

## Capitol Photo celebrates 30 years

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Years ago, when Regina Madwed began working for the person who eventually would become her husband, she never thought she'd have to carry on the business he founded without him.

After Steven Madwed died of cancer in 2003, that is what Madwed faced.

"I took over the business without realizing I could do it," said Madwed, who operates Capitol Photo Interactive on the Post Road in Fairfield.

Although Madwed, still raw with emotion from the loss, may never fully get used to her husband's death, she and the couple's twin sons have gotten through it.

To honor Steven Madwed's memory and mark Capitol Photo's 30th anniversary, they've instituted a lecture series focusing on business-bolstering techniques and practices.

"It's giving back to the community, but at the same time it's telling the community about us," Madwed said.

The free, public series began in October. Two lectures presented so far were well attended, said Madwed, who is overwhelmed by the positive response. Originally conceived as a bimonthly event, the series may become monthly because so many people have been offering to participate, she said.

"The community has been so wonderful to us," Madwed said. "I was thinking, where am I going to get these speakers? I never thought people would be calling."

Capitol Photo offers a wide range of services, including family and business portraits; graphic design and brochures; product and industrial shots; Web site design, and 3-D animation.

Steven Madwed

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founded the business in Bridgeport, then moved it to his native Fairfield five years later.

"He was able to be friends with everybody. He had one of those very creative, very artsy personalities, and he looked the part," said Madwed, recalling that her late husband's preference for casual attire sometimes belied his acumen.

"That was the beauty of Steven. He was so, so intelligent. People gravitated to him."

Madwed began working for him in 1989, and the two married in 1991. Their twin boys, Jacob and Daniel, are now 13.

Steven Madwed died of lymphoma on Dec. 23, 2003, at age 49.

"It hit me very hard because the forecast wasn't that way," Madwed said. Steven had been undergoing aggressive treatment for the disease, and had just returned from a hospital stay. He collapsed at home.

Madwed said she did not consider giving up the company.

"I would never close the business. My kids want the business," she said, adding that her sons have been involved in the lecture series and "really enjoyed" discussions.

The first talk was given by branding consultant Bill Schley, cofounder of Fairfield company david ID Inc. He discussed his 2005 book, "Why Johnny Can't Brand: Rediscovering the Lost Art of the Big Idea."

"I think it's very creative and imaginative," Schley said of the lecture series. "It's somewhat unusual. I can't think of too many businesses in the area doing this. I think it's great."

"I think it's an excellent idea," added Sean Kilbride, a financial consultant and chairperson of the Fairfield Chamber of Commerce's volunteer Board of Directors.

Kilbride gave the second talk, on maximizing one's presence in the business arena

"She was put in a position where she had to make a choice," Kilbride said of Madwed's business. "She chose to throw herself into the business and continue to grow. I find her very inspirational in that sense."

Melissa Riley, manager of two Prudential offices — in Fairfield and Southport — attended the inaugural lecture along with several of her agents.

The series, she said, "brings together people of totally diverse backgrounds, giving them the opportunity to learn and network and develop relationships."

Madwed said the outpouring of community support is reassurance that the series is an appropriate tribute to her husband.

"It's all about respect for what Steve built up. I'm just continuing what he started," she said. "It shows that, yes, there are tragedies in the world, but you can overcome them."

The next lecture will be given by copyright attorney Jason Marsh on Thursday at Capitol Photo, 1300 Post Road, 6 to 7:30 p.m. For more information, call Madwed at 255-4002.