

The courage to create



Chuck Kimmerle found the courage to create by connecting to another photographer with MS.

by Marcella Durand

Although they lived decades apart, landscape photographer Chuck Kimmerle felt a strong connection to his photography inspiration, Steve Szabo, when he discovered, that like him, Szabo had multiple sclerosis. “It was because of my diagnosis, and because of Steve, that I put my heart and soul into my photography,” Kimmerle says.

Both Kimmerle and Szabo started as newspaper photojournalists: Szabo in 1961 and Kimmerle in 1987. “We both turned to landscape photography after leaving photojournalism,” says Kimmerle.



“International Truck” by

Steve Szabo

In 1971, Szabo photographed the back roads of Somerset County, Md., leading to the publication of **The Eastern Shore** and an exhibition that traveled to 15 museums over three years. In 1992, Szabo was diagnosed with progressive MS, but continued to work on a series of photos of cowboy’s boots on fence posts that he had begun earlier, on the plains of Nebraska.

In 2006, Kimmerle was diagnosed with MS. “I had been photographing landscapes on my personal time, but the harsh reality of my diagnosis reinvigorated those efforts. Photography was my mental and emotional therapy,” Kimmerle says. He has exhibited his spare and haunting images of the North Dakota landscape at the Nicolaysen Art Museum in Wyoming, and has been featured in magazines such as **Outdoor Photographer**.

In 2000, Szabo passed away. “I know that a story about a person who died from complications of MS could be considered negative,” says Kimmerle, who did not have a chance to meet his inspiration. “But this should be about truly living our lives, successfully and happily. About how we both created not only through the disease, but because of it.”

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Photography by Chuck Kimmerle

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