

Sheri McGuinn: Biographies

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First Person Brief

I write.

Elementary school plays and short stories, high school news articles, college papers, investigative court reports, individual education plans, screenplays, novels, non-fiction—it all demands attention to detail, careful choice of words, and the end objective of clarity for the reader.

It's all writing, and I write.

(48 with header)

First Person Short

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It's all writing, and I write.

I teach.

I've been self-publishing for more than a decade. I speak, do workshops, and coach other writers through the process to promote quality self-publishing and help them avoid trouble.

I edit.

I do copyediting and proofing, but my favorite is developmental editing. It's an extension of teaching – pulling the best work out of each author while keeping their unique voice.

(109 with headers)

First Person One-Page Bio: Sheri McGuinn

If my life were a painting, it would be impressionistic – specks of color requiring distance for the picture to become clear. I never paint my own portrait; I simply use selected specks from my life to make my stories seem real.

My experience is diverse. A few examples:

- Working as bin attendant on a grape picker, perching on the edge of a one-ton bin, getting covered in grape juice with yellow jackets swarming about, plucking leaves and other undesirable items out of the mechanically picked grapes as they poured into the bin.
- Surviving three children born in fire signs: The oldest disappeared for nine months when he was seventeen; I got two helicopter rides with the youngest when he had severe head injuries; their sister still races to the coast to surf hurricane-driven waves.
- Being an exchange student in 2012 – five weeks with a family in Lima, Peru, and weekend adventures: [sandboarding dunes](#), climbing above Machu Picchu, and fishing in the Amazon.

Writing is part of me.

- I collaborated on my own bedtime stories and attempted my first novel at age ten.
- I wrote class plays in elementary school, was editor of my high school paper, and took writing classes throughout college.
- Day jobs honed skills essential for writing: interviewing, managing various tasks with deadlines, research and evaluation, writing in a variety of modes for different audiences, adaptation/simplification of written materials, editing and proofing, and public speaking.
- On the side, I wrote GED practice exams, a book review for Colorado Libraries, and a successful grant application (my school received \$100,000).

Writing as a profession: In 2005, I got my first check for writing.

Screenwriting: In 2005 I was hired to re-write a screenplay with specific budgetary and story requirements. The script helped land funding for the project, but ended up being changed again. I got paid, was credited as Creative Consultant, and the experience spurred my enthusiasm for writing professionally. I've written screenplays for all of my novels, and the first one, *Running Away*, is on [Lifetime](#).

Books: [Running Away: Maggie's Story](#) is realistic. I was pitching the original novel, *Running Away*, when vampires were the rage. I wasn't pitching it right, either. I turned to self-publishing and have learned to do it myself. I have multiple novels published and more in progress.

Editing: Pulling the best work out of each author while maintaining their unique voice, then seeing them follow through to publication, is fun. It also helps pay bills. So does writing and editing for businesses – and my social histories for sentence mitigation can make a difference.

Looking forward.

I figure I have another thirty years to write, collect more experiences, and learn new things.

Life is good.

Third Person Biographies

Bio/Brief:

Sheri McGuinn is an award-winning writer and self-publisher. With Master's degrees in both education and professional writing, she also does writing and editing for hire, coaches other authors through self-publication, and conducts self-publishing workshops. (34 words)

Bio/Background

Sheri McGuinn was born in Kenmore, New York. As an “afterthought” child, she grew up among adults. Her mother wanted to be a writer. When it was time for dinner, they had to clear the dining room table of her mother's manuscripts, the typewriter, and *Writer's Market*. A letter to the editor is all her mother ever saw in print, but she was an excellent first editor.

When McGuinn was in high school, they moved to Westfield, New York, a small town where she was drafted to be editor of the high school paper. In her senior year, she took art classes. Instead of applying to Northwestern for journalism, she tried unsuccessfully to talk her parents into art school. She spent her twenties at odds with her parents, supporting herself and going to school when she could afford it. She was a music major for a while, then a drama major for several years. Working on sets satisfied her art interest. However, she always took classes in literature, composition, or newswriting.

Thanks to transferability of credits and the way prerequisites are set up at colleges, when she decided to get a degree, a psychology major was the affordable option. That led to work as a probation officer and later as a child protection caseworker/investigator. As a divorced mom with three children, she decided she wanted a safer job and returned to school for a Master's in Education, specializing in Learning and Behavior Disorders. She continued her studies to become certified as a reading specialist as well. As a special education and reading teacher, she worked in multiple states in rural, urban, and reservation schools, usually with tough teenagers.

In December 2014, McGuinn finished a Master's of Administration, Professional Writing, which honed her editing and technical writing skills. She is currently an adjunct instructor at Mohave Community College and she offers occasional workshops and presentations on self-publishing as well.

Awards, & Honors

Running Away, the first novel Sheri self-published, was an honorable mention in the *Writer's Digest's* International Self-Published Book Awards. The movie has been shown on European television and Lifetime. A slightly revised version was released in 2020 as [*Running Away – Maggie's Story*](#) and has received a positive Kirkus review. The mother's story from that novel, [*Peg's Story – Detours*](#), was also released in 2020 with a positive Kirkus review.

[*Tough Times*](#), released in 2021, is a revision of *Michael Dolan McCarthy*, Sheri's second novel. While the original book was a quarter-finalist in the Amazon Breakout Novel Awards, there was room for improvement. *Tough Times* is currently a semifinalist in the Kindle Book Awards.

[*Best Short Stories from Saturday Evening Post's Great American Fiction Contest 2016*](#) included one of Sheri's short stories, “Maria Angelica's Baby.”

Self-Publishing Expertise

In 2014, Sheri presented on “Self-Publishing for Schools: Why and How” as part of the Digital and Media Literacies Poster Session at the annual convention of the National Council of Teachers of English. She also wrote an article on the topic for the inaugural edition of *Literacy Today* and has given several workshops and presentations on self-publishing to writers' groups and the general public.