

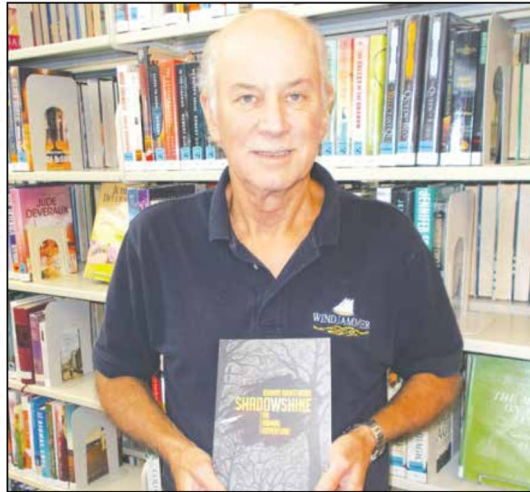
Author Profile Johnny Armstrong

By Michael Wynne

Over several decades of interviewing authors, I have met many very interesting people who happen to have written average books as well as many average people who have written very interesting books. But rarely have I met someone who was both interesting to know as a person and has also written an interesting book. In this rare case, I have the pleasure of offering both to you today, author Dr. Johnny Armstrong and his book, “Shadowshine”.

Johnny, a native and lifelong resident of Ruston, is the son of a World War II soldier-turned-traveling salesman and a homemaker. After graduating in Pre-Med at La Tech, he went on to LSU School of Medicine in New Orleans and graduated in 1975 as a Medical Doctor with a specialty in Pathology. “I noticed that I was in the top of my classes in Pathology so I guess I chose that field,” offered Johnny. After 42 years working in Pathology, he retired in January 2018 after a successful career in medicine. “It was just day to day work—providing reliable service to our patients in care.” But with Johnny’s retirement from medicine, this might be where his greatest success may now begin.

Johnny said he was inspired to begin writing over 25 years ago in the era of “Cowboy Poetry”. He wrote a book of rhymes and said he just “had a blast doing it”. In reading his poetry to the public, he developed what he called a “dog and pony show”, that is, a stand-up act that was a lot of fun for Johnny as well as for his audience. But writing poetry finally ran out of steam for Johnny, “I decided I wanted to do something with animals—I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do, but I came up with some animal characters and they became my friends.” Johnny says he just started writing without any preconceived ideas as to what the final product would be and he ended up with a book. “I just couldn’t stop writing this book as I wanted to find a solution to my ‘friends’ (the animals’) problems,” he explains. The book became “Shadowshine”, a book that one reviewer says is “somewhere between J.R.R. Tolkien and Richard Adams’ ‘Watership Down’.” It is a stunning tale told through the odyssey of a loveable opossum and the friends and lessons that he collects along the way. “As a lifelong conservationist”, Johnny says, “I want my novel to send the strong message that we humans have the responsibility to protect our planet; at the same time, I hope adult and teen readers enjoy a classic adventure story in which all of the heroes are animals.” I found this book to be a true delight as well a quietly instructional guide on the plight of animals and the earth. I know that, one day, this book will become required reading in schools and universities, but is a delight to read by old guys like me, too.



As hinted earlier, Johnny is a devoted conservationist who had turned his family’s 150 year land into a conservation trust for future generations to enjoy. I listened to Johnny talk at length about restoring his lands back to their proper balance of biodiversity. He expects his children and his children’s children to continue his legacy of the conservation of Louisiana’s rich heritage in our native lands.

Johnny is already working on his next book on the fascinating story of Wafer Creek Ranch, the name of his family’s home. Johnny’s book, “Shadowshine”, is available from Amazon Books and Guernicaeditions.com.

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