

At Work in Arizona: The First 100 Years

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This past December, Alliance Bank of Arizona published *At Work in Arizona: The First 100 Years*, a limited-edition pictorial essay chronicling the state's economic history and cultural heritage. The project is the brainchild of Jim Lundy, founding president and CEO of Alliance Bank, who hired renowned photographer Marilyn Szabo in 2003 to curate a commerce-themed exhibition to be installed in each of the bank's 10 branches. The book is a showcase of the exhibition's best, comprised of 168 pages and more than 212 hand-selected images. All are accompanied by a delicious backstory written by Stuart Rosenbrook, western historian and former associate editor of *Arizona Highways*.

While *At Work* serves as a rich, luxurious glimpse into the past, it is also a reminder of what needs to be done in the future. All proceeds from the book benefit Arizona's top 12 education-focused nonprofits in the hopes that the state will succeed in securing a brighter future for the upcoming generation and continue moving forward.

Arizona Foothills Magazine sat down with curator Marilyn Szabo for an exclusive look into *At Work in Arizona: The First 100 years*, a little slice of history in and of itself.

Arizona Foothills Magazine: You've contributed nearly 13 years of ingenuity to Alliance Bank of Arizona's *At Work in Arizona* project. Why publish a book now?

Marilyn Szabo: It took a while to fill [the branches]—a few years—and I began to see that these were incredible photographs and that there were enough of them to start thinking about something like a book. So then eventually...we put together an exhibit of about 50 photos and with that, we were prompted to really organize and the idea moved forward.

AFM: How is the book different from the ongoing exhibition you curate?

MS: All the images that are in the book are on the walls of the bank. The book just completes it.

AFM: Some of the images in *At Work* date back as far as the 1880's. Was it difficult to track down such old photos?

MS: Well, yes and no. I got photos from everywhere. I went to all of the historical societies all over the state... I went to people's homes and waited for them to pull boxes down from their closets to look through. I bought a lot of images off of EBay. [But] I have a history degree and training in research and of course with the Internet, it is pretty incredible.

AFM: Did you have any specific criteria or is it obvious when a photo has that special something?

MS: For me, it's obvious. The idea was very tight. It had to be about a business of some sort and something that either made money or employed people in Arizona. And we had to be very tight on editing. There's basically only one image to represent all of [each] industry.

AFM: What did the collaborative process between you, Jim Lundy and Stuart Rosebrook look like?

MS: It was interesting. It was difficult. We all had to come onboard really fast and Mr. Lundy is a very astute, well-organized person, so we had quite high standards to come up to very quickly.

AFM: What images would you expect to see included in a subsequent edition – say, *The Second 100 Years*?

MS: Mine! [Laughs]. I don't know! We're only in the second year of the next 100 years. I can't even imagine what will happen to Arizona, [but] it will be interesting to see.