

## **Thomas P. Churney—Biography**

I grew up on a farm in southwest Pennsylvania, spending my childhood outdoors with my brothers. We worked and played in nature, often venturing into the nearby Appalachian Mountains to hunt, fish, and camp. This upbringing fostered a deep love for the natural world and a desire to share its beauty and wonder with others.

My journey into photography began 25 years ago during the film era, initially as a way to gather reference material for my nature paintings. After moving to Michigan and starting a family, my camera became the perfect companion for nature walks with my daughter. Around this time, digital cameras emerged, allowing me to see results instantly and better understand how camera settings and lens choices shaped each shot. With limited time for studio painting, photography soon became my primary artistic outlet.

In 2005, I transitioned from CANON® film cameras to their 5D digital series. While I now shoot primarily with CANON® mirrorless models, I continue to use older cameras like the 5D, 5D Mark II, and 1DS Mark III, appreciating their unique image qualities. I also have a passion for restoring old, neglected cameras, which I believe teach valuable lessons to the photographer. This interest led me back to film photography, and I occasionally shoot with a CANON® Elan 7 paired with KODAK® Ektar 100 film—a nostalgic nod to my early days, now enhanced with superior EF lenses.

My approach to photography emphasizes creating art with what is naturally present. I avoid using AI editing tools, preferring to stay true to the original scene. For me, nature is perfect as it is, requiring no enhancement to convey its splendor.

Though I've been painting on and off for nearly 50 years, photography has become my preferred medium. It allows me to immerse myself in the ever-changing beauty of the outdoors—the light, weather, and seasonal shifts. For me, photography is more than a creative pursuit; it's a way to connect with the ancient human experience of observing and appreciating the natural world. With my camera, I am a modern hunter-gatherer, capturing the essence of nature in images that inspire wonder and contentment.

### **Nature and Wildlife Photography Exhibit**

**Exhibit date: Monday, February 3 through Friday, May 30, 2025.**