Appendix B

<u>Create Photo Books and Personal Memoirs</u>

To improve your quality of life, sense of personal identity, and the quality of the care you receive in the future, create memory books that tell your life story. Such personal history books can help make it possible for you to remember the experiences that have made you who you are. These books may also be cherished by other family members both now and in the future.

Get ready to create photo books

You really can create hardback photo books if you are computer literate
"Computer literate" here means able to point a cursor at a box on the screen and click; drag and drop images or files; select a typeface and font size; and handle other similarly basic tasks. And if you don't have these skills, you probably have a friend who does.

Choose a topic, event, or era to cover
A book might cover your whole life or one segment of it, such as a decade. Alternatively, it might address a slice of your life over time, such as school, work, sports, hobbies, or volunteer activities. Other books might illustrate special events, such as weddings, vacations, or family reunions.

For a photo book, it helps to have between 30 and 250 photos (or objects that can be photographed). Don't worry if the photos are old black-and-white ones that you don't have in digital form. As long as you have (or can take) photos, you can get there from here.

Select the specific photos to use
If you have a thousand pictures available, choose perhaps 100-200 that you feel best cover the topic, tell a story, or convey a point you wish to make. If you feel that you must include a lot more than that, consider breaking up the topic into smaller chunks and making two or more books.

Prepare the photos
If all the pictures are digital (on your computer) and you don't use photo editing software, this step is complete.

What about all those black and white photos from Kodak Brownie cameras from half a century ago? No problem. Many home printers can be used to scan photos — and documents such as ticket stubs or certificates.

In my experience, photo scanners such as the Epson Perfection V370 (about $110) faithfully capture what they see, and the newer Epson Perfection V600 (about $190) does as well or better. Check reviews before buying.

If you want to crop, straighten, brighten or otherwise adjust your photos, you will need to use photo-editing software. Many computers come with basic photo editing capabilities.

Put the photos into their own folder on your computer
Make sure you know where the folder is located (e.g., on your computer desktop or elsewhere).

Decide which photo book creation and printing service you wish to use
If you search online on "**make a photo book**" (without quotation marks), you will see many choices. Check current reviews to understand the trade-offs. For example, some services make it very easy to use their software — but make it impossible for you to modify their templates.

You might check to see if the service you are considering has a phone number you can call for live help if needed.

Download or access online the free software from the service you choose.

Follow the service's instructions to start a new photo book
You will generally have several options for: the dimensions of the book; a style or theme, such as "wedding" or "travel"; the cover type/material; etc.

Once these basic decisions are made (and you may be able to go back and change most of them later), you will have a chance to drag the photos you have prepared into a staging area so that you can easily select them to put onto the pages of your book.

Optimize your photo book for future use

Create a title page

This page includes a descriptive title for the book, the date(s) it covers, the location (e.g., city/state), and the author(s)/contributor(s). A title page will help everyone, now and in the future, understand what the book's topic is. Include the publication month/year, and if you reprint the book later to add more material, add a revision number.

Explain clearly what the book is about on the next page

Explain what makes the events included significant. For example, if the book is about a family reunion, how did the idea develop to do it? Did anything amusing, surprising, or unusual happen in the planning stages? Who came and how are they related?

Add page numbers

This is typically an option offered in the software. If you give other people copies of the book and want to point out a particular photo, it helps to refer them to a page number.

Identify each person by their full name the first time they are pictured

After that, use given names (first names) rather than relational names. (You will have explained how people are related already.)

That is, pictures including Marianne Appleworth would give her full name with the first photo, then refer to her as Marianne rather than as "Mom," "Sis," "Auntie," "me," or other names that make perfect sense today but may confuse people looking at the book in the future.

One purpose of the books is to help you and others honor your life story when you may have forgotten some of it; if the photo captions don't make it crystal clear to all readers who the people in the pictures are, the books lose much of their long-term value.

Consider the tone you want to set

It may be more useful to create books that capture great memories that people want to revisit over and over, rather than to capture the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Tell stories

Describe memories the pictures evoke. As a simple example, for a picture of the backyard of my early childhood home, I might add: "When I was two years old, my big brother taught me to climb trees, starting with one way in the back of the yard with very low branches. Oh, the thrill!

"By the time I was seven or eight, I often climbed 30 feet high in maples and beech trees, up to the rooftops. If I climbed high enough in a tree young enough, even my modest weight as a small child would slowly bend the top of the tree's trunk in a majestic arc halfway down to the ground, while I hung on for the ride."

Now the photo is no longer simply a snapshot like a million others of grass and trees behind a small house.

While the pictures in your photo books are important, the stories you tell to describe them are even more important. They are what will make your books meaningful and cherished for a very long time.

Create paperback memoirs

You might also create paperback memoirs instead of or in addition to photo books. If you are comfortable using word processing software such as Microsoft Word, you can create a paperback book. It is easy to include photos, scanned documents, etc.

It is possible today to order a copy of a 200-page, 8.5" x 11" paperback book you wrote, with full color images throughout the interior, for under $20 — including shipping. Books that are smaller, have only black-and-white interiors, or have fewer pages cost less.

Decades ago, it would have cost thousands of dollars to print such a book, so it is extraordinary today to have the opportunity to create and print your own personal history in a professionally produced paperback for less than it costs to fill the gas tank of a compact car.

Search online and read reviews for "**self-publish paperback**" or "**self -publish print on demand paperback**" (in each case, without quotation marks) to identify services that are currently highly rated. The websites of reputable services will walk you through the process of creating your paperback.

If you do not want your book to be publicly available, some services will allow you to set up a profile for the book so that you, the author, can buy copies, but no one else can.

Cost Saving Tip

A 100-page, 8.5" x 11" paperback book with a full color interior and good quality printing will cost perhaps 10-20% of the cost of a similar hardback photo book.

While photo books can have many visual bells & whistles, paperbacks with just as many photos can be a reasonable alternative.

If you prefer to have hardcover books for your memoirs, you can also find services that will print these. Avoid selecting a service that requires a print run of hundreds of copies, if you want just one or a few.