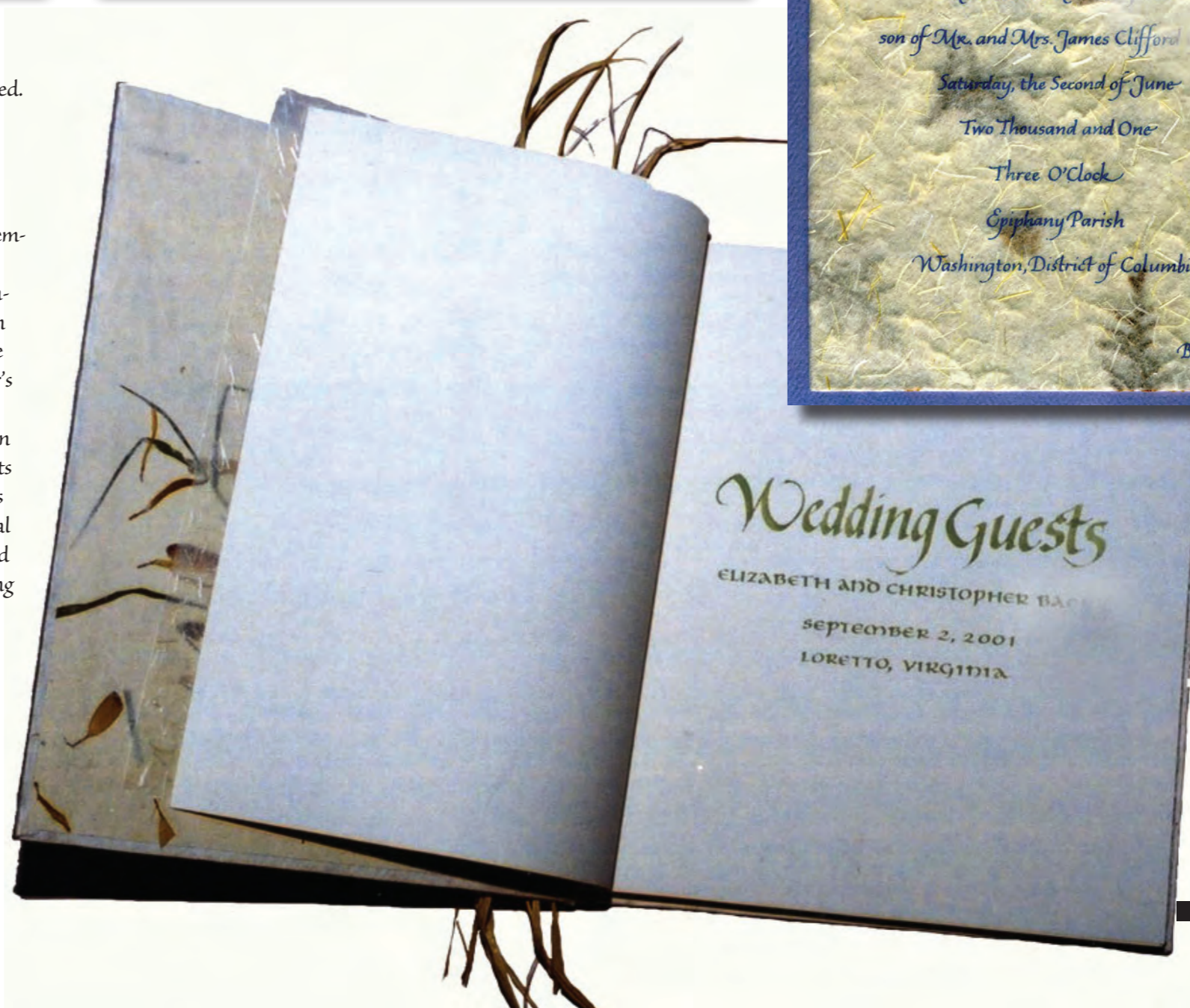
Joan kept a large daily calendar on her wall “to make sure I didn’t miss any deadlines, especially important when working on several events at once.”

She also urges calligraphers to protect themselves from liability by incorporating, “even though it’s initially costly and time-consuming,” she advised. “Also, if your business is in your home and your clients will come there for any reason, make sure your homeowner’s policy includes liability insurance.”

Once the business details are in place, Joan urges calligraphers to “be creative. The clients are making a commitment of their resources by coming to you instead of going to the local card shop because they value your talent and professionalism,” she said. “They are counting on you to create an invitation package that will be unique and a perfect complement to their event.”

She calls event stationery design “an exciting and rewarding business for a calligrapher willing to make a serious commitment to it. You’ll be working with happy people who are preparing for a very special event in their lives.

“It’s gratifying to be a part of that.” ❖





Tamara Stoneburner



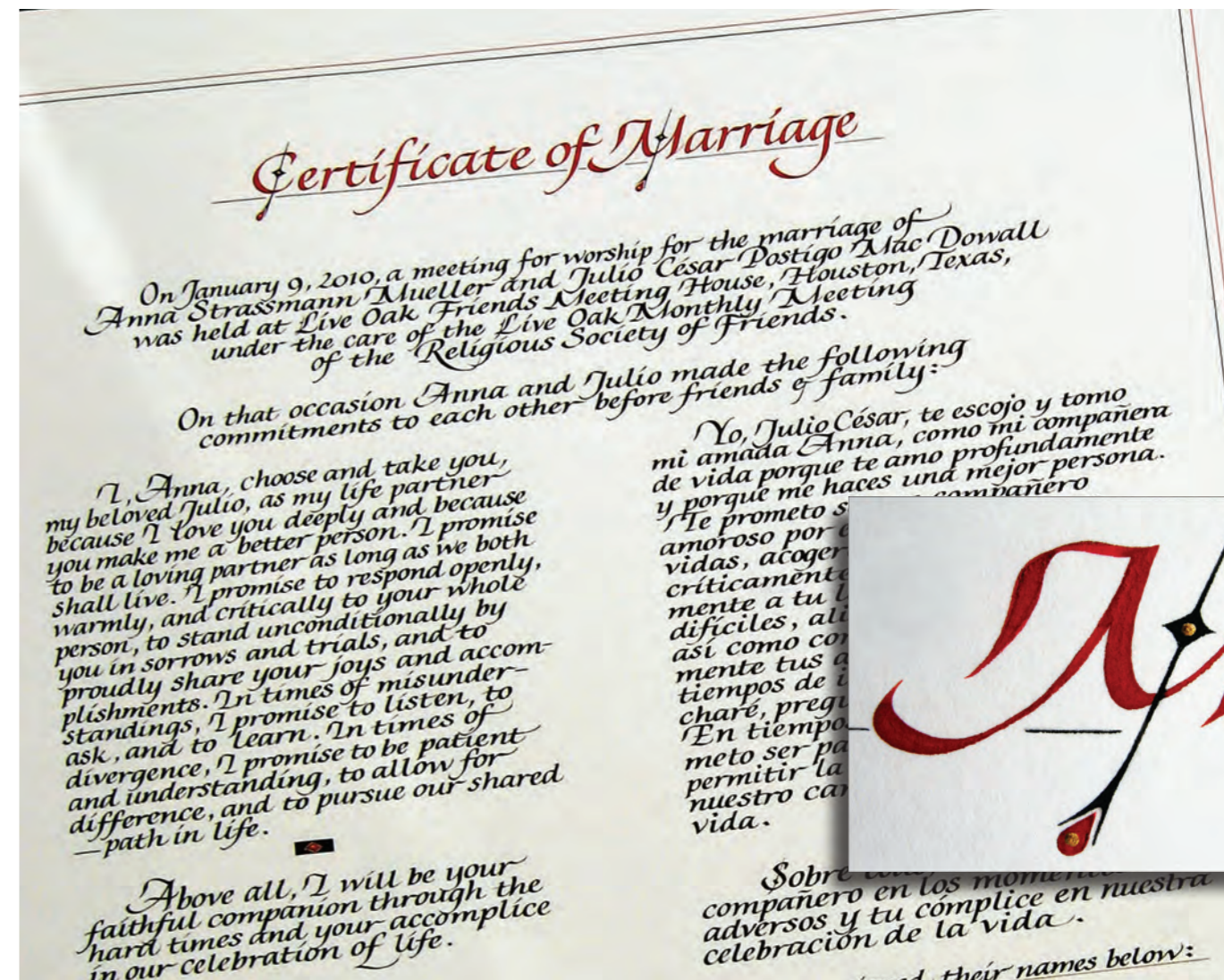
Tamara Stoneburner had never picked up a pointed pen until the day she responded to a help wanted ad for David A. Hobbs & Tolley Studios, a venerable calligraphy studio in Washington, DC.

