



## College Professor Turns Lifelong Love for Writing Into a Full-Time Income — From an RV

For some, becoming a writer is a straight-line decision. For others, like Melissa Gouty, it's a lifelong passion that's burned bright since childhood but could never be fully explored.

"I've been a writer since the day I was born," she says. "I was one of those kids who had her nose in a book and was always writing little poems and things."

That passion led her to majoring in American literature at college, a master's degree, and a professorship at a community college. And her writing blossomed in a different way as a columnist for her town's newspaper.

But after 23 years of mostly grading papers, she yearned for a change. Soon, she and her husband turned an abandoned nursing home into one of the largest sewing retreat centers in the Midwest, bringing in \$1 million a year in tax revenue.

Yet, the center required them at all hours of the day and night — including most weekends. So their dreams changed. Her husband wanted to travel. And for Melissa... she wanted to become a full-time writer.

While running the sewing center, Melissa had nourished her passion by writing product descriptions, marketing flyers, and their popular weekly newsletter. But she needed help actually turning it into a real income.

"I chose writing to make enough money for my husband and I, who are retired and have no real income, to live a simple life," she says. "Being able to travel around in our camper and

### CASE STUDY:

### Melissa Gouty

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### MEMBER:

Melissa Gouty

### LOCATION:

Central Illinois and South Florida

### OTHER JOBS:

College professor, entrepreneur, newspaper columnist

### HOW SHE GOT HER FIRST CLIENT:

She landed her first freelance assignment from a job board.

### TOP AWAI PROGRAMS:

- *FastTrack to Copywriting Success Bootcamp and Job Fair*
- *The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting*
- *Your No-Stress Method for Getting Clients*

then stay at home when we want for the rest of our lives is my dream.”

## *She Found Her What, Now the How*

For Melissa, a lifelong writer who subscribed to multiple writer’s magazines, the answer landed on her desk in the form of an American Writers & Artists Institute (AWAI) mailer. The more she read, the more it inspired her.

“AWAI was positive and they showed examples of people who were making a living as writers,” she says. “I thought, ‘AWAI seems like the right place and this is the right time.’”

She started *The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting*. But the real prize for Melissa was registering for *FastTrack to Copywriting Success* Bootcamp and Job Fair. This was her opportunity to be around the writers she read so much about, to ask questions and learn as much as she could to jumpstart her own full-time writing career.

“I remember sitting in our little camper with pencil, paper and a little calculator, trying to figure out how much money it would cost to go to *Bootcamp* and whether it would be worth the investment,” she says. “It definitely was. Going to *Bootcamp* was the best decision I ever made.”

Within minutes of walking into *Bootcamp*, Melissa knew she had found her tribe. The atmosphere was positive. The people made her feel welcomed. From the experts to the members, they all knew their stuff and Melissa took full advantage.

She attended every session, listened to every speech, got inspired by speakers like Ann Handley, met writers that she remains close with to this day, and entered eight copy challenges.

Her dedication paid off: she won three of the challenges. Melissa pocketed \$750 in cash prizes which, luckily, covered a good portion of what she had put on her credit card to cover *Bootcamp*. But more importantly, these wins were an affirmation for Melissa, like someone in the business telling her personally that she could do this.

## *A Lifelong Writer Becomes a Paid Writer*

Confident and ready, Melissa left *Bootcamp* on a high. She completed *The Accelerated Program* within a month, got certified and started looking for writing jobs. She landed her first job by responding to a posting for a medical company. Melissa rewrote an entire piece on the sleep cycles of Alzheimer’s patients. When the client reviewed what she had submitted, they hired her.

Though it was her first copywriting job, it proved to be the best paying job she would have to date. The company was happy with her copy. But two months into it, the medical director quit the project. So, they shut it down.

“I had this fabulous dream job for two months and then it disappeared,” she said. “But that happens in the industry. You just learn from it, pick up and move on.”

Again, she turned to AWAI and learned why it’s important to post all her articles on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. This simple act drew eyes to her content and netted her jobs at companies like Amazon Web Services, Newsbreak and Elite Editing.



## Writing Full-Time, While Traveling

With her full-time writing career off the ground, Melissa is focused on learning the many aspects of her craft.

“I think what fuels me as a writer — I have a curious mind and writing satisfies that,” she says. “I’m learning something in all kinds of fields every day.”

Melissa seized on every opportunity she had to write and built confidence in the process. That helped her land a full-time position as the marketing manager for a large HVAC and plumbing company in Central Florida, and she

is thrilled. She’s generating content, doing SEO optimization on blog posts, writing pay-per-click (PPC) ads and managing social media posts.

Not only is she making a full-time income, but Melissa and her husband can live anywhere — including their RV.

“I love not having to deal with office politics, managing a staff or commuting,” she says. “I can take my dog for a walk, work at night, listen to my own music, or work in my socks and slippers. We have an income we can rely on in ‘retirement’ as we travel. And next, I’m turning my website into a money-making website. It’ll take time.” Like all good things.

## Melissa’s Tips For Copywriters

- **Put in the work every day** – For most people, writing is a process and it’s every day. It’s not fast, but you have to put in the work every day to get to where you want to be.
- **Have fun** – Don’t forget to have fun while writing. “I got this marvelous response from a person who said if you’ve done one thing right today it’s sharing your joy with me,” Melissa said.
- **If you want it, go after it** – There are some days when you have to fight through it and keep putting words out there.

## Ready to pursue *the writer’s life*?

Learn more about the program that helped launch Melissa’s career, [\*\*\*The FastTrack to Copywriting Success Bootcamp and Job Fair.\*\*\*](#)

