



Finding Romance at Work

Dublin resident finds a new career path as a romance author

by Katelynn Cole

When Marcia Anderson's husband got a job in Central Ohio and the couple moved to Dublin, a career change came with her.

Before the move, Anderson produced training films for the U.S. Navy, was a copywriter for TV commercials and a scriptwriter for corporate videos. Relocating, however, inspired her to try something she's always wanted to do.

Anderson became a romance author. Her desire to write romantic fiction stemmed from her own appreciation for the genre.

"Reading romances was so much fun that eventually I decided I would try writing them," Anderson says. "So, I decided – very cockily – that I would be able to write fiction very easily. And I learned that wasn't true – there's a lot that I've learned."



She first came up with her pen name, Marcia James, by combining her first name and her husband's. Then she chose her trademark, a Chinese crested, hairless dog. She says she chose the distinctive breed for comic relief.



"His name is Smokey and he's been so incredibly popular that I've just snuck one into each book," Anderson says. "They're not necessarily a huge part of the plot but there's always going to be one in each book. It's kind of like how (Alfred) Hitchcock is always in one scene of all of his movies."

Shortly after deciding to embark on her writing dream, she joined Romance Writers of America (RWA), and its local chapter, Central Ohio Fiction Writers. The association is for both published and aspiring romance writers.

“Eighty-three percent of all Americans want to write a book, and one of the best ways to get published is to join a legitimate group like RWA and learn the craft and the business side,” Anderson says. “We’re 10,000 (members) strong. About 3,000 of us are published and about 7,000 are waiting to be published.”

According to Anderson, she enjoys writing romantic fiction for reasons beyond creating a steamy plot.

“I chose romance for many reasons. It’s always optimistic and the women are empowered,” Anderson says. “There’s an unfortunate stigma that the readers and authors are all lonely women that aren’t married and don’t have jobs, and that’s not necessarily true. They’re very positive and upbeat and they show women that are taking control.”

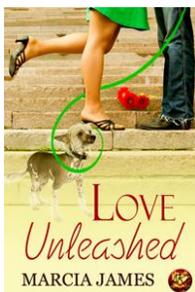
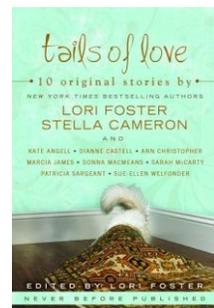


Her manuscripts made it to the finals of 11 writing contests before one sold to Cerridwen Press and her first book, *At Her Command*, was published. The book is set in Washington D.C. and tells the story of four law enforcement agents who work undercover at the same club, and the romances that result from it. She describes *At Her Command* as an R-rated, “risqué” book.

“I don’t write serious erotic romance, but I do have elements in my books that are definitely not for children,” she says.

Still, not all of her stories are for mature audiences only. In July 2009 she was one of 10 authors featured in *Tails of Love*, a book of short stories featuring animals.

Anderson’s story, “Rescue Me,” is a G-rated, humorous tale featuring the relationship between a pet owner and a veterinarian. The proceeds from *Tails of Love* benefit the Animal Adoption Foundation.



Anderson’s new eBook, *Love Unleashed*, will be released in February. The proceeds will benefit the American Heart Association.

“I really like when my work can help others,” she says. “I really enjoy that.”

Anderson makes a point of extending her charitable ways into her personal life, as well. When she and her husband married in 1989, they requested their wedding guests give to charities instead of buying gifts for them. The act garnered them attention and articles in *People* magazine, *The Washington Post* and *Brides* magazine. Anderson also likes to make baskets and donate them to charitable organizations, where they are used as gifts or in silent auction fundraisers.

Anderson also teaches author promotion workshops online and to Central Ohio writing groups, to educate other writers about public relations work. In the past she also wrote romance author profile articles for the Dublin *ThisWeek* newspaper.

Even though she left behind her life in Washington, D.C., Anderson expresses fulfillment with her new path.

“At a time when everybody’s scared to death of losing their jobs and their house, you can come home and read something about two strong people that find love together and end up happy and you go to bed feeling good,” Anderson says. “It’s my avocation as well as my vocation, and I hope I do it for the rest of my life. It’s really fun, and everybody loves a happy ending.”

For more information on Anderson’s work, visit www.MarciaJames.net.

Katelynn Cole is a contributing writer for *Dublin Life*.