Clothing

Timeless clothing will help your portrait withstand the test of time. Clothing is the one factor that we cannot control at the studio and is of the utmost importance in a portrait, so choose outfits that compliment the image to be created.

These suggestions are for the more traditional photography session. If the goals of your session are different, to ensure we accomplish them, please discuss them with us at your Session Consultation.

CLOTHING CHOICES FOR COLOR PORTRAITS

When making clothing choices, think about what you want to emphasize in the portrait. For example, do you want the viewer's attention to focus on your image or clothing? To that end, we put forth the following suggestions:

Select subtle colors such as ivory, taupe, navy, black or earth tones. Bright colors, such as reds, instantly demand attention.

Colors should blend harmoniously among all subjects. For instance if everyone in the photo session is wearing ivory except for one person in red, the person in red will become the focal point of the image.

Avoid clothing with prominent patterns. Stripes, plaids, florals, and such distract the viewer, particularly in large family groups where everyone is wearing different patterns. Patterns also date clothing much quicker in terms of changing fashion.

We may use a combination of sitting and standing poses so feet may be visible. Shoe choices are important. Avoid gym shoes or other "clunky" big shoes. Simple and classic selections are always best. (Also see notes on "Fingernails and Toenails".)

Lighter colors add weight while darker colors subtract weight. Multiple layers of clothing can also add weight.

CLOTHING CHOICES FOR BLACK AND WHITE PORTRAITS

Black and white portraiture is having a renaissance today. Some very dramatic images can be created that are influenced by the clothing selections.

For low-key stylized images, darker colors work best to produce dramatic black and white portraits. Darker colors blend seamlessly into the background placing greater emphasis on the subject.

High-key images can benefit from wearing lighter colors. These too more easily blend into the background and focus the emphasis on the subject.

High contrast images use opposites in tone and lighting to create the image. Light clothing with a dark background or dark clothing with a light background can create just as powerful of an image as either of the above situations.

Even though colors, patterns, stripes, plaids, and florals will be shades of gray in black and white portraiture, they should be carefully considered as they may distract from the overall image.