

For Immediate Release

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Modern Memoirs, Inc. Announces New Ownership

Amherst Couple Purchases Business from Founder and Expands Services



Founder Kitty Axelson-Berry (left) and Director of Publishing Ali de Groot (right) toast Megan and Sean St. Marie's July 16, 2019 purchase of Modern Memoirs, Inc.

Amherst, Massachusetts— July 17, 2019 — Amherst residents Megan and Sean St. Marie are the new owners of the non-commercial publishing company, Modern Memoirs, Inc. They purchased the business from founder, Kitty Axelson-Berry, who is retiring after 25 years as President, and are eager to expand the clientele by offering new writing, publishing, research, and personal archives management services.

“We are thrilled to embark on this new chapter in our careers and in our marriage,” said new company President Megan St. Marie, a published author and part-time Lecturer at Simmons University under her maiden name, Megan Dowd Lambert.

“Happily, longtime employee, Alison (Ali) de Groot, will stay on as Director of Publishing,” said Sean St. Marie, Director of Operations & Archival Projects, who has a business background and an MLIS, Archives Management degree. “And Kitty is generously helping us learn the ropes of the business as a short-term consultant.”

Memoirs and More

Axelsson-Berry established Modern Memoirs in 1994 to help others “preserve their own or a loved one's personal history.” Along with de Groot, who joined the company in 2003, she has helped clients publish roughly 160 personal and family-history projects. Some of these books are commissioned, or as-told-to memoirs, based on client interviews. Others are assisted memoirs, or manuscripts clients write themselves that then receive editorial and design services. Regarding her sale of the business to the St. Maries, Axelsson-Berry remarked, “I see Megan and Sean building on the foundation of the business and taking it to new places, which makes me very happy!”

Under the St. Maries’ leadership, Modern Memoirs will continue offering commissioned and assisted memoir and family-history book publishing, while also providing services for smaller-scale projects, including obituaries.

“I’ve had the honor of writing several obituaries over the years,” said Megan St. Marie, “and I’ve been deeply moved by these opportunities to bring comfort to survivors while paying tribute to those who’ve passed away. At Modern Memoirs, I will work with clients who wish to write advance obituaries, or perhaps ethical wills (also known as legacy letters), as part of their end-of-life planning. I will also be available to help those who seek assistance writing obituaries or eulogies for their deceased loved ones.”

“We can collect such writings, along with photographs, prayers, quotations, and other texts and materials, into keepsake tribute books for interested clients,” added Sean St. Marie.

“And since personal and family histories include many happy occasions that could benefit from writing and editorial support,” said Megan St. Marie, “we can also help clients with written remarks for weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, retirements, and other milestones.”

“Marking such special moments with celebration books, or what they call *festschriften* for retirements in academia,” said Sean St. Marie, “is another option.”

It's All in the Family

In many ways, Megan St. Marie feels she is following in her parents' footsteps as she pursues this new path. "My mother provides a powerful model of respecting and valuing the stories and wisdom of older generations through her decades-long career as a nurse, hospice provider, and elder caregiver. And," she continued, "in his retirement, my father has immersed himself in genealogy research, tracing our Québécois and Acadian family history to 16th-century France."

Sean St. Marie's training as an archivist will allow him to offer clients support in genealogical research and family history preservation projects. "We look forward to helping clients research and create books comprised of family trees, letters, photographs, recipes, and other materials that document their roots," he said.

He will also support clients in personal archives management tasks. "Perhaps potential clients are preparing donations of their papers, or they need to downsize, or maybe they're managing a loved one's affairs. In any case, I can provide confidential review, preservation, organization, and digitization of photographs, documents, and other materials," he said.

This work takes on special meaning for the St. Maries as parents of seven children in their blended family, aged 1 through 22.

"Learning about those who came before us is among the greatest gifts we can give to those who come after us," said Sean St. Marie. "We know this as parents, and we know this as people who cherish our family legacies."

"Everyday lives hold extraordinary stories," said Megan St. Marie. "In her poem 'Sometimes,' Mary Oliver writes, 'Instructions for living a life: / Pay attention. / Be astonished. Tell about it.' We couldn't be more excited about helping Modern Memoirs clients 'tell about' their lives and the lives of their ancestors."

For more information, contact:

Megan St. Marie, President megan@modernmemoirs.com

Sean St. Marie, Director of Operations & Archival Projects sean@modernmemoirs.com

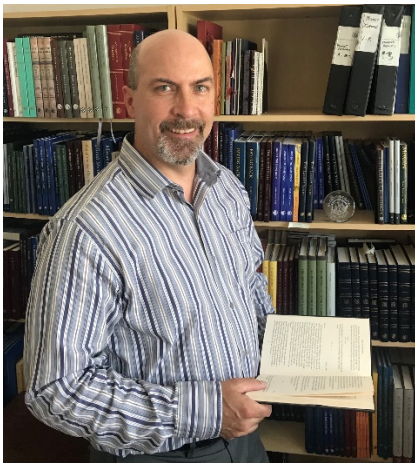
413-253-2353

Modern Memoirs, Inc., 34 Main Street #6, Amherst, Massachusetts, 01002

www.modernmemoirs.com



Megan St. Marie, President of Modern Memoirs, Inc.



Sean St. Marie, Director of Operations & Archival Projects at Modern Memoirs, Inc.