



After 20 Years Performing for the Commander in Chief, This Faithful Mom Traded Her Marching Orders for the Writer's Life

For 20 years Kathy Widenhouse was a flutist in “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band...and her life revolved around the president’s schedule.

She jokes that George W. Bush was her favorite “because he usually went to bed early, but Clinton was a party animal” and would keep them playing late into the night. It was “definitely a younger person’s job because the hours were very erratic,” Kathy says.

But when her family began to grow, Kathy made a choice. Her children would not play second fiddle...not even to the president.

So, after serving four different administrations — from Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush — Kathy took the plunge and started working from home.

Her Faith Led Her to Writing

Already an active member of her church, Kathy’s life of faith inspired her to start writing lesson plans, devotionals, and articles for Christian magazines.

She had a talent for it, and even drew the attention of a faith-based publisher who offered her a book deal. But these projects didn’t pay nearly well enough to give her family security.

“I soon discovered I could write a lot of articles, but it might not be the best way to make enough income,” Kathy says.

CASE STUDY:

Kathy Widenhouse

“I loved the idea of ‘the writer’s life,’ but I didn’t know there was this whole world where you could really make a living as a freelancer...Now, I definitely keep busy, but it’s all work I love!”

MEMBER:

Kathy Widenhouse

LOCATION:

Charlotte, NC

FORMER CAREER:

A flutist in “The President’s Own” U.S. Marine Band

HOW SHE GOT HER FIRST CLIENT:

After sending direct-mail letters, she landed her first copywriting assignment for a children’s relief organization.

TOP AWAI PROGRAMS:

- *The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting*
- *How to Write Your Own Money-Making Websites*

That's when she got a letter from AWAI saying, 'Can you write a letter like this one?' and realized she'd been dabbling on the edge of something huge.

"I loved the idea of *'the writer's life,'*" Kathy says, "but I didn't know there was this whole world where you could really make a living as a freelancer!"

She decided to continue using her writing to serve, this time as a freelancer for faith-based nonprofits. And with over 1.8 million active nonprofits registered in the U.S., there was no shortage of potential clients for Kathy.

"Just from going around, looking at these faith-based nonprofits' websites and newsletters — some are a mess — I could see they had a real need for professional content and copy."

So she poured herself into AWAI's *Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting*.

But How Would She Get Clients?

But before she could start freelancing, Kathy faced another challenge. It was an intimidating task.

"Starting out I remember not feeling very confident at all because I didn't have any marketing experience," Kathy says.

To overcome her doubts, she took Bob Bly's early *Get Clients in 30 Days Challenge* on top of the copywriting course. She says, "Taking Bob's course really helped me get started. Now I knew that I needed to create a direct mail package for myself to find clients in my niche."

Kathy sent out *over 800 letters* to potential clients in the faith-based nonprofits niche.

"Bob taught me that even if you only get a 3% or 4% response rate, that's pretty good," she says. "It took some of the pressure off and I just put myself out there."

The responses rolled in and soon she landed her first copywriting assignment for a children's relief organization. Within weeks she reached her goal of 10 client responses!

"There's been no shortage of work since," she says. "I mean, just for a nonprofit to sit down and talk to a potential major donor they need a PowerPoint, they need stories about their impact, they need a response device — you name it!"

It didn't take long before she settled into a steady flow. "I would say 6 – 12 months into it I stopped being scared all the time," she says. "And about two years after going full-time I was set — I knew I didn't have to worry anymore."

Now 13 years later, with 13 anchor clients, Kathy has never had to go hunting for clients again. She still writes for some of her early clients, and picks up others through referrals, her website, or social media.

Why Such a Focused Niche?

Kathy credits her success in part to choosing such a focused specialization. She knows the niche inside and out, and says, "That's very attractive to my clients because I already know what they're doing and can anticipate what they need."

"For these leaders, it is lonely at the top, and if they feel like they have someone in their corner who's got their back, they'll come to trust and rely on you. It's really rewarding."

She's been a part of their strategic planning, and a few even asked her to be on their boards of directors.

Kathy earns that trust by being proactive to ensure her clients' success. "If I know they have something coming up, I reach out," she says.



That devotion and tight focus on the niche helped Kathy accelerate her career.

And after her copywriting career took off, she decided start a business of her own — one without clients...

Projects, Projects, and More Projects

Kathy was already working full time for her freelance clients when she saw a letter for Nick Usborne's program, *How to Write Your Own Money-Making Websites*.

"The idea of passive income was very attractive to me," she says. "And the idea of writing for my own business and interests was also very appealing."

Her first money-making website, TomatoDirt.com is now a "cash cow" for Kathy. And since then she's built two more money-making websites: Cookie-Elf.com more than pays for itself, and traffic to NonProfitCopywriter.com has doubled in the past year.

Kathy says money-making websites are a fantastic investment and source of income — as long as you're diligent about getting them set up. "You have to work to get the website up and running, but then it just hums along in the background," she says.

These days, Kathy loves having the freedom to split her time between her clients and her personal work.

"I devote my mornings to my nonprofit clients 8am – 12pm," she says. "Then I try to spend my afternoons working on my money-making websites and my other projects. It's been great."

And with a steady stream of work from her nonprofit clients, three successful money-making websites, six published books and a seventh in the works, she has plenty of work to keep moving forward.

"If I wanted to work more I could do more, but I've made some decisions about where my time should be invested," Kathy says. "I definitely keep busy, but it's all work I love!"

Kathy's Tips For Copywriters

- **Don't Fear Rejection** – Kathy sent over 800 letters to potential clients just to land the 10 she needed to launch her career. "You've got to put yourself out there and keep working at it!"
- **Embrace your Roots** – Her roots in the church helped Kathy choose and master her niche. "Don't sell yourself short — you have life experience and there is value in that."
- **Never Stop Writing** – Kathy says, "Way back when I started I must have spent 20 hours writing one 500-word piece! Now I can jot out the gist of one in 20 minutes and then go back and clean it up whenever. Stick with it, it does get easier."

Ready to pursue *the Writer's Life*?

Learn more about the program that launched Kathy's career, [*The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting*](#).

