

****Frequently Asked Questions by Readers****

What makes you powerful as a person and a writer? Who are your mentors?

I believe what makes me powerful as a person and a writer is my ability to read human nature and to see all sides of just about anything. I am also compassionate, like the book character Suzanne, it stems from many not-so-apparent life struggles. I get in the 'head' of my characters, so that you see their dilemma; you understand how they got there; you know them well enough that you sympathize and cheer for them in spite of their shortcomings.

My writing also has impact because it creates connections with everyday experiences. I love scenes and painting a vivid picture through an everyday analogy (i.e. "It was as hot as a Louisiana summer"). I make sure I meticulously depict the body language of the person to reflect what they are experiencing at the moment. The reader's mental and visual senses are working together to bring the character to life and make him or her memorable. Lastly, I like to keep things unpredictable. That is a lot of fun for me.

My writing mentors are the former Bebe Moore Campbell, former Sidney Sheldon, John Grisham and Benilde Little (author of Good Hair). Each of these authors writes stories that are vivid, fast pace, unpredictable with substantive storylines that are rich and filled with complex characters. They leave you wanting more!

Who do you want to reach with your book and the message within?

I want to reach *everyone* with my book. The struggles and lessons drawn from my book are universal. The characters are African-American, which adds an extra perspective and dimension to them, but they are human most of all. That is why I believe I've had an African-American male law professor, Caucasian sales and marketing person, a 70-year Southern, retired woman and my 18-year nephew, all rave about the book! Again, the story is one of love, the consequences of choices, the power of family, standing strong through adversity, learning from one's mistakes, forgiveness and ultimately, redemption. It is about the human struggle and rewards of life.

What do you think makes your book different from others on the same subject?

Many books are about love (romance), or politics, identical twins, or involve crime and detective story lines. This book has equal doses of each! They are blended together to tell a very full and captivating story. The reader will remember the characters. The reader will increase his or her understanding of human nature. The reader will most likely be further empowered to meet his or her own life challenges.

Where can readers find your book?

Store locations carrying "And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Secret Life of Senator Jack" are constantly being added! For a list of stores currently carrying the book, see store listings on the book website's Events web page.

How can readers reach you online?

Readers can reach me online and learn more about "And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Secret Life of Senator Jack" by visiting my book's website at <http://vernadinemerrick.com>. On the site, there are book reviews and a way to enter book reviews, an audio intro of the Prologue, and the capability to order the novel. Readers can email me directly at vm@vernadinemerrick.com for additional questions or insights. I love to hear from readers! I'm also on Facebook.com. The novel can be ordered on Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com (ISBN: 978-1-60860-231-1).

How long have you been writing?

I've been writing since college (1980's). I wrote a book of poetry while at Miami University and Carnegie Mellon University. However, I did not accept the offer of publication for the compilation because I felt the poems were too personal. My debut novel, "And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Secret Life of Senator Jack" took 5 years to write. I did it part time while working at a very demanding job. I'm currently working on my second novel.

What is your favorite book outside of your own?

There are two favorite books. One is "Brothers and Sisters" by the former Bebe Moore Campbell. The other book is one of Sidney Sheldon's first novels, "Bloodline." Both novels are vivid, fast pace, unpredictable, and offer substantive storylines with rich and complex characters.

What do you consider more important, the content of the book or its interpretation from the reader?

The interpretation by the reader of the book is most important. If the author has done his or her job properly, the content of the book drives the reader's 'take away' from the book.

Do you write other genres?

My next book will again be a contemporary fiction. It is also what I most like to read. I have read and enjoyed other types of books, including historical literature, science fiction and non-fiction, mainly in the area of self-development. My next novel is in a corporate setting and involves espionage, money laundering and romantic entanglements.

What advice would you give to someone wanting to write his or her own book?

My first advice is to start. Set aside a certain amount of time each day to write. Be committed to the book's completion and give yourself a goal date for having it done. I definitely encourage the prep work such as reading as many successful authors' works in the genre in which you are interested in writing and taking a creative writing course. Also, I suggest writing down the plot in detail. Have the chapter headings outlined and each chapter's general subject matter in place before starting. After about page 25-30, the characters (if well developed) write themselves. When your work is completed, have a test market mirroring your target audience available to you to obtain honest feedback on your book. Tweak the book accordingly. Good editing of the book is critical. Finally, have patience and persistence when it comes to getting the book published. The book industry is extremely competitive!