“David Hobbs handed me this odd pen with an elbow at the end and a nib that spread with the slightest of pressure,” recounted Tamara, who earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Virginia’s Roanoke College. “I was classically trained in painting, graphic design and print-making and had no idea how to make letterforms. I proceeded to play.”

“Mr. Hobbs saw potential and I became a studio apprentice,” she said, acknowledging that “this was a fairly frightening thing.”

During her two years at the studio, she learned the hands and fell in love with letterforms. “David Hobbs was a wonderful mentor,” she said. “He is left-handed as well, and produces marvelous and precise work. It is fascinating to watch him write upside-down and with such fluidity; it was encouraging to me.”

Tamara recounted that she went to school at a time when “they forced us lefties to switch, and I had difficulty adapting to writing with the right hand. In fact, I failed penmanship twice.” Happily, her uncle had given young Tamara a Speedball set and a bottle of Pelikan



ink. “He knew I had keen observation skills and told me to trace the forms I saw—to train my hand, in essence.”

At Hobbs & Tolley, Tamara was also mentored by another employee, Suzanne Heany. “She showed me what copperplate script writing was all about, and what it could be. I cannot thank her enough for all that she’s done. Suzanne also introduced me to the Washington Calligraphers Guild, stating that joining it would be ‘the best \$30 I could ever invest.’ She was right,” Tamara said.

In 1996 Tamara left Hobbs & Tolley, moving with her husband to Ashburn, Virginia to begin specializing in wedding invitations and envelopes. In the following years, she developed a thriving freelance business called Gracestone Calligraphics.

“Around 2002, I started to burn out on envelopes,” she said. “The process of mass-producing so many of them under such incredibly tight deadlines can really wear out your wrist and hand quickly, and sometimes permanently.”

Knowing that she prefers to work at a “much slower pace with more planning, I started to deeply question

where my art’s direction was pointing,” she said.

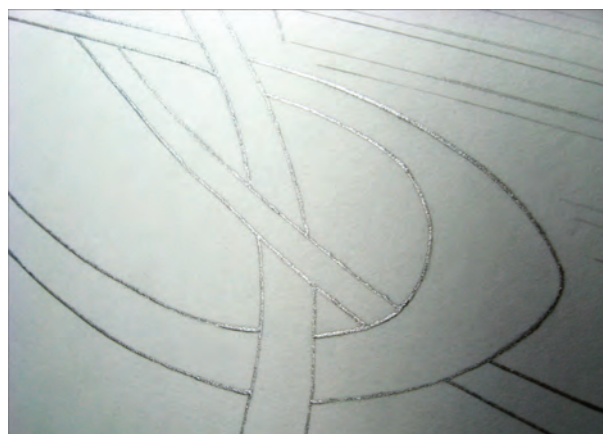
“I learned to say ‘no’ to unrealistic demands and gravitated to other commissions” such as Quaker marriage certificates and family trees.

“It’s the difference between what I call ‘disposable’ and ‘heirloom’ calligraphy. I wanted my work to stay around and be passed down from generation to generation, not just admired for the moment and then thrown away,” she explained. “Having this kind of mindset has actually focused me and allows more time to better my handwriting and layout skills.”

With greater control over her schedule, “I can train with experts and actually fit in taking workshops,” said Tamara, who attends Sheila Waters’ Saturday classes and sometimes her master class. “She’s a tremendous spirit and counselor.”

MARRIAGE CERTIFICATES

One of Tamara’s specialties is Quaker marriage certificates, which “started out as a custom for those of this particular faith, and are used in their marriage ceremo-



The marriage certificate at right, on 22x30" 90 lb. Stonehenge printmaking paper, was signed by wedding guests. Tamara Stoneburner used French curves to draw the art nouveau-inspired borders and transferred them from tracing paper layouts using graphite transfer paper. But when she experimented with inking them, "no matter how I elevated the plastic curves, the silver gouache would glob or smear," she said. Tamara decided to ink the curves by hand with a Staedtler drafting ruling pen and Holbein Acryla brand pearl silver polymer paint. "I needed a quick-drying paint so I could brace my hand and wrist on the paper as I drew," she explained. By constantly turning the paper, she was able to draw in long, fluid movements "to limit shakiness or breaks in the lines."

nies where there is no specified officiant. Instead, the certificates are signed by all attendees to designate their approval of the union," Tamara explained.

"These marriage certificates are highly adaptable and are now being commissioned by people of all faiths and backgrounds," she said. "They can be personalized for use in specialized unions or to highlight the couple's shared interests." They are meant to be preserved and displayed, either in a frame or custom-made folder, which Tamara creates.

To customize a marriage certificate, she asks clients a range of questions, including personal style (traditional, contemporary, etc.), preferred colors, favorite flora/fauna, and significant areas of their shared lives (military, sports, music, travels, how they met and so forth).

"Asking those questions triggers brainstorming. I can better create a document that truly represents them," said Tamara, a past president of the Washington Calligraphers Guild.

"I spend a lot of time educating clients. My website shows not only final artwork, but sketches and other developmental steps to help them understand that this is not an immediate process. There is a lot of layout design and do-overs and modifications that occur behind the scenes," she said. "I don't just sit down and pick up the pen."

Tamara wants clients to understand that "these are not templates printed out upon request. These are works that are original and of the moment. There

is emotion and tremendous thought involved."

Tamara follows up the meeting by submitting a written proposal detailing the work "so the client can see what's involved. They need to know what they are paying for; that they are acquiring value and quality, not just services. The work is personal for me. I feel I have just as much vested interest in their event as they do.

"Perhaps I take myself too seriously," she added with a slight smile.

For a Virginia couple, Tamara illustrated their Quaker marriage certificate with flowers that thrive on their estate—bleeding heart, iris and columbine. At the top she drew an ancient hickory tree located behind the main house (page 35).

"I made a mistake there and razor-bladed it out," Tamara admitted. "Then I affixed an oval inlay of matching paper, edging it with indigo gouache to create a sort of raised embossed look."

Another marriage certificate was for a Muslim couple (page 33). "I particularly enjoyed working on this project, as it allowed me to tap into certain aspects that are inherent in this culture—color and pattern," Tamara said. "I chose bolder colors such as crimson, deep emerald green, and velvet black for both the folder and for the calligraphy. Crimson was essential in bringing out those passages within the text that referred to Allah and Muhammad."

Tamara created a medallion reminiscent of geometric Arabic decoration and illuminated it with gold paint, which she also used to accent the marbled endpapers and



"Certificate of Marriage" banner.

