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For Active Adults
in the Rochester Area

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7 Things To Do
This Fall in
Rochester

TOP MODELS

More Rochester residents over the age 55
are obtaining modeling jobs



Rochester Top Models



Models Kathleen O'Shaughnessy, 78 and her husband Richard O'Shaughnessy, 83, seen in the promotion for the Strong Play Ball Event.

Rochester-based models enjoying life in the limelight

By Debbie Waltzer

Kathleen and Dick O'Shaughnessy's neighbor was worried.

First, the neighbor saw a television commercial for Ferris Hills at West Lake in Canandaigua, featuring Kathleen. The next day, she opened a magazine and noticed a print ad featuring Dick smiling broadly, extolling the virtues of life at Cherry Ridge, a nursing home in Webster.

Did Kathleen put Dick in a nursing home and plan to move to Canandaigua, the neighbor wondered?

The couple laughed and explained that life as seniors who model is sometimes filled with adventures like this one.

The O'Shaughnessys are among a growing number of Rochester residents over age 55 who obtain modeling jobs through Mary Therese Friel and her husband, Kent Friel.

Pittsford native Mary Therese, Miss USA 1979 and a former Ford model, has operated MTF Models for the last 30 years. Kent joined her in the business shortly after their marriage in 1996.

Together, the Friels represent 300 models worldwide, aged 5-95. Working with seniors is one of her favorite parts of the job, says Mary Therese, whose parents are deceased.

"I love seniors so much," she says, explaining that she watched beauty pageants as a child with



Hilton resident James Millet, 69,



Janice Mahoney, 68, lives in Rochester.



Gail Turzillo, 59, who lives in Rochester's Maplewood neighborhood.

her grandmother, and regularly visits an 86-year-old gentleman who resides at the Friendly Home in Rochester. "Seniors are so classy. It is an honor to work with them."

As the United States population continues to age, marketers are increasingly relying on images of seniors to help sell products and services, notes Kent. As a result, modeling opportunities for older adults is on the rise and that trend likely will continue.

The Friels offer a 10-session training program for prospective senior models. Topics covered include appropriate make-up and hair for commercials and still-photo shoots, public speaking skills, learning to read teleprompters, developing effective voice and acting skills and more. Attendees also obtain a portfolio of photos, along with composite cards to promote their talents.

Then, the Friels begin promoting the models to marketing communications firms and advertising agencies that make the hiring decisions. Many of their senior models have been successful in landing multiple gigs.

Second career

Hilton resident James Millet, 69, is one of them. A retired tool and die maker who previously worked for companies such as Xerox Corp. and General Motors Corp., Millet has been represented by the Friels since 2004.

During that time, he has played the role of the Genesee beer man, and has done still work for Xerox and Eastman Kodak Co., as well as for area banks and car dealerships. Millet recently portrayed a nursing home administrator for St. Ann's Community, Rochester.

He also has played the part of a detective on a few occasions. In one spoof ad, he played a cop interrogating a clown. Another gig found him on a motorcycle promoting Kodak products.

The work is a ball, Millet says. He earns roughly \$100 per hour of work and says the Friels are extremely organized and fun to work with.

The O'Shaughnessys, residents of Pittsford, also greatly enjoy their modeling experiences. Kathleen, 78, a retired training consultant, has done print work for newspapers, annual reports and local magazines.

Faces in the media



James Millet in a billboard ad for Highland Hospital.



Kathleen O'Shaughnessy in an print ad for Ferris Hills at West Lake in Canandaigua.



Advertisement featuring Jim Millet (he is the firefighter) for Harris RF Communications.



Advertisement for Finger Lakes Casino and Race Track featuring Gail Turzillo (left) and Janice Mahoney both from MTF Senior Model.



Models Kathleen O'Shaughnessy, 78 and husband Richard, 83. Photo used in an annual report for Lifetime Health.



Model is Gail Turzillo in a cover shot for "Your Health," published by The Democrat and Chronicle newspaper.

Dick, 83, a retired manufacturer's representative, has had similar gigs. Together, the couple portrayed a pair of grandparents playing with their grandchildren at the Strong Museum in Rochester.

Time for interaction

Each of them appreciates the amount of work that art directors, photographers and other crew members go through to set up a shoot. "Modeling is a marvelous experience," Dick says. "The pay is good, and I enjoy interacting with the young people who are doing all of the work."

One of his favorite assignments was a pro bono job. Some Rochester Institute of Technology students needed an older model to portray an elderly patient at Monroe Community Hospital, and Dick happily volunteered. "I'm bald and gray, so I fit right in," he jokes.

Kathleen also enjoys working with young people, and has fun with the last-minute gigs that occasionally crop up. A photo or commercial shoot can be an extremely festive occasion. Regarding her all-day shoot at Ferris Hills, she states: "I don't know when I've enjoyed myself more."

Rochester resident Gail Turzillo, 59, who lives in the city's Maplewood neighborhood with her husband, Jay, started modeling roughly 10 years ago at the suggestion of a friend who is an actor. Both Gail and Jay are retired probation officers. They enjoy hiking, golf and horseback riding and spend winter months in Tuscon, Ariz.

When Gail retired in 2009, she contacted the Friels with an interest in increasing modeling opportunities. To date, she has done work for retailers, an out-of-town HMO and local corporations.

Gail hopes for more modeling opportunities as she grows older.

For their part, the Friels enjoy interacting with seniors and helping them discover a new career.

"We are always looking for people with a good sense of humor and a sense of adventure," Mary Therese says. "It's never too late to start something new, and modeling is a lot safer than skydiving!"

To learn more, call Mary Therese and Kent Friel, co-owners of MTF Models, at 585-624-5510.