

# DONNA HARTER

WRITER | EDITOR | RESEARCHER

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## PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

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Communications professional with comprehensive experience in content development, research, marketing, and fundraising. Adept in creating heartfelt stories to inspire action, as well as research-based articles and brochures to provide technical information.

## EXPERIENCE

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### **FREELANCE WRITER, REMOTE – 7/2024 TO PRESENT**

- Research, interview, and write articles for print and/or electronic distribution.
- Update and edit newsletter content utilizing Wild Apricot and other CRM systems.

### **DIRECTOR OF PROSPECT MANAGEMENT AND RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON, FREDERICKSBURG, VA - 7/2020 – 7/2024**

- Identified donors to feature in UMW's award-winning *Gift Planning Connections*. Through the years, this semiannual newsletter led to several six- and seven-figure estate gifts.
- Facilitated interviews, wrote feature articles, coordinated photos, layout, printing, and mail distribution.
- Created web pages (WordPress) and eblasts (Imodules and Crescendo) targeting 12,000 constituents with the purpose of prompting "clicks" to cultivate current donors and inspire future gifts.
- Managed the screening of more than 90,000 constituents to analyze capacity and inclination to give.
- Researched donors and created custom profiles for President and Vice President for Advancement.

### **DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT CAMPAIGN INITIATIVES, UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON, FREDERICKSBURG, VA - 12/2003 TO 6/2020**

- Concepted, wrote, and led the development of the Mary Washington First Campaign case statement and website to publicly launch the \$50-million Campaign.
- Developed ads for *UMW Magazine*, identified news release and media coverage opportunities for lead gifts, and facilitated social media posts for special gifts and events.
- Partnered with President's Office to strategically draft speeches, targeted newsletters, and other presentation materials in "his/her voice" to support fundraising campaigns and special events.
- Developed solicitation plans, proposals, terms of agreement, and resolutions.
- Supervised Director of Advancement Events and part-time audio/video technician to ensure campaign and donor events were top-notch and memorable.
- Utilized Banner database and custom Excel reports to research donors and analyze data for preparation of articles and board presentations.
- Facilitated discussions with Annual Giving, Stewardship, Gift Processing, and Gift Planning to ensure continuity of messages, streamlining of processes, and application of best practices.
- Consulted on special projects with professors and campus leaders to analyze and offer guidance for communications and fundraising needs.
- Pioneered successful six-week Founders Day Challenge in 2015 to raise \$107,000 in unrestricted funds to celebrate UMW's 107th anniversary. Presented results to governing boards.
- Planned, developed, and implemented two successful programs to steward and cultivate unique donor groups for engagement and giving.
- Strategically planned donor communications for fundraising and events through challenges of presidential retirements and inaugurations, institutional name change, and a Centennial Celebration.

**DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS, MARY WASHINGTON COLLEGE,  
FREDERICKSBURG, VA - PART-TIME, 9/2000 TO 11/2003**

- Concepted and wrote text for UMW's first GIVING website.
- Facilitated communications to help acquire and celebrate a Kresge grant through the implementation of the Kresge Challenge.
- Developed creative "key theme" and lapel pins for award-winning Annual Giving campaigns; helped create and plan the first and subsequent President's Key Receptions.
- Coordinated celebrations and publications for the successful conclusion of the \$5.6 million campaign to fund and build the Jepson Alumni Executive Center.

**FREELANCE WRITER, FREDERICKSBURG, VA AND KANSAS CITY, MO - 6/95 TO 8/2000**

- Researched, interviewed subject matter experts, and wrote technical copy for publicity, training, and advertising targeted to alfalfa growers and dealers, corn growers, and golf course superintendents.
- Articles were placed in trade publications, including *Florida Grower*, *Farm Industry News*, *Pecan South*, and *Golf Course Management*.
- Communications projects included newsletters and web articles for WestAgro dairy products; training workbooks and telemarketing scripts for Western Star Trucks; mailers and advertorials for MERIT, PREMISE, and TEMPO insecticides from Bayer.

**WRITER/PROJECT MANAGER, THE DUFF CO., KANSAS CITY, MO - 3/93 TO 6/95**

- Assisted in annual planning and budgeting for America's Alfalfa and Gustafson Seed Treatments.
- Managed advertising and public relations projects and wrote copy for newsletters, brochures, press releases, and promotional material.
- Was instrumental in planning, presenting to and capturing new Duff client, Western Star Trucks. Managed roll-out and implementation of new training program for 1,100 parts people at truck dealerships in U.S. and Canada. Wrote reader-friendly instructional materials, promotional letters, and technical training workbooks.

**EDUCATION**

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**Missouri State University** (*formerly Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri*)

**Bachelor of Science degree** received Magna Cum Laude in Electronic Media

(*Custom major to cover courses in journalism, speech, public relations, marketing, and accounting.*)

**HONORS AND AWARDS**

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- Award of Excellence - Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE)
- Best Quarterly Newsletter – Crescendo Integrated Marketing
- 1st Place Writing - Virginia Press Women (8 awards)
- 1st Place Writing - National Federation of Press Women
- 2nd Place Writing - Virginia Press Women (4 awards)
- 2nd Place Writing - National Federation of Press Women (2 awards)
- Special Merit Campaigns - CASE (2 awards)
- \$500 Employee Creative Idea - Valentine- Radford (2 awards)