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Skyline photo by local doctor a contest winner

Fernando Diaz, Staff writer

Walter S. Brooks has photographed the pyramids at Giza.

He has captured tufts of low-hanging clouds sweeping across a snowcapped Mount McKinley and images from dozens, if not hundreds, of other exotic locations.

But it was a picture of Rochester's skyline that earned the dermatologist, with residence in Penfield and practice in Greece, first place in the hometown photo contest of Shutterfly, an online photo service.



Walter S. Brooks, 51, took this picture of Rochester's downtown skyline on a Saturday last October, an hour and a half before dawn.

Brooks, 51, took the picture on a Saturday last October, an hour and a half before dawn, framing the Douglass-Anthony Bridge between the tallest downtown buildings and the reflection of their lights off a still Genesee River.

Brooks was inspired to take the picture after people he met during his travels kept asking where he was from and he couldn't show them. "I was so embarrassed," he said.

Though he doesn't enter many contests, Brooks said the recognition was only part of his joy. "It meant more to me than anything to be able to show and convey to others what beauty we have here," he said.

The self-taught photographer said taking pictures is his second passion, after dermatology, and his work is guided by a desire to capture the stories we often miss in our hurried lives. He began taking pictures during his 15th wedding anniversary trip to the Mediterranean.

"It's nice to have an escape," he said, and his passion is "a natural extension" of his profession because both require an eye for detail.

Brooks continues to push the limits of the photo service. So far, he said, about 17,000 of his images are on Shutterfly.

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On the Web - To see Walter Brooks' photos, go to www.brooksrus.shutterfly.com.