The couple wanted to emphasize the text and keep with traditional wording according to Muslim culture. "The overall result was to be more of a formal, legal document," she said. Tamara painted black and gold "ribbons" down the sides rather than apply fabric "to keep the document flat and streamlined."

FAMILY TREES

For creative challenge, Tamara enjoys tackling complex family trees. "I love the puzzle of graphically depicting lineage while calligraphically conveying the

family's unique story," she said. "And I love being able to provide a lasting legacy of their heritage. It's a visual mapping of their history."

For large family trees Tamara often uses a full sheet of 300 lb. Arches cold-press watercolor paper because "it maintains the vividness of applied pigments and holds up well to corrective measures such as erasing and scraping," she said. "It's dense and archival, so it resists warping and won't yellow or deteriorate over time and exposure.

"The only drawback is its tooth," she continued. "It's great for watercolor and pastel illustration, but

On the twenty-second day of December,
in the year two thousand and seven,
at Goose Creek Friends Meetinghouse,
in Lincoln, Virginia.

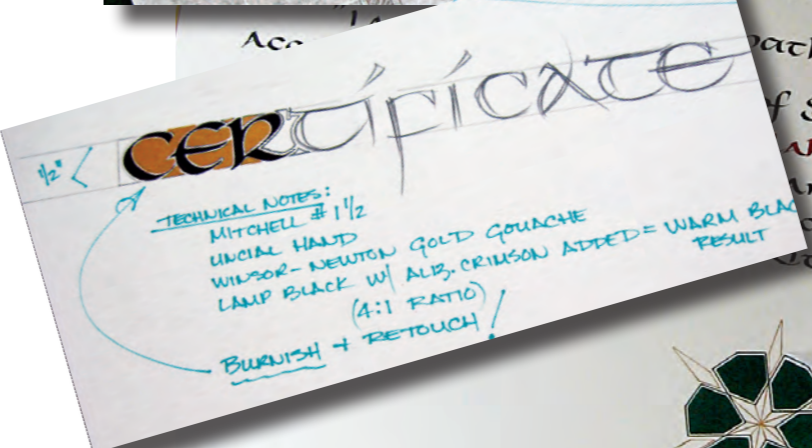
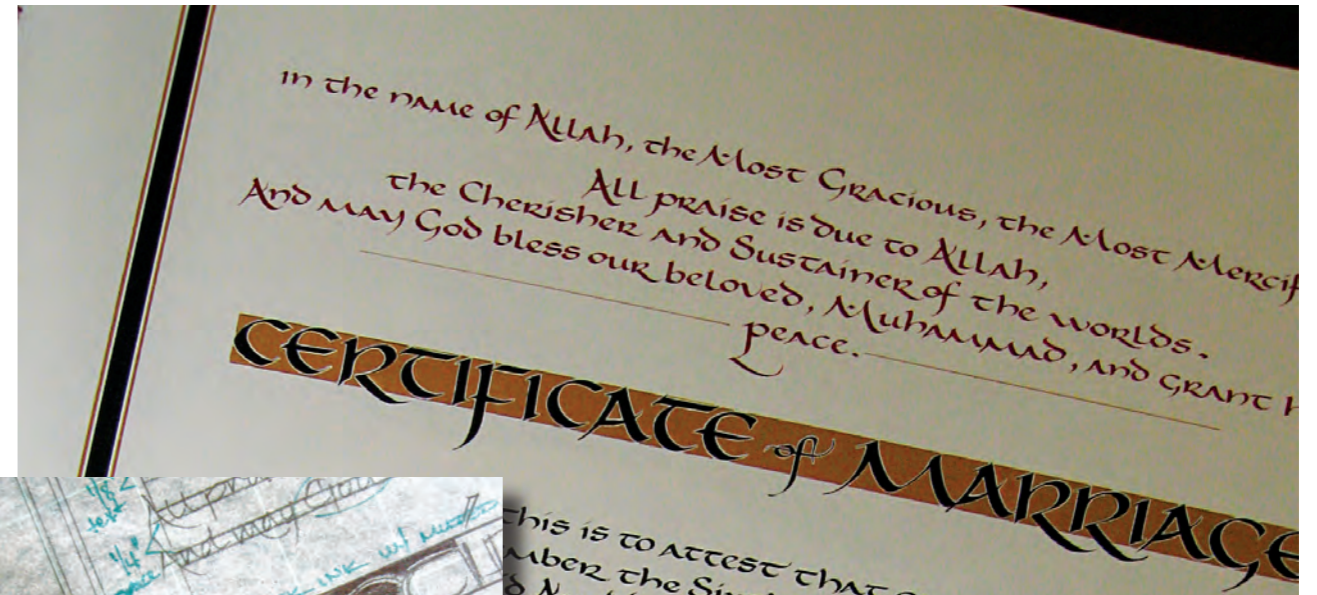
April Catherine Ferrell
and
J. Conenico Giandomenico

took each other by the hand and exchanged this vow:
In the presence of the love of family or friends,
I take thee to be my beloved,
promising to be a loving and faithful partner.
I ask you to be none other than yourself.
I promise to cherish and delight in your spirit,
to face life's challenges with patience and humor,
to respect our differences,
and to nurture our growth.
This commitment is made in love,
kept in faith, lived in hope,
and made eternally new.
From this day forward,
we come together as one family.
In celebration of this commitment,
we set our hands below:

