



Ariana ('89) and Yates Adams

JMU alumna ventures away from corporate America for just a bit to try her hand at writing

By Erin Pettit ('05)

It all started when she saw a call for submissions for *Chicken Soup for the Bride's Soul: Stories of Love, Laughter and Commitment to Last a Lifetime*. Ariana Adams ('89) was working as a communications manager for Wachovia's Internal Audit department when she saw the chance to fulfill a dream of hers.

"I knew it was the perfect opportunity for me," Adams says, "to try to get my work published since I had such a unique story to tell. So, it turned out to be a great groundbreaking publishing success."

Her rare story begins with her unexpected reunion with her high school sweetheart, Yates Adams, after a 10-year hiatus. They immediately started talking about marriage, and he soon proposed. But, just two days before their wedding day Adams was involved in a serious car accident. She was left with a collapsed lung, several broken ribs, a fractured pelvis and a fractured clavicle.

"I couldn't believe after a year and a half of wedding planning that I wasn't able to walk down the aisle ... I remember looking out the hospital window and seeing a beautiful autumn day ... we even gave thought to getting married in the hospital chapel. But I didn't want to remember my wedding day that way, so we decided to postpone the wedding until I was well ... I eventually recognized that the wedding wasn't what mattered most, but the fact that we were together and I was going to get well was what was most important."

After a surprisingly speedy recovery, Ariana and Yates finally married. Contrary to the stereotypical "perfect wedding day," they competed with a thunderstorm.

"After everything we had been through, a little rain was the least of my worries," Ariana says. "It was actually pretty cool to hear the thunder as we stood at the altar saying our vows. Sure, I would have preferred that it was a nice sunny day. But I was just glad to finally have my day. I learned that people put too much emphasis on everything being perfect on their wedding day."

So, with she and Yates finally married -- unique story in hand -- Ariana was able to kick off her writing career. She submitted her story to *Chicken Soup* and it was selected among 3,000 submissions to be one of the 101 featured stories.

"I was elated," Adams says, "not just because I was published, but also because I was able to share my unique story with a vast audience."

The Adams' story was then featured in *South Charlotte Weekly*, a regional paper where they reside. This experience gave Adams even more writing exposure.

"Our faces were plastered all over Charlotte in those newspaper bins that line every street corner. That was such a rush. Additionally, while I don't yet know the impact, I'm hoping that it will be easier for me to get published in the future, now that I have one under my belt. That is to be determined! I'm submitting a story for another *Chicken Soup* book, so stay tuned."

Adams actually quit corporate America for a while to freelance full time.

"I did business writing though, not creative writing. I entered the market as a freelancer several months after 9/11 and the Enron fiasco, so the economy could not support my efforts. I had some work but not nearly enough to make the money I needed to support my lifestyle. So after 15 months, I took the job at Wachovia. My plan is to, at some point, leave corporate America once again to write full time, however, I want to do creative fiction and nonfiction versus business writing. I would like to eventually write novels full time."

"What I enjoy the most is knowing that I'm sharing a part of myself and hopefully leaving a legacy behind. I don't have children and don't plan on any, so this is my form of procreation."

"I've tried writing pieces that I just couldn't get into. As I reflected on why, I realized that I didn't have enough passion about the subject ... it's easy to be self-critical and talk yourself into believing you're not a good writer. But with practice and persistence, publication is only a story away!"

[Read Ariana's own story.](#)