

## 2022 WOMEN IN BUSINESS



### Melissa L. James

Owner, Creative Copy & Design

**At work:** I'm a copywriter and graphic designer who operates a two-person marketing agency. My work ranges from websites and e-blasts to print brochures, flyers and fundraising letters — basically, any form of creative, persuasive communication.

**Volunteer activities:** I'm passionate about language, from mentoring copywriters to serving on the board of Peninsula READS, for which I am president-elect. Another passion is education; I work with many York County schools, teaching print advertising to third graders each spring, performing mock job interviews with students from three high schools, teaching website design and serving on pitch panels for entrepreneurship classes. At Yorkminster Presbyterian Church, I'm a Sunday school teacher, direct the children's handchime choir, give children's sermons every other week, play in two handbell choirs, sing weekly in the chancel choir, coordinate/train acolytes and design marketing materials. Other nonprofits I've helped in recent years include Smart Beginnings, PORT/LINK and Salvation Army (as a Spanish interpreter). I provide pro bono marketing work for several other nonprofits.

**Home and family:** I live in York County with my husband, Air Force Lt. Col. Derek James; son Preston, 15; daughter Audrey, 13; and our German exchange student, Sebastian. Plus four cats! My husband and I are both from Charlotte, North Carolina, where we were high school sweethearts and then attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill together.

**Motivating factor:** Helping others succeed.

**Advice for women in business:** Communication is king (OK, queen)! Answer emails and calls promptly, and keep others informed of your progress. It takes mere minutes but makes all the difference in your business relationships.

**The one thing I would change about Hampton Roads:** For the Peninsula to be included more — send some love up this way!

**Professional goal in five years:** See my business continue to grow and add more staff to help handle the workload.

**Downtime:** Creating custom cakes for friends, book club, gardening, interior design and lots of singing and handbell ringing!

**What really gets under my skin:** When people are inconsiderate of others.

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