



**From: Kelli Williams, Chief Communications Officer  
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**Bartlesville Library to showcase Edge of Nowhere author C.H. Armstrong**

Author C.H. Armstrong hasn't lived in Oklahoma since graduating from OU and marrying Bartlesville native Troy Armstrong more than 20 years ago, but she returns to her roots and digs deep for inspiration for her novel, *The Edge of Nowhere* — a work of historical fiction set in rural Oklahoma during the 1930s Dust Bowl and the Great Depression.

The Bartlesville Public Library will host an event featuring Armstrong, including a presentation and book signing, in Bartlesville on April 2. The event begins at 7 p.m. at the library, 600 S. Johnstone Ave., in Meeting Room A.

“The *Edge of Nowhere* is a brilliantly written novel about Oklahoma and the people who experienced one of the most challenging times in our state’s history,” said Shellie McGill, interim transitional director for the Bartlesville Public Library. “Ms. Armstrong’s book is drawing rave review across the country, and we are thrilled to be able to help bring this very talented author to Bartlesville. We are very excited about this event.”

Armstrong, an El Reno, Okla., native who now resides in Rochester, Minn., says she drew on the stories and experiences of her grandmother, who lived in Oklahoma during the Dust Bowl years, as inspiration to write the book and in creating the novel’s main character, Victoria Hastings Harrison Greene.

“The idea for the novel came as a result of trying to understand who my grandmother was before her death,” Armstrong says. “She passed away when I was in my early 20s, so I knew her well and grew up with her as a very big part of my life; but we were never close. I never really knew who she was, she never talked about her past experiences, and we didn’t really have that close grandmother-granddaughter relationship that I’d always

longed for. When she died, I had this need to understand who she was and why our relationship wasn't as fulfilling as I'd hoped.

“While my grandmother never talked about her history, her children, my aunts and uncles, and their cousins sometimes did, so my generation grew up on the stories of the many hardships our family endured during the 1930s Dust Bowl. I've always thought those stories were so interesting and said a lot about who my grandmother probably was.

“Victoria Hastings Harrison Greene was inspired by my own re-imagining of who my grandmother may've been. She's a young woman who's seen too much in too short of a time. She's watched those she loves die too soon, and then she finds herself in the position of raising nine children entirely alone in the midst of the one-two punch that was the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression ... To see her children fed and sheltered, she makes very difficult decisions that will haunt her the remainder of her life and leave her both revered and feared by her grandchildren.”

Armstrong will kick off the Oklahoma leg of her book tour on April 2, when she will appear in Ponca City during the day and Bartlesville that evening. She says she's excited to be returning to Oklahoma, where she was raised and met her husband, Bartlesville native Troy Armstrong. Although the couple moved to Minnesota after Troy accepted a “temporary” job assignment on their wedding day in 1992, the Armstrongs return to Bartlesville as often as possible to visit family.

“My husband's parents (T. Doyle and Nancy Armstrong) still live in Bartlesville, and most of my extended family still live in the Tulsa and Oklahoma City areas,” Armstrong says. “So, until the last few years, I've made it home for one to two weeks every July. These last ten years have been at about two-year intervals. Funny enough, my middle brother also married a girl from Bartlesville. My former sister-in-law — we still claim each other as sisters — is Kathy Berg, and she graduated in 1979 from Sooner High School. Her mother and two siblings still live in Bartlesville.”

Strong family ties are clearly important to Armstrong, who, when asked to name her favorite thing about the novel, says it's having the opportunity to retell her family's stories — though she has had to “tame them down some” to make them believable.

“In a way, it sort of immortalizes the experiences of my grandmother and her children,” she says. “I loved being able to reimagine my dad and his siblings as children, and watch the personalities that I know today as they emerged from the page. And I love that some of the true stories are so unbelievable that I had to tame them down some to be believable. Some of the true events are so jaw-dropping that I get great enjoyment out of revealing the fact from fiction to readers when asked.”

Local readers will have an opportunity to ask those questions and enjoy a presentation on the book during the event on April 2. The event is free and open to anyone wishing to attend. Seats are available on a first come, first served basis.

*The full version of the City of Bartlesville's interview with Ms. Armstrong is available at [www.cityofbartlesville.org](http://www.cityofbartlesville.org).*