

## In Address to College Students, Author Urges Sexual Abuse Victims Not to Give Up

*Author Gina McCabe spoke to up and coming writers about the taboo topic of child sexual abuse and her assertive approach to tackling the book business after receiving an invitation from GMU English professor Dan Gallehr.*

Fairfax, VA ([PRWEB](#)) June 5, 2008 -- Author Gina McCabe, whose recently published memoir about the silence and shame she felt for decades after enduring sexual abuse as a child, recently spoke to George Mason University writing students.

As English Professor Don Gallehr was preparing for his final week of classes, he came across a newspaper article featuring McCabe, a GMU alum. He immediately read her book and then invited her to campus.

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“When I read *What If I Tell* the week before Gina came to Mason, I made it to page eleven before crying. I put it down for a few days and went back to read the rest of it in one sitting. It’s one powerful book.”

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“Not only was the person featured in the article a victim of sexual abuse,” explained Gallehr. “She had written a book about it, been rejected by literary agents and publishing companies, and most impressive to me, had set up her own publishing company – Winding Road Books <http://www.windingroadbooks.com> – dedicated to effecting positive social change. McCabe had acted out the very advice I had been giving my students all semester – don’t give up!”

McCabe jumped on the opportunity to address graduating writers, calling her invitation to campus a “dream come true.”

McCabe explained to students that when she left Mason with a writing degree fifteen years ago, she started climbing from one unrelated career to another, unable to find a desirable writing position. Eventually, she became

Vice President at a Northern Virginia-based IT consulting firm, and it was in this role, during a 2007 summer vacation, that she began her career as an author.

“I had a challenging career in business, and the time I had available for writing was limited,” McCabe told the audience, “So I just promised myself that every Sunday afternoon I would spend at least 15 minutes writing. Sometimes I ended up writing all weekend, and within 8 months, my book was ready.”

What If I Tell <http://www.whatifitell.com> was published in March 2008.

The process of bringing her book to market involved one hurdle after another. Having previously run a business, holding a master’s degree from UVA and practical experience in technology and business development, McCabe launched a publishing company to support the imprint and promotion for her book. She then leveraged a web-based service to manage the printing and distribution to primary online channels, including Amazon.com, Borders.com and Target.com.

"I still have a lot of work to do to reach the audiences I'm seeking," McCabe admitted to students, "And that's why I'm tackling the market iteratively. My next objective is to reach customers through Borders and Barnes & Noble bookstores."

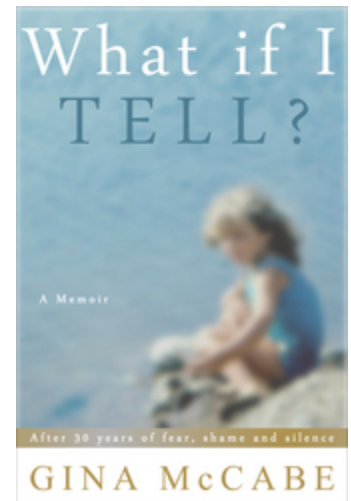
Student Zahira Khan commented, "Her 'not going to quit' and 'get what I want' attitude encouraged me to know that there is nothing I can't make happen."

McCabe emphasized that it is the passion behind her message that keeps her going as an author.

"If I didn't believe so strongly that this message needs to be heard, I wouldn't have had the energy to make this book happen. It took me 30 years to admit the mess about my uncle sexually abusing me and the impact it had on me and my view of the world. Now, I want to help others confront their own monsters through telling."

Student Elizabeth Stern commented, "To meet an author who I have so much in common with is groundbreaking in my life. She gave me the confidence to speak out against sexual violence and to expose my own demons."

Student Christina Sanders added, "I've always thought about publishing, and her presentation definitely motivated me to write about my experiences. I want to do the same thing with my story and help victims understand that they are never alone."



Following the talk, several audience members approached McCabe and disclosed their secrets, including one of McCabe's favorite former GMU professors who revealed that he had been subjected to sexual abuse at the hands of a teacher when he was 12. It was this very professor who encouraged McCabe to pursue writing in the first place.

"You're a talented writer, Gina," he had written on one of her papers during spring semester of 1992. "I look forward to seeing you published one day."

McCabe says she never forgot those words.

Professor Gallehr remarked, "When I read What If I Tell the week before Gina came to Mason, I made it to page eleven before crying. I put it down for a few days and went back to read the rest of it in one sitting. It's one powerful book."

#### About the Author

Gina McCabe's first book, What If I Tell <http://www.whatifitell.com> was published in March 2008. The book deals with the silence and shame she felt for decades after enduring sexual abuse as a child.

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