

Parent Care: Mom-daughter combination is picture-perfect

by *Marsha_Kay_Seff*

Some children are luckier than others when it comes to the parents they inherit.

Ivory Lewis, 61, and her mom, Lily "Lillis" Lewis, 92, both lucked out. They're best friends, not because of circumstances, but because they want to be.

Lily is a still-life and portrait painter. Ivory, who has degrees in anthropology and urban planning, is retired.

This spring, the daughter and best friend orchestrated her mom's first one-woman art show. Ivory secured a venue at San Diego City Hall and started preparing the art. Because she couldn't part with her mother's originals, she decided to turn them into giclee prints.

Then she had to learn how. She owned a digital camera and computer, but bought a special printer. When the reproductions were finished, she stretched each of the 15 canvases and framed them.

"I'm very proud of her," Ivory says. "To have a mom that's that talented is really special."

So Ivory is always there to cheer her on. When the daughter decided weekly art class enough for Lily, Ivory started another group. She talked the folks at the nearby Sunrise retirement home in San Diego into letting the group meet there. Now, Ivory hires all the models.

With all her experience with an artist in the family, Ivory is thinking of starting her own art publishing business.

Lily, who signs her work "Lillis" and has a Web site, www.lillislewis.com, has been painting since she was a kid. "It's a love affair; I even love the smell of the paint."

She has turned two bedrooms into her studio and often works from sunup to way past sundown, producing about two paintings a week.

"When you're happily employed doing something you love, you've got no time to worry about anything else," Lily explains.

Though her left leg was severely hurt in a bombing raid in England during World War II, Lily mostly ignores it. When her ankle gave out before the art show, she agreed to move in to her daughter San Diego home for only a few days. It was perfect timing, Lily says, because her mother helped with the giclees, even embellishing some by hand.

The daughter, who never married and has a 16-year-old adopted daughter from Romania, vacations with her mom. They own three nearby time shares, so they can get away without having to fly.

"If ever there was a blessing," Lily says, "the one above gave me the best daughter."

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