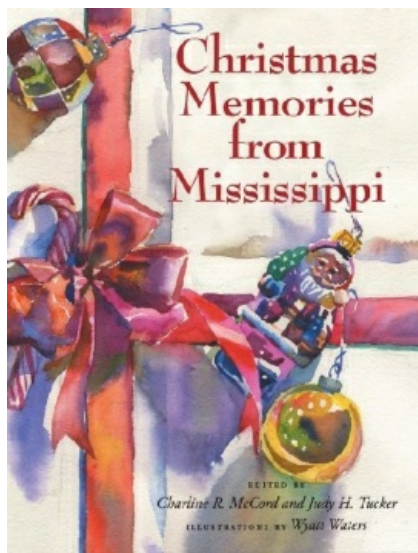




I miss David. This is a photo of him and his wife McKenna.



Charming and spoiled. While the horses nearly bake in the heat, these little rascals lounge in air-conditioning. Just look at 'em!



Dear Friends and Readers,

September has been a month of extremes. I lost a friend, David Thompson, manager of [Murder by the Book](#) in Houston and publisher of [Busted Flush Press](#). David was a lover of books, authors, and his family, friends, dogs, and customers. My annual trip to Houston to sign books was something I always looked forward to, and this past year Alice Jackson traveled with me and met David and his wife McKenna and the whole Houston book clan. David's sudden death has left a hole for many, many people, and I'm one of them.

The weather has been unbearable. The extreme temperatures, almost the entire month in the low to mid-90s with no rain, have been rough on me and the horses. The cats and dogs don't give a flip because they think air-conditioning comes from magic. (These are the most spoiled dogs and cats around!) September is generally our rainy month, with October coming in cooler and drier. Not so this year—everything is all messed up. I worry about what this signifies.

On the book front, things are going very well. I've almost got *BONIFIRE OF THE VANITIES* figured out (I hope I can keep that title!). I've had to put my Southern Gothic chiller aside to work on this proposal and a short story. But I'm almost ready to return to the spooky story.

I have a short essay included in a beautiful new book, [Christmas Memories from Mississippi](#), edited by Charline McCord and Judy Tucker. These two dynamic women pull together some of the most interesting stories, memories, and essays. Mississippi watercolorist Wyatt Waters created the cover and illustrations (he is just a genius!) and I am proud to be included. The book includes 38 essays by Mississippi writers celebrating Christmas pageants, the art of decorating, and family dinners. The

I am digging the cover art for the book. And I'm also proud of all 38 holiday essays contained within!



My friend An'gel Molpus got her hapless sweet dog Peanut to model a Jitty t-shirt from my upcoming Zinnia collection. The quote says "I be dead people."



I love providing for such remarkable beings who share my life.

...and, and family dinner. The book looks at the holidays from the early 20th Century through the present. University Press of Mississippi is the publisher, and some of the contributors include Mary Ann Mobley, John M. Floyd, Richard Howorth, Bill Lockett, Elise Winter, and Oprah Winfrey. Some contributors, Charline, Judy, Wyatt, and I will be at [Lemuria Books](#) in Jackson from 5-7 p.m., Nov. 16, for the official launch. Everyone is invited! (The book is just gorgeous!)

I've been honored by the University of South Alabama English Department—they've asked me to give the annual [Eugenia Hamner lecture](#) at 7:30 p.m. , Oct. 14, in the USA Library. My talk will be "Tell Me a Story: The Art of Publishing and Why I Write." This is open to the public and I hope anyone interested will attend. There will be a reception afterward.

Plans for Daddy's Girl weekend are coming along smashingly. We'll have info posted soon. The new website is progressing. The T-shirts are printed and the polos are embroidered. It's just a matter of figuring out how to sell them. But my friends and I will get 'er done. More on this later!

The best news is that all the critters in my care are doing well. There are the usual things—kitty fights, doggy toenail snags, etc.--those who have animals know all about this. But after the loss of Chester and Echo this spring, the summer has passed with no new tragedies in the animal kingdom. I love saying this. I am thankful each morning when I go out to feed that the horses are there, hungry, and I'm stomping around in the rain, mud, heat, dust—whatever—able to provide for these remarkable beings who share my life. Caring for livestock is a hard life, but I am blessed to be living my dream. If I didn't have to work so hard to have it, I wouldn't appreciate it.

There is always a tinge of sadness to fall as we move toward winter. The old pagans celebrated the death of the year because it meant the spring would bring new life. Perhaps it's some Druid DNA that makes me feel the changing of the seasons so acutely even though I live in Alabama where there is only one season. HOT



You'll have to ask Alice what the deal is with her and the Canterbury Tales. Don't say I didn't warn you.

One season—not.

One humorous note—if you happen to see [Alice Jackson](#), ask her about her special romantic link to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. It's a story that must be "told" rather than printed. The sound effects are ...debilitating. Perhaps she'll perform at DG Weekend. We can only hope.

Take care,
Carolyn

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