



*2004 LLA Conference
Book Dinner Speaker*

Sarah Shankman, the author of the seven-volume Samantha Adams mystery series, as well as three other novels and a collection of short stories, grew up in West Monroe, a small town in northeastern Louisiana. She earned her B.A. at Northeast Louisiana University, Monroe, and an M.A. at Emory University, in Atlanta. In the mid-sixties, she began teaching night school at Georgia State College while holding down a day job at *Atlanta Magazine*. Next up, she was on the founding staff of *New Orleans Magazine*. At both, she worked with the likes of Anne Rivers Siddons, William Diehl and Pat Conroy, all of whom cheered her on when she herself began writing fiction.

Words, words, words have been the passion of Shankman's life. In addition to her writing, she's taught literature and writing to students ranging from junior high school to university. She's worked as an editor and writer on magazines comprising subjects from candy manufacturing to the lighting industry to restaurant reviewing. (The last being the best, her beat: dining with the country's finest chefs.)

Her mystery writing has allowed her the pleasure of making the acquaintance of hundreds of other crime writers, particularly as a board member of both the Mystery Writers of America and the International Association of Crime Writers.

Always a rolling stone, Shankman has to'd and fro'd between Manhattan and the San Francisco Bay Area most of her adult life, with a long stopover in Santa Fe in the mid-nineties. Santa Fe provided the setting for the last Sam Adams novel, *Digging Up Momma*. Place has always been major focus of Shankman's writing, the setting often acting as a character. Atlantic City and the Miss America Pageant were the backdrop for *She Walks in Beauty*; Tupelo, MS, and a barbecue cook-off for *The King is Dead*; Nashville's country music scene for *I Still Miss My Man But My Aim is Getting Better*. Her hometown, West Monroe, was, in part, the setting for her semi-autobiographical literary novel, *Keeping Secrets*, as Atlanta was Samantha's hometown and the locale for *First Kill All the Lawyers* and *Then Hang All the Liars*. Shankman spun her memories of New Orleans at Carnival-time into *Now Let's Talk of Graves*, and childhood visits to Hot Springs, AK, fueled *He Was Her Man*. The San Francisco Bay Area, where Shankman once again makes her home in the East Bay, was the setting for her first novel, a thriller entitled *Impersonal Attractions*.

Shankman is hard at work on her next novel, which she characterizes as "Steel Magnolias meets The Canterbury Tales meets Weight Watchers."