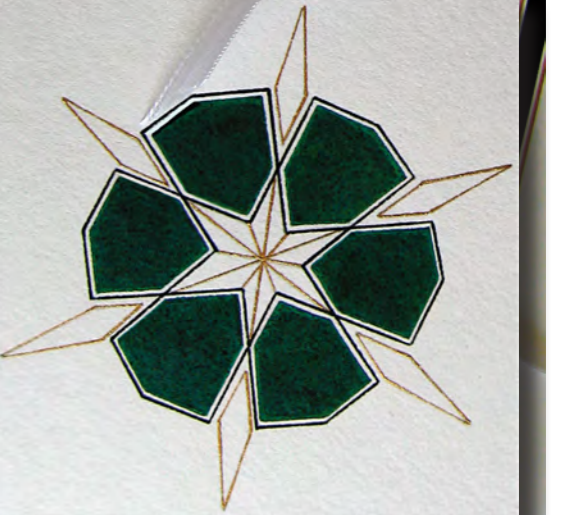
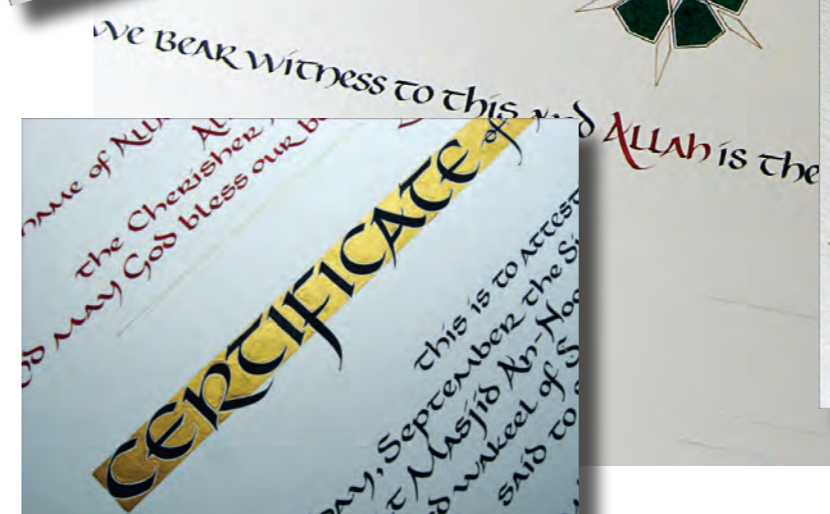
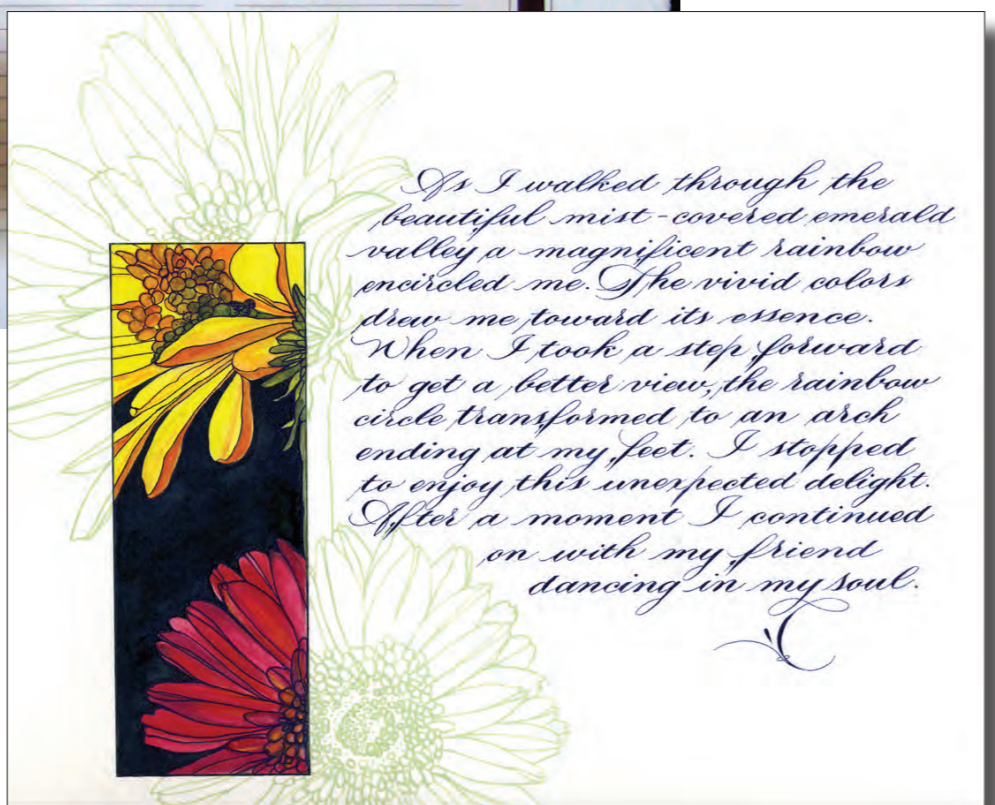
Spouse

Green

And we, as members of their loving community,
having been present in caring witness of this marriage
and promising to honor and support their unity,
set our hands below:



This is to attest that on
the Sixth, Two Thousand and Nine,
in Knoxville, Tennessee,
of Sanjana Ahmad, Dr. Abu Bakar Ahmed,
to Samuel Jonathan Ross:
daughter, Sanjana Ahmad, to you
of Allah and the Sunna of His Prophet,
less him and grant him peace,
and conditions specified
MARITAL CONTRACT."
Jonathan Ross replied:
of Sanjana Ahmad to me
and the Sunna of His Prophet
and grant him peace,
and conditions specified
AL CONTRACT."



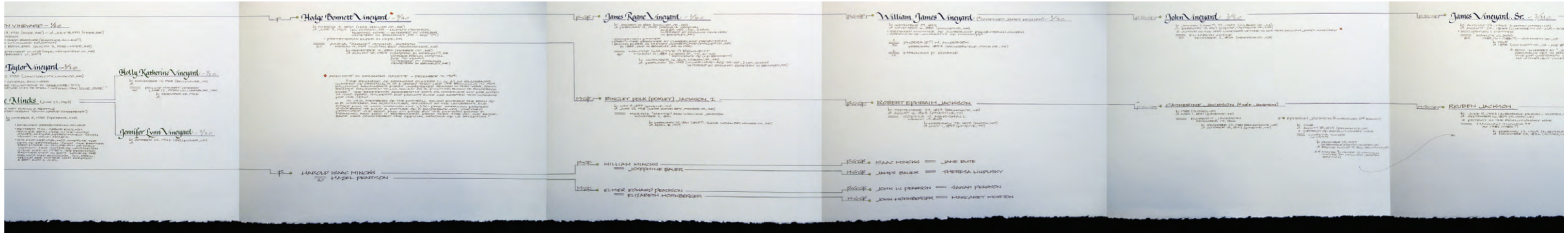
For their marriage certificate (opposite page), the couple asked Tamara to include native flowers on their property and drawings of their hickory tree, house and horses (not shown). "This piece was beginning to come off as including 'everything but the kitchen sink,'" Tamara said. Using trompe l'oeil to insert the sprig of bleeding heart between the vows was her solution to "not having all the elements just be randomly arranged in the layout." The certificate is on 22x30" 90 lb. Stonehenge printmaking paper, which Tamara prefers for its "soft natural deckle edges on two sides and ivory color. It takes corrective measures and all sorts of media like watercolor, pastel, etching and drawing inks very well."



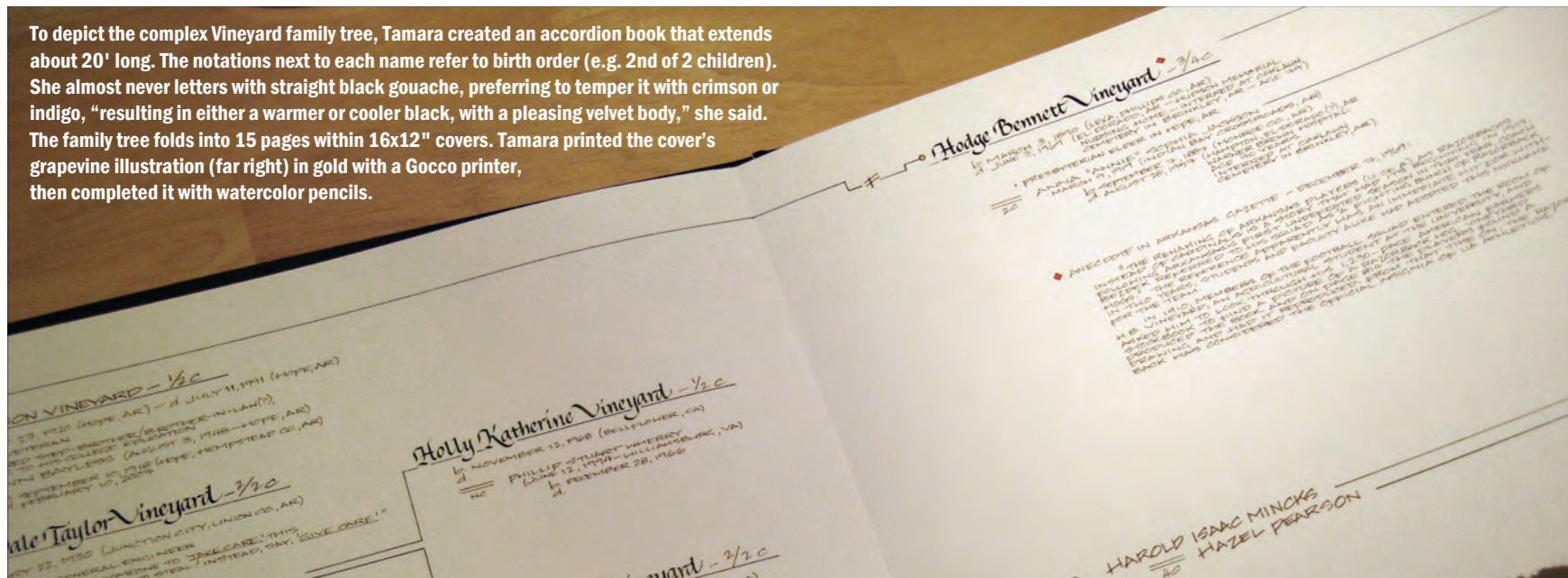
Left: Marriage gift from a groom to his bride. Tamara used a modified uncial to letter the song, "Forever" by Ben Harper, in a spiral layout with a gold-leafed infinity symbol at its center.

