

## Life Story Work as a Business

Join veteran personal historians Mary O'Brien Tyrrell of "Memoirs Inc." and Audrey Galex of "Roots & Wings Life Stories" in an interactive workshop to explore the nuts and bolts of turning your passion for gathering life stories into a money-making venture. You will be introduced to typical clients, to the nuts and bolts of running a business, to the benefits and challenges of using a variety of recording technologies and to family and cultural concerns that impact the process and the product. You will receive academic journal articles that discuss the health benefits and possible risks. You will also have the chance to discuss your concerns with experienced instructors.

### Bio's

**Mary O'Brien Tyrrell**, MPH, BSN, President, Memoirs, Inc.



With the goal of designing a progressive model to honor elders, in 1994 Mary founded Memoirs, Inc. Since then, she has assisted hundreds of elderly individuals, both nationally and internationally, in publishing a life story in limited-edition hardcover books that are distributed at a family book-signing party. The company has been featured in the *Wall Street Journal*, *VFW Magazine*, *Kiplinger's Retirement Report*, *Minnesota Monthly*, and both Twin Cities daily newspapers as well as numerous appearances on local television and radio programs.

Also recognized academically, Mary was the life story consultant in the 2002 MetLife Foundation sponsored video from the University of Wisconsin, *The Joys and Surprises of Telling Your Life Story*. Her journal articles, "Memoirist of Ordinary, Yet Extraordinary Elders" in 2003 *Generations: The Journal of the American Society on Aging* and "Stories Behind Life Stories: Musings of a Memoirist" in the 2008 Gerontological Society of America's *Journal of Aging, Humanities, and the Arts*, are the first in academic gerontological literature to describe this new emerging industry, the professional skills involved, and its effects on narrators. Her co-authored chapter, "Life Stories as Heirlooms" in *Transformational Reminiscence Life Story Work* (Springer Publishing, 2007), provides an historic perspective.

Mary has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Master of Public Health in Community Health Education. A Vietnam veteran of the Navy Nurse Corps, for the past thirty years she has specialized in gerontology. In addition to working in hospitals, clinics, and home care settings, she has been employed as Associate Director at the Minnesota Board of Nursing, coordinator of health care research, and President of Memoirs, Inc. for fifteen years.

**Audrey Galex** is a professional storyteller, personal historian/video biographer and broadcast television producer and reporter. She is the founder of Roots & Wings Life Stories, a company that helps people and organizations preserve their stories and histories through workshops, video, and story performance.

Audrey believes in the power of story to connect people, across cultures and generations. She tells stories at festivals, conferences, coffee houses, religious services and workshops, and focuses on sharing stories from her Jewish heritage, as well as stories about peace and co-existence. Her concern over the violence between Arabs and Israelis inspired her to create "Tapestry: An Arab-Jewish Storytelling Dialogue," along with storyteller B.J. Abraham as well as to initiate a "The Sarah/Hagar Storytelling Project" with Opal Muhammad, to promote peace in the Middle East and between faith communities.

Her belief in interfaith dialogue inspired her produce Atlanta's annual "Peace & Winter's Light" interfaith storytelling and song program, starting in 2004. She is also the co-founder of Atlanta's Interfaith Women's Baking Group, and was the organizer of Atlanta's "Story Tsunami," which raised money for international disaster relief. Audrey is also the creator and performer of "On the Eve of Peace," a one-woman show on Middle East peace, commissioned by the Jimmy Carter Museum & Library and she serves on the board of trustees of the Friends of the Arava Institute, an Israeli environmental institute that promotes Middle East peace through collaborative research and educational programs.

Audrey holds a Master's Degree in Broadcast Journalism from Northwestern University and a degree in International Relations from the American University.

She is a founding member of the Association of Personal Historians, a past president of the Southern Order of Storytellers and a member of the National Storytelling Network.

Audrey lives in Atlanta with her husband and three children. She loves to tap dance, drink coffee, and tell stories.