

# Former Alberta politician turns passion for photography into new career

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Former Alberta attorney general Jonathan Havelock has a new career these days. He's just opened a photographic art gallery, next to the Brewery District, showcasing his creative side.

"All I'm doing is borrowing images from God's role of film — because he's created this stuff — and I'm putting my own interpretation on it," said Havelock. "I'm trying to find what is unique in what people look at every day."

Havelock, who also served as minister of economic development and tourism, justice minister and government house leader from 1997 to 2001 under premier Ralph Klein, represented the riding of Calgary Shaw from 1993 to 2001. He stepped down from politics in 2001. His pre-politics background doesn't hint at his creative side: he was director of Canadian operations for the (now defunct) World Basketball League, legal counsel for Amoco Canada Petroleum Company and a Calgary alderman.

**Q: You've spent a good portion of your life in politics. When did the interest in photography start?**

**A:** Some years ago I used to do a lot of photography, in the days when film was used. But after leaving high school, life managed to get in the way so I stopped doing photography.

**Q: How does one go from leading the development of Alberta's justice policy to opening a photographic gallery?**

**A:** There's no link at all. My father became ill and passed away in 2007. My wife Neris decided I needed something to take my mind off that so she bought a very primitive Photoshop program for me and I started to play with the images I had taken. I was amazed at what you could do with a photo because it was so different than what I was able to do.

**Q: How did this evolve into the gallery?**

**A:** The initial goal was to take a shot of every province in the country and I would reproduce that on canvas. When I took in my shot of Peggy's Cove to a local photographer to have it made up, he indicated it was one of the best he ever saw. He felt I had the ability to really capture the feeling of what I was photographing. So it grew from there. I decided to chase it down and see if I could make it a viable hobby. And being an ex-politician, any time you tell a politician that he's good at anything, whether he is or not, he runs with it.

**Q: Did you ever confess to your colleagues that there was an artist buried inside just waiting to be paroled?**

**A:** I didn't confess anything to my colleagues. In fact, politics was an interesting type of an experience because while you're in a caucus, everyone is striving to be in cabinet. It was very much focused on doing what we thought was best for Alberta.

**Q: What is the vision for the gallery?**

**A:** If I can operate this so I can generate enough in sales, that it's covering expenses, then I'm happy because quite frankly for me, I do this because I love it. It's not financially driven ... and that enables me to keep the prices reasonable and ensures that a wide variety of people can afford to buy my works. (His photographs sell for between \$350 and \$3,100 for the canvas versions.)

**Q: You describe your work as fine art photography. What does that mean?**

**A:** Once I have the base image, I work in layers with respect to colour, shadow and texture — a variety of effects that I try and put into the image. I try to accomplish three things: colour is very important to me; light is critical as I want the image to react with light; and it needs to have detail and depth. I'm trying to make my photograph, to the extent I can, reflect the good qualities of oil paintings.

**Q: Your work tends to focus on the outdoors, nature and storms. What draws you to these subjects?**

**A:** They just make me feel good. I identify with them. I'm familiar with them having grown up in Alberta. A perfect day for me is to hop in my van and drive around and basically try and track down fields.

**Q: What are some of your newer series?**

**A:** I've just done some derelict automobiles. I love the look on the metal. Right now I'm focusing on a new series that will be looking at village, town, and city images with a dusk-to-dawn focus.

**Q: And would we find your works hanging in the homes of well-known politicians?**

**A:** That's a great question. I haven't really marketed to the politicians. I don't think I've had any one of them come forward to acquire a piece. Maybe that's because they still don't believe I'm doing them.

### **GALLERY BASICS**

**What:** Jonathan Havelock Fine Art Photography Gallery

**Where:** Suite 155, 10403 122 St. (West of the old Molson Brewery in Glenora Gates on 121 Street.)

**Hours:** Tuesday to Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., open to 7 p.m. on Thursday. Closed on holidays.

**Info:** 587-520-9255 or [jonathanhavelock.com](http://jonathanhavelock.com)