

## **Spotlight: *We're Pleased to Present...***

### **Dianna Graveman**



**Nonfiction Writer, Fiction Writer, Writing Instructor  
Elementary and Middle School Teacher**

**SLWG Member since 2006**

**DIANNA GRAVEMAN** is amazed at the direction her life has taken this past year. On the brink of finishing her culminating project for an MFA in Writing from Lindenwood University last July, she finally worked up the nerve to submit a piece of writing for publication. Since then, she finished her degree, published three pieces of nonfiction and three pieces of fiction, and has had six more pieces accepted for publication in 2006 and early 2007, one of which was chosen by the editor of an anthology as “Best in Book.”

Dianna was interviewed in April on a radio talk show, judged a category of books for the Missouri Writers Guild’s annual awards, and appeared as a featured reader at a Lindenwood University alumni event. She will be teaching writing courses for St. Charles Community College and the University of Phoenix this fall and participating in a book signing event for Adams Media at Barnes & Noble in September. She will also help judge the youth writing contest for The Big Read Literary Festival (co-sponsored by St. Louis Writers Guild and Build-a-Bear Workshops) in Clayton in October.

All of this is pretty exciting for somebody who gave up the idea of being a writer over thirty years ago when she was in her teens! Upon the advice of teachers and guidance counselors to take up something more practical, she enrolled in general education classes at a community college but eventually dropped out and took an office job. Over the years she worked in several business and medical offices, married and had three wonderful children (Steve, Beth, and Teresa), and every now and then jotted a story idea or two on a stray piece of scrap paper that she promptly threw away.

Her husband eventually encouraged her to give college another shot. She graduated Summa cum laude from UM-St. Louis the year she turned 40 and began teaching. For almost a decade, she taught elementary or middle school in both public and private schools. She is included in the 2005 edition of “Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers.”

Dianna was trying to decide where to pursue her master’s degree a few years ago when she discovered that Lindenwood University offered a relatively new MFA program. The old writing urges resurfaced, and she enrolled in the program, graduating this past September. She says she was strongly influenced by Dr. Michael Castro, her professor and advisor at Lindenwood (also a member of SLWG!). “His expectations were high, but he was very supportive,” she said.

Among Dianna’s favorite writers are Terry Tempest Williams, William Least Heat-Moon, and nature poet, Mary Oliver. Her favorite fiction writers are Sue Monk Kidd, Anne Tyler, and Elizabeth Berg.

Dianna is a member of St. Louis Writers Guild, Saturday Writers, and Missouri Writers Guild. She is currently working on a collection of short fiction and a children’s picture book biography. When she isn’t reading or writing, she plays acoustic guitar (a graduation gift from her good friend, Nancy, upon completing her MFA), attempts watercolor paintings, and travels with her husband, Don. Her favorite destinations are in the American West, the setting for much of her recent fiction. At the time of this writing, she is in Siesta Key, Florida (literally!).

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