

Profiles in BLUE

Kim Edwards

Kim Edwards, assistant professor of English at UK, has said that one of the pleasures of writing *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* was uncovering the resilience that developed in the novel's characters as they found themselves in situations they did not understand. Her expertise at crafting this story — about a doctor delivering his twins during a snowstorm, discovering that one has Down's syndrome and sending the child to an institution, all the while telling his wife that the child died at birth — was what propelled the book to a huge success, reaching No.1 on *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Publisher's Weekly*, and *Book Sense* best seller lists. The novel also is being published in 40 other countries.

Edwards has been interested in telling stories all her life, so writing a successful novel is like the ultimate culmination of a natural inclination. Storytelling is simply part of her.

"I have a clear memory of my very first story. I told it to my mother and she wrote it down because I was too young to write. It was a very moralistic tale about an eagle and a worm," she says. "But it had a happy ending."

Edwards is a native of Texas and grew up in Skaneateles, N.Y. She graduated from Colgate University and the University of Iowa, where she received master's degrees in fiction and linguistics. Traveling to Asia with her husband (Thomas Clayton, now head of the English department at UK), she enjoyed five years of teaching in Malaysia, Japan, and Cambodia and began publishing short stories while overseas. One of these, "Sky Juice," won the Nelson Algren Award, while others appeared in notable periodicals and also won honors, including a National Magazine Award for Excellence in Fiction and a Pushcart Prize, as well as inclusion in *The Best American Short Stories*. Her book, *The Secrets of a Fire King*, also was recently reissued in the United States.

Before coming to UK in 2002, she taught in the MFA programs at Warren Wilson and Washington University. She usually teaches creative writing classes, but currently she is on a one year sabbatical from UK.

"I'm working on another novel, and even though I know more now about writing, it is still a process of starting over," she says. "Some writers have a formula they follow, but for me, it is more about the process of discovery."



Photo: Chris Poore