Below: After Gocco-printing the invitation set using metallic ink on Stonehenge paper, Tamara hand-colored the oak's acorn and leaves. "Gocco silkscreen inks are oil-based, so you can go back into them with water-based media," she said. "The silkscreen inks sit on the surface while the watercolors are absorbed into the paper, which creates a stained glass look."





To depict the complex Vineyard family tree, Tamara created an accordion book that extends about 20' long. The notations next to each name refer to birth order (e.g. 2nd of 2 children). She almost never letters with straight black gouache, preferring to temper it with crimson or indigo, "resulting in either a warmer or cooler black, with a pleasing velvet body," she said. The family tree folds into 15 pages within 16x12" covers. Tamara printed the cover's grapevine illustration (far right) in gold with a Gocco printer, then completed it with watercolor pencils.



Holly Katherine Vineyard - 2/c
 b. 1910 (Hope, AR) - d. July 11, 1991 (Hope, AR)
 m. Phillip Stuart Vineyard - 1/c
 b. 1914 (Bellflower, CA) - d. November 12, 1988 (Bellflower, CA)

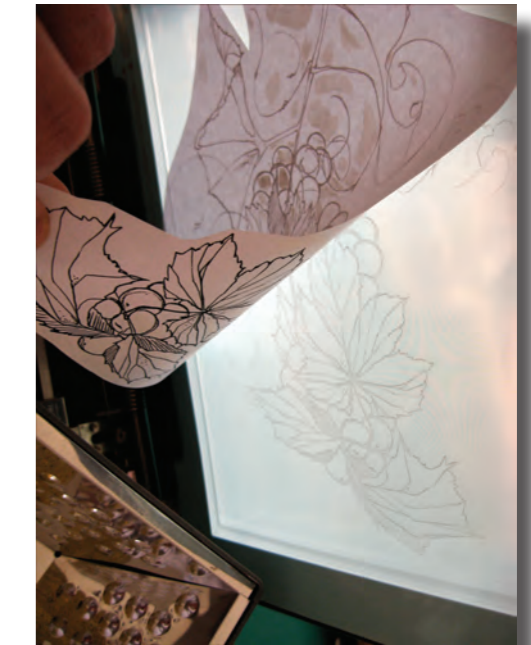
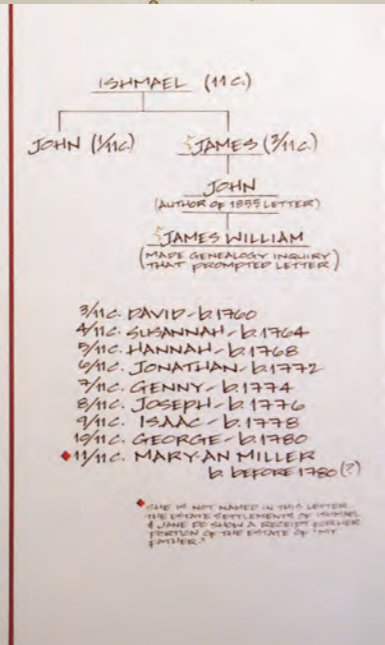
Jane Mincks - 1/c
 b. 1910 (Seattle, WA) - d. 1988 (Spokane, WA)
 m. Harold Isaac Mincks - 1/c
 b. 1910 (Seattle, WA) - d. 1988 (Spokane, WA)

"THE VINEYARD LETTER OF 1895"
 EXCERPTS THAT PROVIDED THE CLUE TO THE VINEYARD INTO THE FAMILY OF ISHMAEL VINEYARD

Oxford, Mississippi
 7 June, 1895

MR. JAMES VINEYARD, DEAR SON:

MY GRANDFATHER WAS A SCIENTIFIC GENTLEMAN FROM GERMANY HIS NAME WAS ISHMAEL MY GRANDMOTHER WAS ALSO FROM GERMANY AND HER MIDDLE NAME WAS GENEVIEVE SHE WAS ALSO A SCIENTIFIC GENTLEMAN'S WIFE...



Christine Tischer

The client who called Christine Tischer's calligraphy studio identified himself as a chaplain and asked if she could inscribe eight Bibles by that weekend. Until the chaplain brought her the books and wording, she had no idea they were to be inscribed for an important political family to use at the military chapel.

"The chaplain was happy I could accommodate him," Chris said, and has directed other work to her, including a quotation by President Franklin D. Roosevelt (shown on page 44), commissioned by the departing commanding officer as a gift to the chapel.

"I was thrilled to have been chosen," said Chris, who had the pleasure of seeing the work, which combines calligraphy, photo transfer and gold leaf, hanging in the chapel during a recent visit.

"So many times when I view one of my pieces in an 'exhibition setting,' all I can see are the mistakes that I made," she said. "I must admit that when I saw this FDR prayer hanging there, I was pleasantly surprised at how 'at home' it felt. The upright lettering conveyed strength while the transferred image was a complement, softly telling the story of D-Day down the left side."

From an early age Chris seemed destined to become a professional calligrapher, but it took her decades to realize it. In grade school she loved making letters, and as an 8th grader working on the school magazine she

imitated script lettering to draw headlines. The high school art teacher introduced Chris to broad-edged pens and the Speedball book, and she went on to render the Ten Commandments in blackletter.

"They reproduced it to hang in all the schools in the county. I was so honored and pleased."

At the same time her lettering was being displayed throughout the school system, she was writing her senior thesis on illuminated manuscripts.

"You'd think at that point I'd realize that calligraphy was important in my life," Chris said with a laugh, "but I wanted to go to a liberal arts college, not art school."

At Hood College she did major in art, "but it was painting and drawing, and not a Bachelor of Fine Arts program."

Chris went on to work in Hood's development division for many years, followed by 12 years serving on



A military chaplain commissioned Christine Tischer to inscribe eight Bibles (above) for an important family.



Above: Photo of a large seating chart Chris created for a wine-themed wedding. She did the lettering and illustrations for the invitation (left) and reception card (below).



RECEPTION
Dinner and Dance
will follow the ceremony
at The Manor
2395 Bayview Avenue
Toronto, Canada

RSVP by May 31, 1998 to 703-524-0858

Rather than using place cards at the wedding reception, the bride asked Chris to letter a large seating chart that was displayed on an easel.

