

*The Fleur-de-Lis recently interviewed Ginger Doyel '97 at her home studio in Annapolis' historic district. Ginger, an honored writer and journalist, a book illustrator and a two-time winner of the Historic Annapolis Foundation Preservation Award, spoke with us about her own personal history in Annapolis and touched on her special connection with St. Mary's.*

**How did you develop your interest/expertise in history, particularly that of Annapolis?**

Ginger's family has a long history in Annapolis—her great grandparents lived in Annapolis and her father went to the Naval Academy. Although her family moved around with her father's naval career, "this was home." Whenever they visited, she would spend hours in her grandparents' "wonderful" library devouring their collection. For her history seemed permanent and stable. "It helps me to discover my own roots."

When she returned from the University of Richmond [in 2001 from where she graduated as valedictorian of the Jepson School of Leadership Studies], she noticed changes to the area. The changes sparked her interest and, because it was during state elections, Ginger particularly wanted to understand more about redistricting & development.

She was finishing up her work as a Research Fellow for the Pew Partnership for Civic Change, and then doing golf art in the evenings. Ginger's original plans included staying only a month and a half in Annapolis before taking a job with the PGA in Florida. The job in Florida was "attractive but my hometown had changed." She made the decision to "reinvent myself professionally."

Ginger had noticed that *The Capital* didn't have a local history column; she shared this with Linnell Bowen, Executive Director of Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts, who encouraged her to approach the newspaper with a proposal. Out of this proposal developed Ginger's column, "Annapolis: From Past to Present." The columns began weekly, starting in November 2002. [It is temporarily running monthly while she finishes several book projects].

**Did you ever feel you needed to choose between art and writing?**

"I feel blessed that I can do both and they complement each other," Ginger explained the interrelationship between her two pursuits. "Both are about composing—choosing words, choosing strokes. Both require patience and thought." She elaborated, "Pictures tell a story." Art and writing "speak to different audiences."

They also affect the artist/writer in different ways. "I write best in the morning and paint best in the evening," explained Ginger. She feels more playful and free spirited with her art; even the card she created for The City of Annapolis' 2004 Holiday Gala Open has a childlike, playful quality.

**How did you get started in illustrating children's books and in golf art?**

Playing golf one evening at Pew's course, Ginger was paired with a gentleman who was an attorney. After talking with her that evening and seeing her work, he thought that she might be a good match for his client, a children's author who needed an illustrator for his book, *Gertrude the Albino Frog and Her Friend Rupert the Turtle*. Ginger read the book and knew that she would be the perfect match. She identified with Gertrude "because we are both late bloomers and we burn in the sun."

Sometime later, the same gentleman with whom she had played golf, gave her her first commission—to paint a portrait of him, his brother and his father at Augusta National—as a present for his father. Gradually, she began to get more and more orders. By the time her work at Pew ended, she was working fulltime on golf art and the frog book.

Her love of the golf began when she was very young. They were living in Scotland and she liked to walk around the course, following her father. When she was 6, he made her a set of clubs. "Golf became," Ginger admits "a way to bond with my father and my grandfather."

She thinks of the back nine (holes 13 & 14) at the Navy golf course as an "outdoor cathedral."

### **Who are your personal heroes—as an artist and a writer?**

"My artistic hero is Marion E. Warren," Ginger offered, speaking of the noted Maryland photographer and author of number of books about the area, including *The Train's Done Been and Gone: An Annapolis Portrait*.

"He is an inspiration—personally and professionally. Our community and its residents (both present and future) are fortunate to have him here. I remember spending hours at my grandparents' home as a child reading and looking at his and Mame Warren's (his daughter) books."

### **What about the influence of St. Mary's on your choice of careers?**

"Even the location, walking around the Carroll Gardens was inspirational." She has a strong interest in the history of Catholicism in America. St Mary's is featured in two of her favorite chapters in her upcoming book, tentatively titled, *Annapolis Vignettes* [a collection of 53 of her columns for The Capital]. The first is about Kate Kealy, a parishioner, who in 1903 led a one person standoff against the Federal government. The second chapter focuses on Robert and Norma Worden's [he is St. Mary's Archivist] discovery of the burial place of the Carroll family at the site which is now the Annapolis Harbour Center.

### **Any thoughts of doing a book on St. Mary's?**

Ginger believes St. Mary's Archivist Robert Worden already has written the authoritative book on the subject, *St. Mary's Church in Annapolis, Maryland A Sesquicentennial History 1853-2003*. "His book is more than a book about the church; it's a larger history of a city and its people."

### **Which St. Mary's teachers had a special impact on your life?**

Ginger named three teachers who made a difference in her life. She credits Mr. Blades' current events class with getting her "hooked" on reading news magazines. She remembers Mrs. Ago's willingness to listen. Finally, she acknowledges Mr. Sheehan's role in making fitness an important part of her life. "I never used a gym till Mr. Sheehan. I'm very grateful that I had to run around the parking lot and do incline pushups against the brick wall."

### **What is your next big project?**

Next up for Ginger is the publication of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of *Long Ago is Closer Than You Think: Your Passport to Discovery*, the children's book about local history and culture which she illustrated. She also has a number of big projects which should be finishing in the near future, including several commissioned manuscripts—one about the Annapolitan Club and one about the Market House, *Gone to Market The Annapolis Market House, 1698-2005*. The *Annapolis Vignettes* book should be out or finished by December.

Currently, she is working on a book proposal for the Naval Institute Press about Alfred Schanze, USNA 1908. He wrote over 400 letters beginning with his prep days. These letters, Ginger explained, offer insight into the city, race relations, the nation, the 1904 Baltimore fire, presidential inauguration, key changes at the Academy—building of the yard and the Chapel.

This December, Ginger hopes to take time to contemplate what comes next in her life. Whatever it is she knows that she "wants to stay part of the community and write more books."

### **Speaking of books...If you had to title your biography, what would you call it?**

"*Little Hands*. I'll explain: My mom has always said that the first thing she noticed about me when I was born were my 'little hands.' She said that she knew they were artists' hands, that her daughter would be an artist, and that they'd shape my life. She was right—my hands enable [me] to create as an illustrator and a writer."

*Ginger was happy to report that her sister, Cathleen '02, will be graduating from Georgetown University with a degree in International Business. She believes her sister may*

*combine her new degree with her love and talent for cooking and baking to open her own business. "She is an artist with her cakes."*