



# Golden Crown Literary Society

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## Testimonials from our Authors, Faculty and Trailblazers

“It is been an honor to work as a mentor in the historic one-of-a-kind GCLS Education Program. From our own grassroots organization, opportunities have evolved for lesbian writers to learn from lesbian writers. No more do we have to sit in the back of creative writing classes and seminars, afraid to share our work with non-gay writers. In my experience, that situation always results in having my work considered erotica (even when there is no mention of sex). Straight teachers have always wanted to make gayness the central conflict, no matter what this writer intended. Now, new lesbian writers can offer their work without implicit censure, scorn and dismissal. The thrust of this program and mentoring, for me, is to ensure lesbian words are heard and will endure.”

-- Lee Lynch, author of *Swashbuckler*, *Beggar of Love*, *Sweet Creek*, *Amazon Trail*, and more

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“I came out during a time in Oregon's history when there was a lot of violent anti-gay politicking. Some may have seen the movie Ballot Measure 9, which documents one of the over 30 anti-gay measures and ordinances that were put forth (and often passed) in Oregon in the 90s. During that time, with no internet and no gay student groups, my refuge was the lesbian books I bought at Powell's Bookstore eighty miles from my house. Those writers saved me, but there aren't a lot of ways I can thank those founding mothers. Some aren't even alive anymore. However, by teaching for the Gold Crown Literary Academy, I can "pay it forward" by helping a new generation of lesbian writers learn the craft of writing and find their place in the publishing world. The Academy curriculum is brilliant! The professors are committed to student success. The students are some of the best emerging writers I've met. I am honored to be a part of this amazing endeavor.”

-- Karelia Stetz-Waters, author of *The purveyor*, *The Admirer*,  
*Forgive me If I Told You This Before*, and more

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“As the faculty chair of the GCLS writing academy, I can honestly say that this addition to GCLS is going to become a facet of the organization that people are going to be talking about and wishing to be a part of. We have such depth in our authorial talent and many of these authors have signed on in order to help open doors for new writers... something we, as women, should be doing as much and as often as possible. It isn't just that we have an excellent curriculum and staff, but we also enable these writer-students to form writing cohorts that could, quite possibly, last the rest of their lives. It is an exciting time to be a part of the growing changes occurring in GCLS, and I am thrilled to be a part of it all.”

-- Linda Kay Silva, author of *The Across Time Series*,  
*Echo Series*, *Demon Hunter Series* & more

As a lesbian, I'm still amazed at how many of us have never heard of lesbian fiction and don't even know that romances and other books representing people just like us exist. In a world where most people and most characters in fiction are heterosexual, it's so important for LGBT people to find representation in literature. The GCLS works hard to promote lesbian fiction and to make it easier for people to find out about that kind of literature.

I've been a member of the GCLS for nearly six years, and in that time, I've watched the organization grow and get better with every year. I've attended the GCLS conference for the first time last year, flying in all the way from Germany, and I intend to return every year from now on. I was very impressed with the welcoming atmosphere, the well-put-together seminars, and the hard work of the board members to ensure a wonderful conference experience for each and every attendee.

As an editor and multi-published author, I have participated in the GCLS's mentoring program for several years now, and I appreciate the support they are giving writers that are just starting out. I wish there'd been an education program like it when I was first starting out as a writer. There are few places where newbie writers of lesbian fiction can turn to, to get qualified help—especially if the writers don't have much money to spare to pay for editing or writing workshops—so the GCLS fills a void. The staff of the GCLS education team does their best to match the writers with the right mentors in regards to genre and skill level, making sure the writers get as much as possible out of the experience. I personally witnessed several success stories of writers who benefitted from the mentoring program and went on to become published.

I hope the GCLS can keep up its wonderful work and expand it to help even more writers for many years to come.

-- Sandra Gerth, published under the pen name Jae, author of *Conflict of Interest*, *Backwards to Oregon*, and more

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"The GCLS Writing Academy creates a caring, mutually supportive learning environment in which women can grow as writers."

--Julia Watts, author of *Finding H.F.* and *Secret City*

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"Through GCLS, I've been a mentor for six different women over the years. Some of the mentees were true neophytes, some had been writing for a while, and one had already produced a good number of stories. The nice part of that variety is that it allowed people at every stage of their development to participate and get the help they thought they needed. Letting people tailor the program to suit their own needs is an indication of how GCLS tries to serve its members' goals. But being flexible and changing program requirements as situations change is also a hallmark of a good organization. GCLS responded and made changes to the program to make sure they weren't over-taxing the mentors. The way it's set up now probably makes the most sense. Now the mentees have some solid experience and know their own styles well enough to be able to use their mentors effectively.

I've been a member of GCLS from near the beginning, and have gotten a lot from working in the mentorship program. I'm really happy it's one of the organization's goals to help foster new talent, and I'd be pleased to keep participating for many years to come."

-- Susan Meagher, author of *The San Francisco Series*, and numerous other novels

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"I'm excited to be an instructor with the GCLS Writing Academy because it's not about canned writing classes. It's about tailoring the classes to help lesbian writers improve their works about lesbian lives, both fiction and nonfiction. For years lesbian fiction has been plagued by the stereotype of 'bad writing.' While in many cases that stereotype is undeserved, in too many others it's painfully true. The Writing Academy is the best effort I've seen yet that actively addresses this problem. Those students who enroll in the Academy are raising the bar for the entire genre, and this is a good thing."

-- Catherine Friend, author of *Hit by a Farm*, *A Pirate's Heart*, *The Spanish Pearl* and more