CATHY & SEAN
MAY 8, 1999

<p>HYDRANGEA Peter Spellar Patricia Spellar Bob Pokelwaldt Laurie Pokelwaldt Hetty Matthews Ken Matthews Gary Ellis Jane Ellis Nancy Pruden Milton Veale</p>	<p>IRIS Catharine O'Rourke Sean O'Rourke Paul Flynn Kathryn Ardinger Robert Unger Grace Unger Jeffrey Johnson Faith Massey</p>	<p>LISIANTHUS Andrew Spellar Jordan Spellar Sherri Spellar Dimitri Tzoumas Lizzie Tzoumas Shelly Tzoumas Thomas Lee Joshua Lee Mary Lee Taylor O'Rourke</p>
<p>TULIP Terry Pruden Dianne Pruden Kim Kell Diane O'Connor Chuck Koutnik Dilwyn Koutnik-Piner Kim Piner Chris Koutnik Paul Schuler</p>	<p>ROSE Vincent Sadowski Nicole Sadowski Lance Moore Enca Bowser Chad Morgan Christina Gerstner Aaron Brown Jenny Young</p>	<p>SWEET PEA Jean Noyes Tony Noyes Robert Koutnik Jane Koutnik Charles Mawbey Joyce Merchant Neil Rupright Geraldine Rupright Bob Vealey</p>
<p>STOCK Brandon Younger Haven Younger John Hershey Paige Hershey Sally Beaver Don Beaver Bill Hunsberger Sylvia Hunsberger Allan Bacon Barbara Bacon</p>	<p>FREESIA Rodney Breeden Tracy Breeden Allysen Breeden Autumn Breeden Rachel Yesacavage Donald Yesacavage Ruth Sasse Kelli Palamar Brenda Yesacavage</p>	<p>ANEMONE Rich Hoover Debbie Hoover Gene Ogilvie Kay Dodson Roger Finn Edith Finn Donald Risser June Risser Gregg Foster Madeline Townley</p>
<p>ORCHID Linda Ogilvie John Boyer Jane Moody Ann Meyer Doris Glessner Jean Sandell Alan Sandell Pat Abeles Bill Abeles</p>	<p>LILY Ned Ardinger Sarah Ardinger Jerry Massey Dawn Massey Joseph Gerstner Wanda Gerstner Bob O'Connor Mary Rogers Donald Van Reenan Carol Van Reenan</p>	<p>LILAC Craig O'Connor Rachel O'Connor Ivan Stoneham Sophie Marks James Corderman Nikki Corderman Vinnie Casear Kathy Casear Kristen Ogilvie</p>

In celebration of their love
Natalie Semler and her children,
James, Brittany, Meghan,
& Matthew J. Tischer
invite you to share in their wedding
February 10, 2001 at 2:00 p.m.
Saint Mark's Episcopal Church
18313 Lappans Road
Join us for champagne & desserts
19825 Blue Heron Lane
RSVP 301-733-7811

Mr. and Mrs. Gary Cantrell
109 Vinings Parkway
Smyrna, Georgia 30080

Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Schofield
30 Front Street Apartment 205
Stratford, Ontario
N5A 7S3 Canada



its board of trustees as well as other volunteer work for organizations near her Hagerstown home in northwestern Maryland, at the foot of the Appalachian mountains.

With more free time, "I decided to paint but found it wasn't calling me," Chris said. In the late 1980s she ran into a Hood classmate who was doing calligraphy and asked her about it. The woman advised Chris to get in touch with Brenda Broadbent, whose store, now called Paper & Ink Arts, is located "one mountain over," she said.

Brenda suggested Chris take lessons with Sheila Waters. "I got the last opening in Sheila's class that was starting the next month, and went on to take every class she offered for the next three or four years," Chris said.

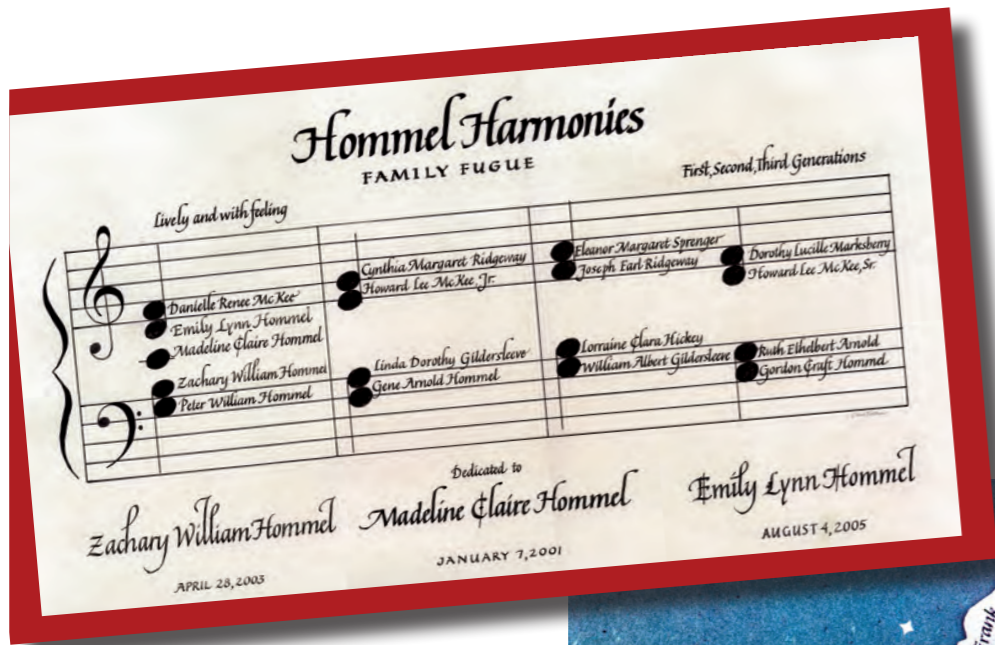
"I'm so glad I took the time to get the basics under

my belt. Many people in our craft don't want to do the hard work," she said. "It's important to really understand the letters—then you can have fun." Chris now teaches the basic hands at the Washington County (MD) Museum of Fine Arts.

