

Jan Burke - Long Bio - Updated 02/06/09

Jan Burke's newest novel, *The Messenger*, is a supernatural thriller set in Los Angeles. Her eleven novels of crime fiction include *Flight*, *Bloodlines*, and *Bones*, which won the Edgar® for Best Novel. Her books have appeared on the *USA Today* and *NY Times* bestseller lists, have been published internationally, and optioned for film and television. She is also an award-winning short story writer.

She is the founder and director of the Crime Lab Project, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the improvement of public forensic science

Jan Burke was born in Houston, Texas. She has spent most of her life in Southern California, often in coastal cities—several of which combine to make up the fictional Las Piernas, where her series character, newspaper reporter Irene Kelly works and lives.

She comes from a close-knit family, and remains close to not only her parents, her two sisters (neither of whom resemble Irene's sister, Barbara) and brother, but also a wonderful assortment of nephews, nieces, cousins, aunts, and uncles.

She and her husband, Tim, share their home with two dogs, Cappy and Britches. Jan's husband, Tim Burke, is a musician and owner of a private tutoring company, The Traveling Tutor.

Burke is a Distinguished Alumna of California State University, Long Beach, where she received a B.A. in History and worked on oral history projects as a graduate student. She later became the manager of a manufacturing plant for a large corporation.

From the age of seven, though, she wanted to write. She completed her first novel, *Goodnight, Irene* in the evenings after work. It was sold unagented and unsolicited to Simon & Schuster. She received a surprising boost from a new fan when, during his first White House interview after taking office, President Bill Clinton said he was reading *Goodnight, Irene*.

She soon left her day-job to write full-time. Simon & Schuster has remained her publisher throughout her career, and has now published twelve of her novels and a collection of her short stories

She is one of the few American women to win the Edgar® Award for Best Novel, which she received for *Bones*. She also received an Edgar® nomination for Best Short Story for "The Abbey Ghosts." Her short stories have won the Agatha, two Macavity awards, and the *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine* Readers Award. (She is the first woman to have won the EQMM award.) She has also

received Anthony, Nero, and Barry Award nominations.

Her books and stories have been published internationally and optioned for film and television. They are available as audio books from Recorded Books.

Burke is an advocate for the improvement public forensic science. In addition to being the founder and director of the Crime Lab Project and the Crime Lab Project Foundation, she has been a speaker at meetings of the National Institute of Justice, the American Society of Crime Lab Directors, the California Association of Criminalists, the California Association of Crime Lab Directors, and other forensic science organizations. She is a member of the honorary board of the California Forensic Science Institute.

Burke taught writing for the UCLA Extension Writers' Program and has been the keynote speaker at the Book Passage Mystery Writers Conference. She has taught writing, research, and forensic science for writers at numerous conferences. She edited the first edition of *Breaking and Entering*, Sisters in Crime's guide to getting published, and served as an Associate Editor on *Writing Mysteries: A Handbook by the Mystery Writers of America*, edited by Sue Grafton. She is a longtime member of Sisters in Crime and has served on the national boards of Mystery Writers of America and the American Crime Writers League. She served as President of the Southern California Chapter of MWA.

She will be the Guest of Honor at Left Coast Crime 2010 in Los Angeles.

Her blog, *Is this thing on?* can be found at <http://www.janburke.com/blog.html>

You can learn more about Jan Burke and her work at her Web site, <http://www.janburke.com> .