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May 11, 2026

Behind the Lens of a Cultural Icon:
***The Linda McCartney Retrospective: From the Light* opens May 23rd at Fenimore Art Museum**

Cooperstown, NY:

Summer at Fenimore Art Museum in Cooperstown, New York features a major exhibition beginning May 23rd. The Linda McCartney Retrospective: From the Light (May 23–September 7) offers a compelling look at the life and work of the celebrated photographer. Linda McCartney (1941–1998) was an exceptional photographer, known for her portraits of musicians such as The Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, Aretha Franklin and The Beatles. Her story is close to a fairy tale, one of professional and personal accomplishments and loving dedication. Linda used photography to share her enthusiasm for the people and passions that formed and informed her life story.

Linda, born Linda Louise Eastman in Scarsdale, New York, briefly took night classes in photography while studying Art History at the University of Arizona. She preferred to trust her natural instinct rather than rely on formal photography training. She was an avid animal and nature lover, often photographing the landscapes and creatures around her. Linda started her career as a receptionist and editorial assistant for Town & Country magazine, eventually running her own photoshoots with music groups, including the Rolling Stones. Her photos of Mick Jagger on the Hudson launched her career as a professional photographer. Later, in 1968, her photo of Eric Clapton used as the cover of Rolling Stone magazine made her the first female photographer to have a photo on the cover of the magazine.

Alongside photography, music goes hand-in-hand with Linda's work and her life. Linda met Paul in 1967 at the Bag O'Nails Club and then again four days later at the launch of Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. Paul and Linda's relationship is a story of love, shared passions and commitment to family life. They spent nearly every night of their relationship together and bonded deeply over their appreciation of nature, and a shared commitment to their family life. Many of the photos in the exhibit are photos of Paul and their children taken by Linda at various stages of their lives and in the many places they traveled to. Some of the photos in the show are by Paul, a photographer in his own right, with him and Linda sometimes swapping the camera back and forth.

Linda married Paul in 1969 after a two-year courtship. After the 1970 breakup of The Beatles, Paul continued making music, including the 1971 album RAM, on which Linda was credited. They continued performing together, with Linda joining Paul on stage in their band Wings as a keyboard player and vocalist. Linda had her own musical output as well. In 1977 an unknown band called Suzy and the Red Stripes released a single titled "Seaside Woman." The band was a pseudonym of Wings, but Linda wrote and sang lead vocals on the song. This song was later included on Wide Prairie, a compilation album posthumously released after her passing in 1998.

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One of Linda's other passions was her work for animal rights and promoting vegetarian lifestyles. She was a committed and successful protector of animals, encouraging a vegetarian lifestyle as far back as the 1970s. By the late 1980s and early 1990s she was a successful vegetarian cookbook writer and founder of her frozen vegetarian food line. Linda McCartney Food was a pioneer in mass market of vegetarian food brands, and it is still extremely successful in the UK, Ireland Australia and other regions. She was also unafraid of more public gestures—becoming a patron of the Vegetarian Society and working closely on public activism with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and fearlessly advocated for their rights.

In 1995, Linda was diagnosed with breast cancer. The last months of her life were spent surrounded by her family before passing away in 1998 at the age of 56 at the family ranch in Tucson, Arizona. Paul encouraged fans to donate to breast cancer research charities that did not support animal testing. In her memory, the Linda McCartney Kintyre Memorial Trust opened a memorial garden near the family's Scottish farmhouse. Linda had previously described Scotland as "like nothing I'd ever lived in. It was the most beautiful land you have ever seen, way at the end of nowhere. To me it was the first feeling I'd ever had of civilization dropped away." A bronze statue of her sits in the center of the garden.

Linda's legacy carries on through her photographs, her music, her long-lasting support for animal rights, and her love for her family. The Linda McCartney Retrospective: From the Light is on view at Fenimore Art Museum from May 23rd until September 7th.

Fenimore Art Museum begins summer hours on May 23rd and will be open 7 days a week from 10 am – 5 pm. You can now conveniently pre-purchase your tickets online at www.fenimoreart.org or at the door.

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The Beatles. Abbey Road, London © 1969 Paul McCartney under exclusive licence to MPL Archive LLP. Photographer: Linda McCartney