

# Sprung from cages on Highway 9 ... (and the Parkway and Turnpike)

N.J. celebrities are focus of photo exhibit at Newark Museum



Among the celebrities featured in "What Exit? The Spirit of New Jersey: Photographs by Timothy White" at the Newark Museum are, clockwise from top left: Susan Sarandon, Bruce Springsteen, James Gandolfini, Whitney Houston and Jack Nicholson. Below: a portrait of Queen Latifah. *Timothy White*

Natalie Pompillo For The Star-Ledger

If you're from New Jersey, you could be anywhere in the world — the Siberian steppes, an Argentinian archipelago, the desert of Death Valley — and you'll get the same question about your home state: "What exit?"

That's the belief of Fort Lee native/celebrity photographer Timothy White and the reason his Newark Museum exhibition featuring photographs of Garden State celebrities is titled, "What Exit? The Spirit of New Jersey."

All of those featured are members of the New Jersey Hall of Fame — including Queen Latifah, Whitney Houston, Jon Bon Jovi and Meryl Streep — as a nod to White's own induction into the hallowed institution later this month.

"We have more than our fair share of celebrities, probably more than any other state," White said. "It's about the strength of the people, the strength of their character." White is one of the biggest names in photography. He's shot album covers for Aretha Franklin, Jay-Z and Bruce Springsteen; photo spreads for Rolling Stone, Vanity Fair, Esquire and Playboy; movie posters and television promotional images; and "Got milk?" ads featuring athletes and actors.

His alphabetical online archive of hundreds of images starts with Aaron Eckhart and ends with Ziggy Marley. He's published books, created commercials and been named "International Photographer of the Year" by the Lucie Foundation and "One of the Most Important People in Photography" by the now-shuttered American Photo magazine.

White was born in New Jersey, his parents were born in New Jersey and he's always been proud of his roots.

"As I've traveled the world and met famous people, I always was myself. I always was this kid from Jersey," White said. "Here I am with the president of the United States; Brad Pitt; Harrison Ford ... and I'm this kid from New Jersey."

White attended the 2010 New Jersey Hall of Fame induction ceremony and was blown away not only by the inductees — including

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— Photographer and native New Jerseyan Timothy White

Susan Sarandon, Danny DeVito and Frankie Valli — but by "everyone's pride in our state."

"I was amazed by how much fun it was, how long it lasted, how these really well-known people were hanging around backstage, eating spaghetti while sitting on park benches," he said. "They believed in what we all believe if we're from New Jersey. There's a special pride in who we are. Some people call that 'attitude.'"

In addition to White, this class of Hall of Fame inductees includes authors Peter Benchley ("Jaws") and George R.R. Martin ("A Song of Ice and Fire") series, which became the basis for "Game of Thrones"; actor Jason Alexander; musician Southside Johnny Lyon; and entrepreneur Martha Stewart. Tickets to the red carpet ceremony at Asbury Park's Paramount Theatre on Oct. 27 are almost sold out, but the happenings will be live-streamed on nj.com.

White hopes to bring his 100-year-old mother, who still lives in the Garden State, to the event. ("I go back and visit her every month although I live in Los Angeles. I haven't really left. I don't think any of us do," he said.) White's parents met as students at Cliffside Park High School. He grew up in Fort Lee; his family had a Shore home in Ship Bottom and he has friends and relatives in the Oranges, on Long Beach Island and in Asbury Park.

"I'm behind the camera. I'm not famous. I'm not Jack Nicholson or Bruce Springsteen who can stand up there and say almost anything and be revered. Some people get up there and talk about New Jersey and what sets us apart and I don't want to do that either," White said. "I want to bring my mom up and say, 'This woman was born 100 years ago in New Jersey and I was born here as well.'"

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What Exit? The Spirit of New Jersey: Photographs by Timothy White

Where: Newark Museum, 49 Washington St., Newark

When: Through Jan. 5. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5 p.m. Closed major holidays.

Admission: \$8-\$15. For more information, visit [newarkmuseum.org](http://newarkmuseum.org).