

Molly Glath: The best of both worlds

By Denise Adams

Molly Glath captures moments on film. Whether it's a brother giving his sister a bear hug or a baby resting his chin on his mother's shoulder, Glath catches those elusive minutes of joy through her photography business, Molly Jean Designs. Now a stay-at-home mother, Glath began her career in advertising right after college.

She was a "one-man public relations department" for three years with Associated Builders in Louisiana. From 1994 to 2001, she worked for Exxon's Public Affairs Department — four years in Louisiana and three at the company's headquarters office in Houston.

Glath created magazines, newsletters and external advertisements and also worked with the media. She also wrote and designed for the company's internal communications system as well as the public Web site.

She particularly enjoyed the design part of the job, especially coming up with concepts and seeing them go from the initial idea to the final presentation.

She frequently worked alongside professional photographers where she had the opportunity to observe how they used light, shadows and composition to create a work of art. For her, it was the opportunity of a lifetime.

"Photography's been my passion since college," said Glath, who admits she always seemed to have a camera on her hip, snapping shots of people, places and events.

With a natural eye for the camera, Glath was often asked to take pictures of her family members and friends, and she happily obliged.

Five years ago, she and her husband, Ray, welcomed daughter Caroline into their family, and Glath decided to step away from corporate America for a career as a stay-at-home mother. Daughter Anna Kate was born two and a half years ago, and Camille blessed the Glaths six months ago.

The idea of starting and owning her own photography business became a reality in the fall of 2004. With the full support of her husband, Glath believed she could balance her family life with a photography business.

Calling on her background in the corporate world, Glath set up a Web site, www.mollyjean.com. The site showcases her photographs as well as allows visitors to see special occasion cards she designed, using pictures and art work. Glath's specialties include high school senior pictures, weddings, family reunions and family portraits.

From the beginning, she's been able to accommodate a

growing business with her busy family. Molly Jean Designs is a partnership between Molly and Ray — his background in marketing helps her grow her business. When Glath has a shooting day, Ray and his daughters spend the day together.

Glath prefers outdoor photos, and there are five or six park-like locations near her home in Pecan Grove where she meets with families. Best of all, she's familiar with the lay of the land, the direction of the light and where the shadows and open spaces can be used to the best advantage.

Using a digital camera, Glath usually takes 150 shots in 15 to 20 minutes and assembles a package of 50 poses to choose from. She offers a choice of prints, from wallets all the way to 11x14-inch prints, and she often converts shots to black and white if it enhances the mood of the photo.

Glath also utilizes her background in creative design to create Christmas cards, birthday invitations, family reunion notices and special note cards for her clients.

Each one is unique as Glath incorporates family photos and a variety of templates, borders and backgrounds into each design, refusing to settle until the final product is exactly right.

"I'm a perfectionist, and it's the hardest part of being in a creative business," she said.

Some of the most satisfying times are when Glath's looking through the lens finder, and she instantly knows she captured something special.

When she's watching a family through the lens, she feels as if she's participating in their life, and it helps her visually discover the special chemistry that makes a family unique.

"It's great to be a part of that family's life for those moments," she said.

The Glaths donate a portion of the profits from Molly Jean Designs to King's Camp (www.clfcamp.com), a Christian summer camp her family established in Louisiana. Giving back is important to the Glaths, especially as she feels strongly that God has put this business opportunity in her path at this time in her life.

It appears Glath has the best of both worlds — she has time to

devote to her family and the opportunity to allow her creativity and love of photography to flourish in the business world.

Glath understands those moments of joy are fleeting, and capturing those moments on film is her way of helping families remember those special, unforgettable glimpses into the memorable times in a family's history.