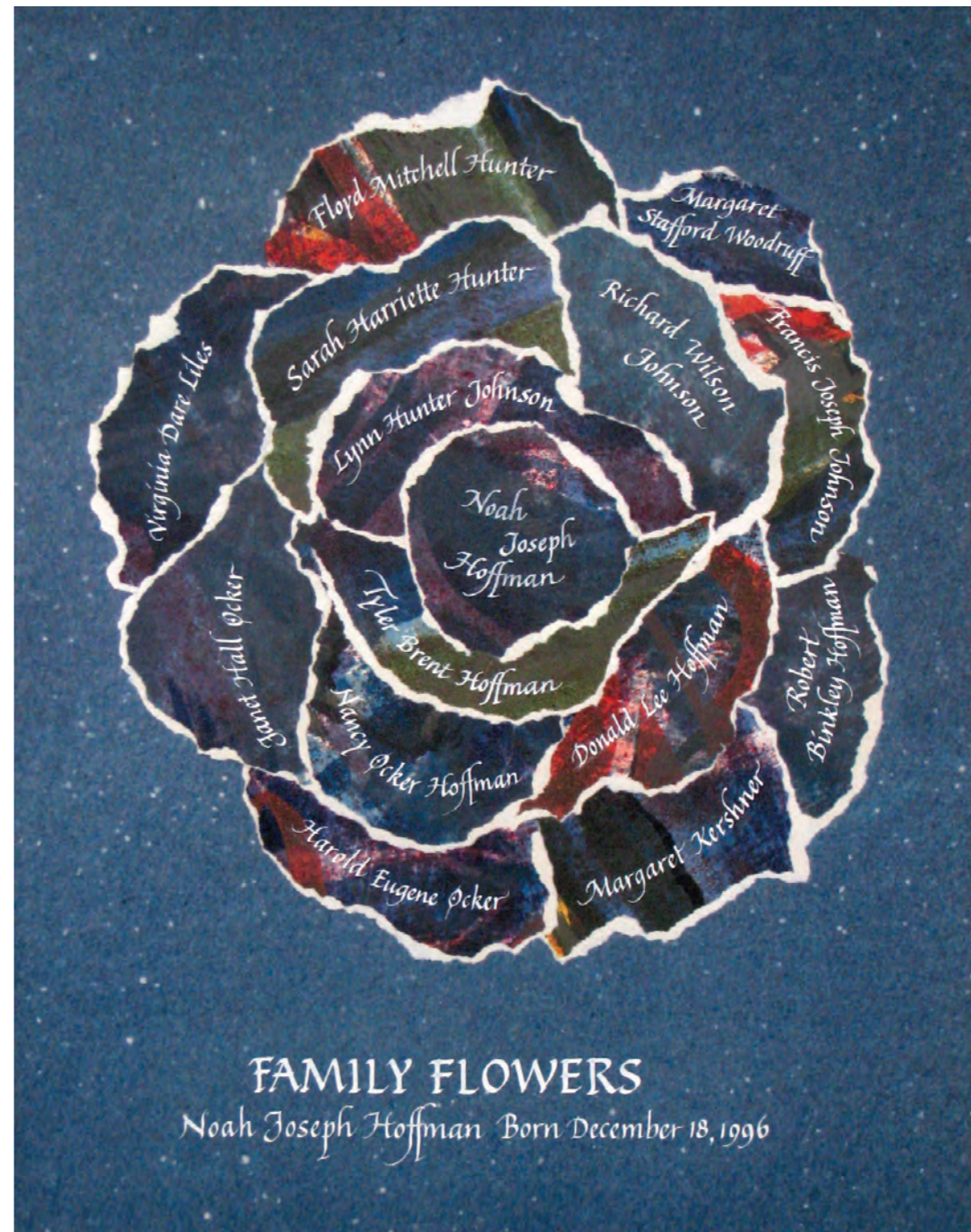
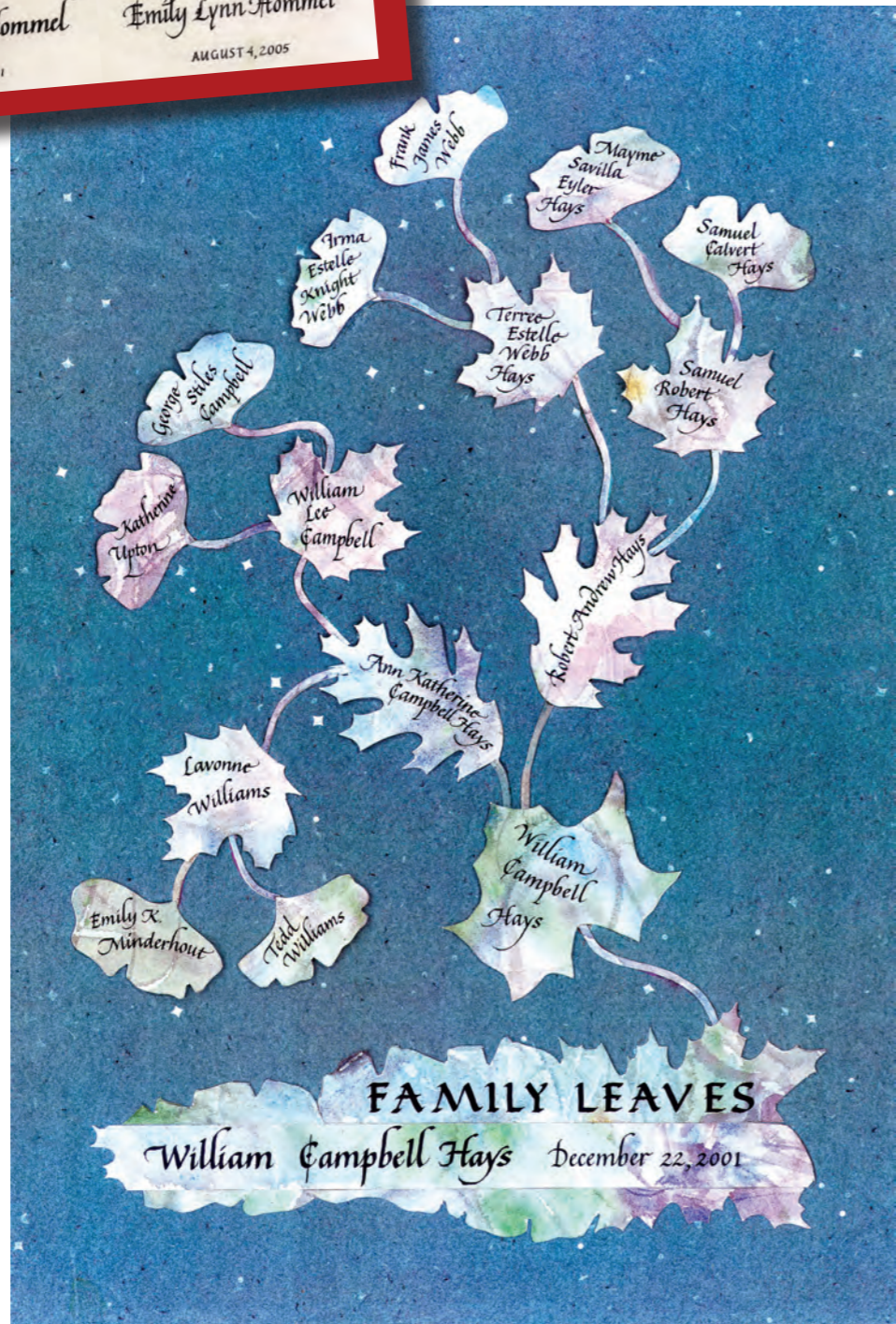
After attending the 1995 Letterforum international calligraphy conference at St. Mary's College in Maryland, hosted by the Washington Calligraphers Guild, Chris set up her home studio and started looking for commissions.

"I took whatever work walked in the door, including lettering on Little League baseballs," Chris said. "I thought a baseball can't be that much different than lettering on parchment, except I had to figure out how to work on a curve. You learn that way."

She also continued to learn from Sheila Waters.



With handmade paper as the background for these family trees, Chris applied silkscreened papers for the flower petals at right and painted watercolor paper for the leaves below. Family trees are her favorite type of commission because, she said, they are “potential heirlooms” that “allow me to flex my creativity.”



“I was a regular attendee of Sheila’s weekly class at her home, where I’d take commissions and get her guidance on how to fix a problem or solve a design issue,” Chris said.

Her favorite commissions are “potential heirlooms that allow me to flex my creativity. I like doing family trees because I can create a design that’s meaningful to the family,” she said. She often uses handmade paper or paper she’s painted with watercolors “to get the colors I want.”

Chris does almost all her work in Italic with Mitchell and Speedball nibs and gouache. “You can count on gouache to sit up on the fibers, not sink in like ink.

I find it easier to correct mistakes,” she said.

“I go to conferences and take as many local workshops as I can—there’s always something new to learn and techniques to explore,” said Chris, who for many years has arranged workshops for the Washington Calligraphers Guild.

