

# STANLEY LEARY

People & Location Photographer

## Clients

American Die Technology  
American Power Conversion  
AmeriGlo  
Annie E Casey Foundation  
Associated Builders Contractors of Georgia  
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Atlanta Regional Commission  
Baptist Press  
Bank of America  
British Broadcasting Company  
Black Star Publishing  
Blessed Trinity High School  
Burke County Public Library, Inc.  
Burmester Group  
Calvin Center  
Catholic News Service  
Celebrate Life International, Inc  
Chiropractic Economics  
Clayton State University  
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship  
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Country Magazine  
Creative Publishing International  
Defenderworx LLC  
Delta Airlines  
Design Directions Inc.  
Discovery Channel  
Drug Store News  
East Carolina University  
Enzymatic Deinking Technologies  
ESPN.COM  
Faith And The City  
Florida Baptist Convention  
Florida State University  
Fordham University  
fTRANS  
Fulcrum Construction  
Galloway School  
Georgia Council of Chiropractic  
Georgia Southern University  
Georgia State University  
Georgia Tech  
Georgia Trial Lawyers Association  
GTP Enterprises Inc  
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Home Channel News  
International Mission Board, SBC  
It's for Vets  
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J. M. Huber Corporation  
Kennesaw State University  
Kenyon College  
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Landmark Christian School  
Lifeway Christian Resources  
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Media2K  
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Morning Glory Farms  
MSI International  
National Education Association  
National Education Association  
National Basketball Association  
North American Mission Board



## How to create a soft and blurry background



### Getting started

Some portraits leap off the page and demand your attention. These compelling portraits are usually tight headshots with simple, non-competing backgrounds.

The key in all successful photographs is how well the photographer directed the viewer's attention to where he or she wants it to go.

In a candid or formal portrait there are four things you can do to create a blurry background that helps to make a strong photograph.

First (and the easiest thing to do) move the subject away from the background. If you have a person leaning against a wall it is very difficult to make the wall fuzzy.

Second (this one is a little more technical) your lens has an iris like



your eye. Your pupils get smaller when you go outside to compensate for all the light. When you go inside they open up to let in more light. The iris on your camera is called the aperture and it works the same as your eye if it is set on



Close to background



Far from background



North Carolina State University  
 Old Dominion University  
 Ohio State University  
 Presbyterian Today  
 Princeton University  
 Reinhardt College  
 Roni Hicks & Associates  
 St. John & Partners  
 Southern Catholic College  
 Southern Seminary  
 SouthTrust Bank  
 Stetson University  
 Sunny Crest Publishing  
 The Community Institute, Inc.  
 The Georgia Bulletin  
 Thione International, Inc  
 Union University  
 University Of Alabama Birmingham  
 University Of Michigan  
 University Of Tennessee At Martin  
 Upper Deck  
 Virginia Commonwealth University  
 Wake Forest University  
 Woodward Academy  
 World Journalism Institute

*Try a few different ways!*



fuzzier the background.

If you use aperture priority on your camera (check your manual) the camera will pick the shutter speed to match the aperture you have selected and give you the correct exposure.

I warned you that this part was a little more technical.

Third (this one is almost as technical) Selecting an ISO. As you probably know ISO stands for International Standards Organization. It used to be called ASA for American Standards Association and you'll see this on older cameras, but that has all changed now.

automatic.

Those little numbers running around your lens barrel (*f/2.8, f/4, f/5.6, f/8, f/11, f/16, f/22*) are really fractions. I know, who ever heard of a fraction 2.8 or 5.6? Photographers that's who, so just trust me on this one.

ISO numbers indicate how sensitive the camera is to light. If you are shooting film, you are stuck with one ISO for the entire roll. On digital you can change the ISO with each shot. The higher the ISO number, say 1000, the more sensitive it is to light. The lower the ISO number, say 100, the less sensitive.

Just like  $\frac{1}{2}$  is larger than  $\frac{1}{4}$ , *f/2.8* larger than *f/4* and *f/4* is larger than *f/5.6*. The larger the number the more light is let in through the lens. The larger the number (*f/4* is larger than *f/5.6*) the less is in focus in front of and behind the point focused on. The area in focus is called the depth-of-field and it changes with each f-stop (aperture). Different types of lenses like wide-angle or telephoto lenses make a difference also, more to come on that in a moment.

Using a lower number (100 as compared to 200 or higher) the larger the f-stop you can use thus the more out of focus the background.

Fourth (this one isn't technical at all) Telephoto lenses, like a 200 mm, will help make the background blurry. The longer the lens the more shallow the depth of field at any given f-stop. Conversely, the wider angle the lens the more depth of field at any given f-stop. So using a telephoto lens (100 mm and up) will help to blur the background.

The point of all this is that the larger the f number the less that is in focus around the subject and the

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***A camera gives you a  
reason to stare.***

*- John Running*

Summary: To make your background as blurry as possible:

- 1- move the subject as far away from the background as possible,
- 2- use the widest aperture like *f/2.8*,
- 3- choose a low ISO, and
- 4- use a telephoto lens like 200 mm.

Following these guidelines will help you put the focus on the subject where it should be and make the background just that, a background.

**We're on the Web!**

Visit us at:  
[www.StanleyLeary.com](http://www.StanleyLeary.com)