

# *Oklahoma* **WOMAN**

July 2009

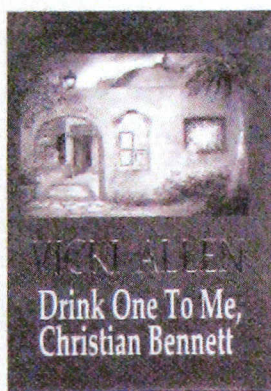
Timely Information  
for the *Women of Oklahoma*



# OKLAHOMA ROOTS SHAPES PHARMACIST-NOVELIST

BY TRACY CLEMENT

Vicki Allen wasn't born in Oklahoma. If asked, she'll tell you she was born and raised in the Deep South, by way of Alabama and Louisiana. But she moved to Oklahoma, graduated from the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy and embarked on a rich life as an Oklahoma City girl.



VICKI ALLEN  
*Drink One To Me,*  
Christian Bennett

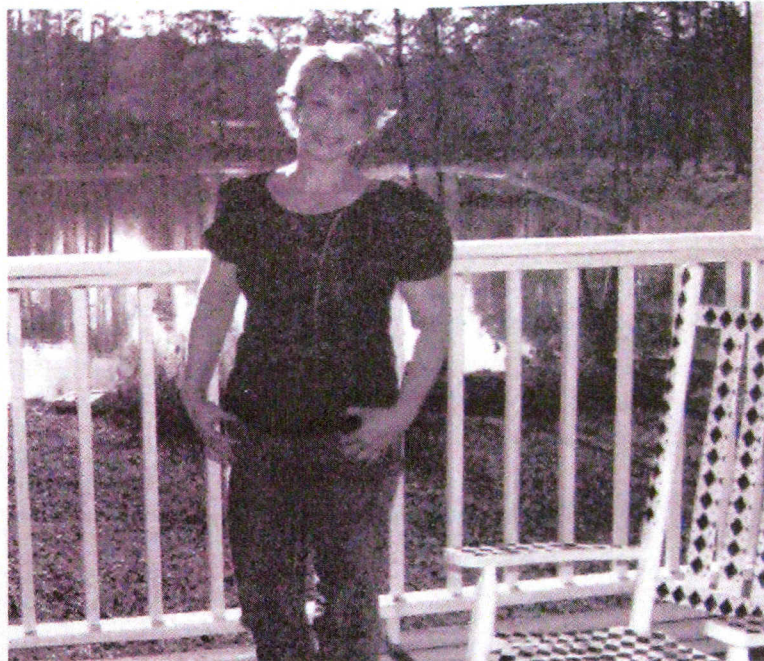
be defeated in times of tragedy.

For an Oklahoman, there are few greater tragedies than that of April 19, 1995 when Allen felt the windows in her workplace, Thrifty Pharmacy, rumble and shake as the result of the Oklahoma City bombing blast fifteen

miles away. The days and weeks that followed were nothing short of a catastrophic, heartbreaking loss, but the perseverance and positive attitude of the city impacted her.

"I witnessed strangers helping strangers in a way I had never seen before," says Allen. "We cried together, and we hoped for peace and justice for each other. The way that Oklahoma City pulled together changed me—gave me strength and perseverance that I have drawn upon ever since."

Eventually, the Southern Belle transplant married Oklahoma City native and attorney, Kent Allen and the two settled down with three children—daughter, Kelli and sons, Chris and Sean. She raised her family here until seven years ago, when she returned to



Alexandria, LA to become a co-owner of the city's nostalgic Sentry Drug & Grill. Though Allen loves her work and store, she misses the unique dynamic of skyscrapers and open space, culture and cowboys. She misses Oklahoma.

"Above all, I miss our friends and family who live here. But I also miss the food from our favorite eateries, like Ted's enchiladas, tortillas and cheese sauce, Braum's double-dip pecan caramel fudge sundaes—I ate one every day when I was pregnant with Chris—and Johnnie's #9."

Finding balance as a wife, a mother of three, a business owner and author of four published books (with four more in the works) would be daunting to any woman, but she takes it in stride and draws on her experiences and acquaintances to develop characters and storylines.

"Many of the personalities in my books are a cross-section of my life's experiences, including my time in Oklahoma. I loved living in such a diverse community and

know that the friends and memories I made here will be with me forever."

Allen's first two novels—*For Molly* and *The Search for Shannon*, a 2001 Fiction Finalist for the prestigious Oklahoma Book Award—were completed while she lived in Oklahoma.

According to Allen, *Drink One to Me*, Christian Bennett, is her best to date and will add a little spice to a summer reading list. "It is the story of Abigail Christiansen, an American photographer who breaks free of the stifling expectations of her large political family and travels with her brother to Mexico to take pictures for an upcoming exhibit, her jaunts through the Veracruz countryside unwittingly attracting the attention of legendary drug lord, Esai Molinero."

Vicki Allen's books are available locally at Barnes & Noble, 61<sup>st</sup> and N. May Ave. (OKC), Best of Books (Edmond), and online at BarnesandNoble.com and Amazon.com.

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