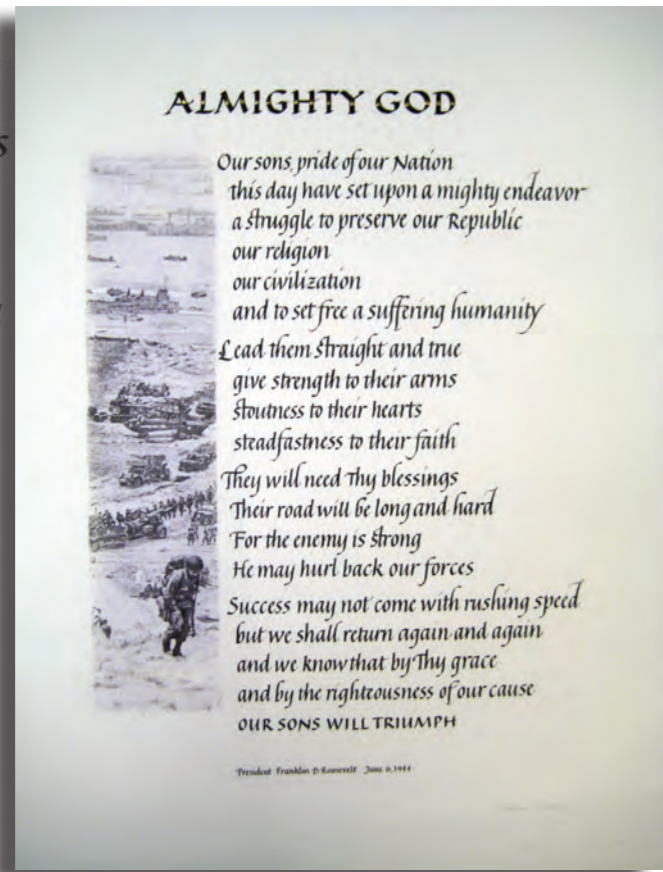
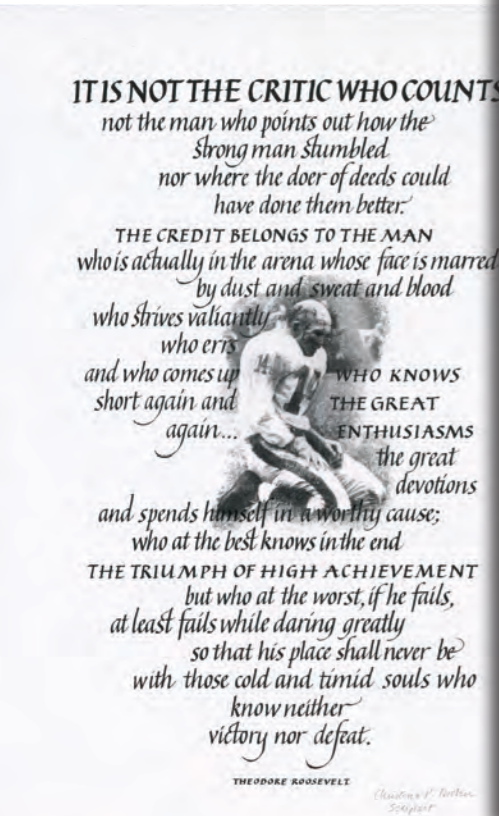
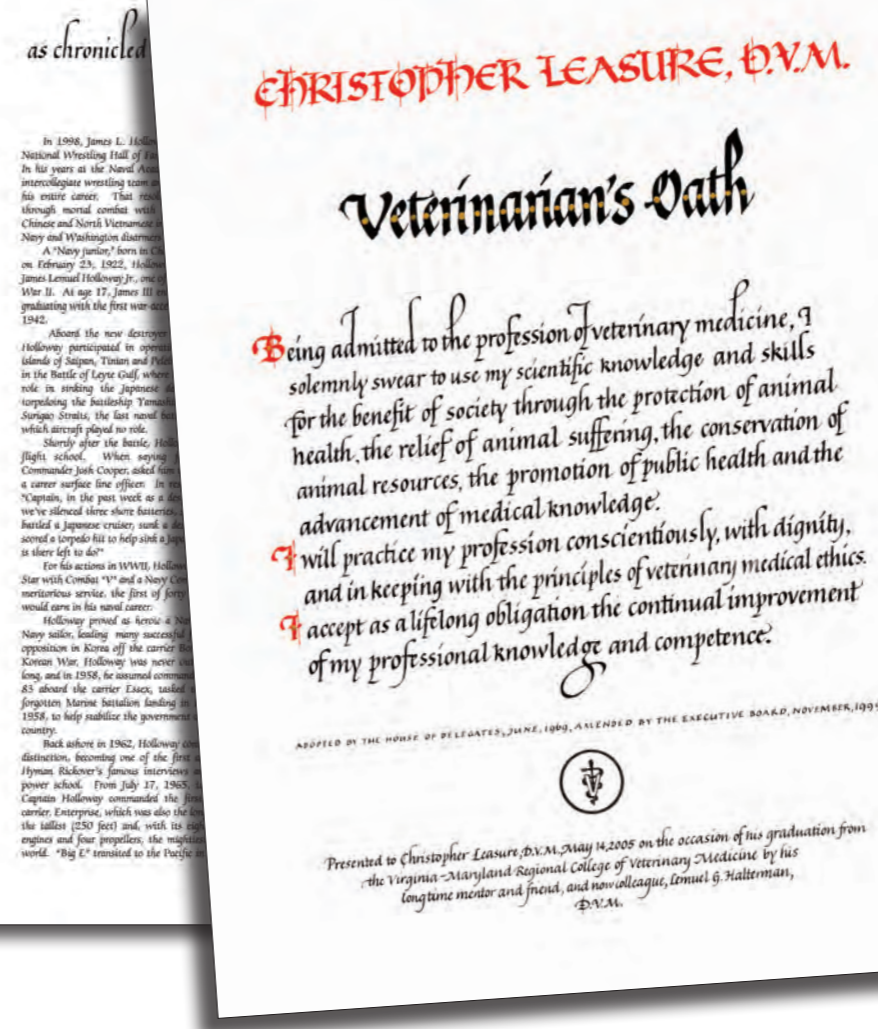
PHOTO TRANSFERS

One of the techniques Chris learned at a workshop has become her specialty: combining photos with lettering to create commissioned gifts, such as the examples on page 44. After planning the design and doing the lettering, she transfers one or more photos onto



THE NAVAL CAREER OF
Admiral James L. Holloway III
 Saint James, Class of 1939
 PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN
 Saint James Board of Trustees 1989-1999

Chris enjoys lettering "pieces that commemorate life's transitions," she said. The client asked her to typeset the body of the piece at left to keep down costs.



Commissioned to create a piece to hang in a military chapel, Chris decided on President Franklin D. Roosevelt's D-Day prayer (left). To add the D-Day image she used a photo transfer technique that "gives me an effect similar to silk screen, but is much easier with less use of toxic materials." Chris printed out a negative image of the photo and duplicated it on a toner-based copier. To transfer the toner onto her art surface she used Citra Solv and a Chartpak Blender pen (one can also use plain acetone or nail polish remover). She then enhanced the image with colored pencils. Chris employed the same process to create the other pieces on this page.

hot-press watercolor paper using a photo transfer technique that produces an effect similar to serigraphy or silk screening.

"I love working with clients to create a montage that reflects their passions. For instance, the couple who commissioned the wolf picture (opposite page) wanted to show their commitment to the Yellowstone Wolf Project, where they volunteer every year," Chris explained. "I combined wolf quotations with an image of the animal they tracked for many years, who has since died.

"The piece has great meaning for them."

The calligraphy and photo transfer combination provided the perfect solution for a businessman who asked Chris to create a limited edition of prints that he could give to clients, using an image of legendary quarterback Y.A. Tittle (far left).

"I love the creative process for each of these commissions," said Chris. "I never know what form or look the next project will have.

"I'm very lucky that I have never been overwhelmed with requests and yet I have steady work and there's always something to look forward to."

See more of Christine's work at www.calligraphybychris.com



Mr. and Mrs. Warren Blair
request the pleasure of your company
at the marriage of their daughter

Lauren Jeanne

to

Mr. Richard Canton

Sunday, the fifth of September

Two thousand and ten

at four o'clock in the afternoon

Raspberry Plain

Leesburg, Virginia

Reception immediately following

With both hand and heart, Patricia Blair lettered this invitation for her daughter's wedding. As the White House chief calligrapher, Pat was featured in the Scripsit titled "Pens & Protocol: The Calligraphy of Official Washington." That issue and many other past Scripsits are available for purchase at www.calligraphersguild.org/scripsit.html.