

Tucsonan, sister collaborate on children's book 'Jack and Jill'

By Valerie Vinyard

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Linda Solomon can't think of anything she wouldn't want to photograph.

"I never go anywhere without a camera — you never know what you want to capture," said Solomon, who owns a home in Tucson.

Solomon and her sister, Jill Rappaport of the NBC "Today" show, worked together on a book called "Jack and Jill" (HarperCollins, \$17.99). It is their third collaboration.

The book will be released Tuesday, and at about 8 a.m. Wednesday, "Today" will air a segment on it.

The children's book is a true story about Rappaport's German shepherd, Jack, who had to have a leg amputated. Solomon shot the photos at Rappaport's Bridgehampton, N.Y., farm.

"With three legs, he did everything he had done before," Solomon said. "That's a message — you've got to have courage."

No Tucson signings are scheduled yet, but Solomon will send signed bookplates to people who buy her book at Borders and leave their name.

Solomon's Foothills home is filled with Mexican and American Indian antiques.

"There isn't an inch of wall space and table space," she said, laughing.

Solomon attended the University of Arizona for one year and graduated from the University of Michigan with a teaching degree. She lives with Barry, her husband of 33 years, and a dog and a cat. She calls her rescued terrier mix the "Brad Pitt of terriers — he's gorgeous."

We recently spoke with Solomon by phone about her book and other projects. Her Web site is at lindasolomonphotography.com.

What made you start taking photos?

"I started (taking photos) when I was 5 years old. When I was 13, I received a beautifully wrapped gift for my birthday. It was a photo album. . . . It showed my parents' respect for my work."

What's your favorite camera to use?

"Shockingly, I still use film. I finally bought a Nikon 300 digital camera and used it for (this year's) Academy Awards.

"The difference is that you don't have to carry as much equipment. With a film camera, I take a variety of cameras and lenses. But I love the texture of film — I think it's warmer."

Tell me about your newest book, "Jack and Jill."

"It was the inspiration of Jack's life. The book is in Jack's voice.

"It's a book about love and courage. Jack was just filled with spirit. Watching and photographing him changed my life."

Tell me about Pictures of Hope, the program you founded that distributes cameras to disadvantaged children nationwide.

"Everything has come full circle. I started as a child, and now I'm teaching children.

"We've made a difference. Last year, two children who were living in shelters photographed two different colleges, one in San Diego and one in Memphis. Both of those children were granted four-year scholarships.

"I feel that every project I do should help someone. 'Jack and Jill' is going to help Tails of Hope Foundation," a non-profit that helps to eradicate life-threatening diseases that affect companion animals.

How did you end up living in Tucson part time?

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"It was the inspiration of Jack's life. The book is in Jack's voice.

It's a book about love and courage. Jack was just filled with spirit. Watching and photographing him changed my life."

Linda Solomon, photojournalist

"My mother attended the UA, and my grandparents lived here. My husband and I bought a home here in 1998, and I attended the UA."

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