

STEPHANIE WATSON 1927 - 2000

Detailed C.V. and family photographs

The father of *Stephanie* Blanche Elspeth St Monica *née* Harmer was Henry "Harry" Harmer, an Austrian civil engineer who had studied in the UK and went to Central Africa to work on civil projects in addition to big game hunting. Her mother, Judith Monica, a South Africa (who had been brought up by her oldest sister in England) travelled to the Ilha de Moçambique where she was a teacher. They married in 1923, first living in Central and East Africa.



The Harmer family

Stephanie was born on 27th December 1927, in Livingstone, Zambia: she was the eldest of 3 children.



Stephanie with her mother Mollie somewhere in Central Africa

In about 1934, they moved to South Africa. After leaving school, *Stephanie* did an apprenticeship at Werner' Photographic Studio in Springs. Here, before colour photography, she essentially painted the black and white photos in colour. She moved onto Polly Photo Studios, Springs, travelling around the country taking portrait photos. She then worked as a journalist for the Springs Advertiser and the Sunday Express in Johannesburg.

In the early 50s she worked for SA Glazing, Benoni, as a pottery artist. Later, *Stephanie* was active in producing pewter jewellery and decorative objects, selling through Helen de Leeuw's first shop in Gretermans, Johannesburg.

In 1950, *Stephanie* married Keith Watson who had recently arrived from England and had started a concrete manufacturing business (Watson Tile & Concrete) - they had three daughters, Keithayn, Eve and Peta and lived on the East Rand in Springs and Benoni.

During the late 1950s/early 1960s, she was very involved with the Springs Repertory Theatre, Springs, particularly in set design and creation.



Dance Springs in 1949

In the 1960s, *Stephanie* studied art at the Johannesburg School of Art (under Joyce Leonard, Mervyn Dewes and George Boys) and the Visual Arts Research Centre, Johannesburg.

Stephanie joined a diving club then; she enthusiastically entered a new phase of painting subjects as a result of diving on coral reefs. *Stephanie* Watson loved to travel and undertook *numerous* trips to various countries, such as those bordering South Africa, to Britain and Europe, to Israel, Egypt, Iran, Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar, India, and to coastal ports of Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil.



Stephanie disembarking in 1967



Keith and Stephanie on board a ship to South America

Stephanie divorced in 1966, then moved to Betty's Bay in the Cape in mid-1976.



Market in Antananarivo, Madagascar, 1970

Stephanie Watson was a member of the Artists Guild, Cape Town. From 1978 she lectured at the Ruth Prowse School of Art, Cape Town; 1981-1983 she was a lecturer at the Strand Technical College; later she also taught at studios in Gordon's Bay and Grabouw. Over the years, she also had many students coming to her private Art Studio.

Stephanie Watson died in September, 2000, in Cape Town, after a short illness.

Selected Painting in the family collection



"Rock pools", 1995 – watercolour, pastels and salt – 185x130 cm

Return to:

<http://www.art-archives-southafrica.ch/WATSON.htm>