ABOUT VANESSA W. SNYDER

Vanessa Williams Snyder, an award-winning educator and author, spent nearly 15 years in journalism before launching a second career. Since leaving Gannett News Service, where she was an editor and writer in the Features department, she has blossomed as a teacher while still finding time to write.

Her first novel, "The Second First Lady," will be released in Fall 2010. It's the story of Clairmont Jenkins, a recently-widowed, 40-year-old pastor who must learn how to date again and be a single parent, while figuring out what God wants him to do for the congregation and community. Of course women are lining up because he's such a good catch, while his 14-year-old son shuts down on him. It's the first book in a three-part series that centers around Clairmont's family.

In addition to writing about health, marriage, music and other topics for GNS, Vanessa has written numerous freelance articles for several magazines — including Emerge, BET Weekend, Gospel Today and Excellence. She also wrote youth curriculum for many years for two Sunday School publishing companies. Along with her husband, Deron, she's the co-author of "50 Ways to Put Christ in Your Marriage: And Live Happily Every Day," in addition to "50 Ways to Put Christ Back in Christmas: And Keep the Spirit Alive All Year." Vanessa and Deron are co-owners of BlackDoor Ventures, Inc., which specializes in high-quality writing, editing and communication services, including publishing, public/media relations and broadcasting.

A native Washingtonian, Vanessa is a National Board-certified teacher, with a Master's degree in Education from Walden University and a Bachelor's degree in Journalism from the University of Maryland. Among her many education honors is a Golden Apple Award for "Teacher of Distinction," and "Teacher of the Year" awards in Lee County (Fla.). She currently teaches Language Arts in the District of Columbia's public school system.

The Snyders were married in 1990 and reside in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area with their daughters, 14-year-old Sierra and 10-year-old Sequoia.

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