

Interview with Associate Senior Editor Monique Patterson

by Dianna Love Snell, 2007

Bio:

Monique Patterson joined Avon Books in 1998, where she created, formed and launched Harper's African American romance program, in addition to editing and acquiring women's fiction and mainstream African American fiction. She also had the pleasure of working with bestselling authors such as Kinley MacGregor, Karen Ranney and Kayla Perrin. About three years later, she joined St. Martin's Press where she is now a senior editor. She acquires women's fiction, which includes contemporary, historical, paranormal and erotic romance, paranormal fiction, African American fiction and a selective amount of commercial non-fiction, which includes pop culture and celebrity bios for all parts of the list and for all formats. Some of her current authors are Sherrilyn Kenyon, L. A. Banks, Barbara Pierce, Cheyenne McCray, Celeste Bradley, Cindy Gerard, Brenda Jackson and Francis Ray. Her favorite pastime . . . is reading. What a surprise.

Publisher name and location:

St. Martin's Press
175 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10010

How long have you been an editor and what was your path to being an editor?

I've been an editor for nine years and it definitely wasn't planned that I would go into publishing. I had majored in English and minored in history in college and I actually thought I wanted to go into criminal law at first. But I quickly changed my mind about that once I got a little taste of criminal law, which I found fascinating, but knew that I didn't want to make into my career. I had always adored books with a scary intensity, so I looked for something that would allow me to be involved with the written word in some creative aspect. When I landed on publishing as a choice, I basically decided to give it a try. Once I got into it, I absolutely loved it. I loved working on the books from acquisition to getting the books on the shelves. I loved working with the authors and on all the things necessary when it comes to how to sell a book most successfully. I still love it.

How many authors do you represent and would you care to list a few? What is the majority sub-genre you represent?

I have about forty-eight authors. Some of them are Sherrilyn Kenyon, Susan Donovan, Barbara Pierce, Celeste Bradley, Lora Leigh, Christine Warren, L. A. Banks, Cindy Gerard, Cheyenne McCray, Delilah Dawson, Francis Ray, Ronda Thompson, Donna Hill and Brenda Jackson.

I have a good mix of authors on my list who write in different areas, including paranormal, historical, romantic suspense, and contemporary. Romance and mainstream women's fiction.

Sub-genres you are acquiring and if there are any specifics about those genres you'd like the writers to know.

I am acquiring all sub-genres. Be creative and let your own voice come through!

What do you expect of your authors?

Hopefully a great working relationship and the best book you can write. And on my end I will do my best to publish it successfully, so we're both happy at the end of the day.

How do you prefer submissions based on a conference appointment request?

If I meet you during a conference appointment then I would like a proposal, which is a synopsis (no longer than 10 pages, please) and the first three chapters. You can submit the full manuscript, but only upon request. And when the submission is sent in, I love for authors to mention that we met at the conference and it's always a good idea to put "Requested Material" on the outside of the envelope.

What is a pet peeve to do with submissions and/or working with writers?

Professionalism. Always, always, always be professional.

Is there anything you'd like to add that you were not asked?

Just a reminder. We're out here looking for that next great voice. So know your market, but don't try to become someone else who's already out there. Be true to your own voice and don't be afraid to put your own creative spin on something familiar. You just might surprise yourself and a whole lot of readers who are waiting to read that next great book.