

“During COVID, I think I was just itching to do something and to have a project to work on,” Anna Romani said, a Virginia sophomore who started her own photography business in high school.

The Oakton sophomore reportedly started at 16, establishing her own business “one month” into the COVID-19 pandemic amidst social distancing and other policies, Romani said.

To originally build her portfolio, she implemented a form of “social-distance shoots” which allowed her to build a clientele base amidst the worries of the pandemic, Romani said.

“Beyond just COVID though, starting a business—I did not know what I was getting myself into,” Romani said. “And I’m kind of grateful for that because I don’t know if I would’ve done it if I necessarily knew all that it entailed.”

Romani said that “photography is a very personal business” and that differing views on the style and quality of photos can lead many in the industry to have very pinpoint opinions.

“The personal connection with my clients is so important to me and I really think that’s one of the things that sets me apart,” Romani said. “I build in a lot of client communication in my workflow prior to the shoot so that my client can feel the most comfortable with me in front of my lens, and therefore love their photos so much.”

It is that “personal connection” Romani said, that keeps her going through possible trials of her work, with notable instances being anniversary photos in important places, family photos in the home of a client, and many more instances of personal touches.

“One of the biggest things that I look back on my sixteen-year-old self and I’m so proud of,” Romani said, “is just that I did not let other people’s opinions of me stop me from pursuing my dreams of photography and I think that’s huge.”

According to Romani, despite the many difficulties of starting a business in high school, she is hopeful of what is to come, and “proud” of her “sixteen-year-old self” for making such a big decision.