

Tommy Heinrich Bio (2017 Long Update)

Tommy Heinrich was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1962 to parents of European decent. As a child, Tommy kindled deep love for wilderness on summer family holidays spent in the mountains of Bariloche, Patagonia. When he was 9 years old, his father gave him his first camera and Tommy began capturing the beauty he saw in the world of nature. He dreamed of photographing for National Geographic someday.

As an 18-year old, Tommy began roped rock and mountain climbing and loved it from the first moment. While climbing as much as he was able in the nearby Andes, he soon excelled in the sport, displaying a willingness to take risk as well as a willingness to help others in extreme circumstances.

Tommy earned a university degree in Agricultural Engineering and at 27, left for Germany to work in horse breeding and training. For the next five years, he traveled around Europe and the United States working in high-level thoroughbred and quarter horse training facilities until he realized a life of climbing was what he most wanted to pursue.

In 1991, Tommy became a rock-climbing instructor at UC Berkeley. Two years later, Tommy found himself living full time in Yosemite for six months where he climbed El Capitan, Half Dome and many other classic test pieces. Soon he heard the Himalaya calling him — the highest peaks in the world. In 1993, Tommy traveled to Nepal and successfully summited Cholatse, a 22,000' peak near Mt. Everest, alone.

Himalayan expedition climbing became Tommy's passion, and on May 15th, 1995, Tommy became the first Argentine to summit Mt. Everest. Soon thereafter, Tommy began speaking to groups and businesses about his experience on Everest, gaining great popularity as a corporate speaker — which continues to this day.

In the next decade, he went on to participate in 11 more Himalayan expeditions attempting 14 different peaks — as both a climber and a photographer. His considerable expedition experience includes summiting the fourth highest peak in the world (Lhotse Sha, 23,000 ft.) in 1998 and documenting Austrian climber Gelinde Kaltenbrunner's summit of K-2 in 2011.

Tommy's long career in photography has yielded work published in countless catalogs and magazines, and exhibitions in North and South America, Asia, and Europe. His childhood dream of becoming a National Geographic photographer came true with an assignment in 2006 to document a winter ascent of Nanga Parbat, by a Polish climbing team. His ongoing love for photographing in remote and exotic places was chronicled in *Pakistan's Golden Thrones*, a large-format book of images from the highest peaks in Pakistan's Karakorum Range. The book was a finalist in the 2011 Banff Mountain Book and Film Festival.

He has shot film footage for CBS, Discovery, CNN, Univision and most Argentine television networks. Tommy continues to keep in touch with his love of horses by covering Polo World Championships in Europe and South America, including Argentina's Polo Triple Crown.

Tommy was twice awarded Argentina's *Orden a los Servicios Distinguidos en el Mérito Civil* for his summit of Mt. Everest in 1995, and again for reaching the North Pole in 2016. He was the first civilian to receive Argentina's *Condor Dorado Honoris Causa* award for his ascent of Mt. Everest.

Presently, Tommy lives in Buenos Aires with his wife Victoria and son Liam. He is a dedicated father, still in love with big mountains, photographing wild places, and sharing his stories to the hearts of others.