

## **Writers Foundation Forum Questions/Responses by Vernadine Merrick:**

### **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 do you hope to accomplish with your book?**

Like most authors, I want my book to be a bestseller and reach as wide of an audience as possible. However, I equally want my readers to further understand the forgiving nature of love, the consequences of choices, the power of family, and the value in standing strong through adversity, learning from one's mistakes, and ultimately, the beauty of redemption. The book is about the human struggle and rewards of life.

### **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.

### **Are people able to follow you on twitter or other social sites?**

I am on Facebook.com. Readers can reach me online and learn more about "And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Secret Life of Senator Jack" also by visiting the book's website at <http://vernadinemerrick.com>. On the website, there are book reviews and a way to enter your book review, and an audio intro of the Prologue. Readers can email me directly at [vm@vernadinemerrick.com](mailto:vm@vernadinemerrick.com) for additional questions or insights. I love to hear from readers!

### **What advice would you give to someone that would like to write their 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!

**What is your inspiration for writing? How have your mentors influenced you?**

I feel compelled to write. I relish expressing myself through the written word. My inspiration for writing stems from thorough enjoyment of storytelling and helping others to learn some of the lessons in life I may have learned the hard way. My characters are multidimensional like many of us. I believe after you have read the book, you will hopefully see people more as humans and not as images or caricatures. No one is totally good or bad and that adds to his or her uniqueness and often strength. My author mentors realized this in the most powerful way.

**What will readers be able to take away from your book?**

Readers should be able to take away from the book a better understanding of human nature. The book will challenge persons as to how they see situations and others in their own lives.

Ultimately, the book should inspire persons to work through and learn from their own adversity and to never give up! There is always the wonder of redemption.

**Why does your book stand alone in comparison to 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.

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 character Suzanne, it stems from many not-so-apparent life struggles. I get in the 'head' of my characters. 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 is visual. 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.