

# About the

# Book

*A Widow's Awakening* draws you in from the first page. Listening in on a conversation one month before the death of a police officer, readers are given a glimpse into the everyday marriage on the brink of a tragic event. "You almost want to apologize," wrote Michael Platt from the Calgary Sun, "reading Maryanne Pope's account of her husband's death...so vivid is her description, you feel like an intruder."

Eight years in the making, 'the book you can't put down,' is a powerful and engaging journey through the first year of grief and a candid portrayal of the difficulty of accepting the unacceptable while learning how to transform loss into positive change.

"*A Widow's Awakening* gives a rare insight into the emotional roller coaster and psychological struggle experienced by the newly widowed wife of a police officer, senselessly killed as the result of an unsafe workplace," said Calgary Police Chief Rick Hanson. "This compelling account of personal tragedy and its aftermath, told with brutal honesty and a sense of humour uniquely the author's own, results in a fascinating and thought-provoking book."

The text pages have been produced on 100% post-consumer recycled paper.



## ***A Widow's Awakening***

Creative Non-fiction

Trade Paperback/\$24.95

312 pages

5.5" x 8.5" x 0.77"

Soft cover, matte finish

Written by Maryanne Pope

ISBN: 978-0-9810643-0-7

Published by Pink Gazelle Productions Inc.

September 2008

*"I loved your book! I cried, I laughed, I felt your anger. I was willingly drawn into your opinions on Christianity, the transition from life to death and the environment. It was an amazing read and I have selected your book for my choice in our book club, as I think it will spark so much interest and conversation." Linda MacGillivray, Calgary, Alberta*

# *A Widow's Awakening*

For more information visit [www.pinkgazelle.com](http://www.pinkgazelle.com) or [www.jpmf.ca](http://www.jpmf.ca)

For media bookings contact Ian Wilson at (403) 891-4269 or [ian@jpmf.ca](mailto:ian@jpmf.ca)



# About the Author

“ *A Widow’s Awakening* is just that: a waking up of the soul. It is my hope that by sharing the intimate details of my personal loss, I can inspire others to awaken to what’s important in their own lives and the world around them...and if something needs changing - be that on an individual, societal, environmental or political level - to do it.”

– Maryanne Pope



Photo Credit: Ada Casello



**Maryanne Pope** is the Board Chair of the John Petropoulos Memorial Fund (JPMF) and the Founder & CEO of Pink Gazelle Productions Inc. She is the author of *A Widow’s Awakening* and the award-winning playwright of *Saviour* and *The Widows*. Maryanne also writes short stories, articles and screenplays.

Maryanne is the executive producer for the award-winning documentary, *Whatever Floats Your Boat...Perspectives on Motherhood* as well as the JPMF’s *Put Yourself in Our Boots* safety video.

She is a workplace safety advocate, environmental educator, and public speaker and has extensive experience dealing with the media, having received coverage on TV, radio, newspaper, magazines and on-line publications throughout North America.

Maryanne loves traveling, hiking, golfing, skiing, swimming and camping. She lives in Calgary, Alberta with her two dogs.

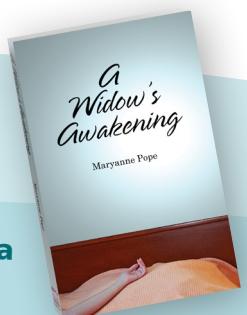
*“In January, my husband’s best friend took his own life. She picked up a copy of your book, recommended to her by a victim services worker who had recently attended an engagement at which you were speaking. You began as an inspiring writer, overnight you became an inspiring person and I just want to thank you for helping my friend.”*

Stacey C, Calgary, AB

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# Q & A

## Q: What is the book about?

A: It's my personal story about the loss of my husband, John Petropoulos, a police officer who died in the line of duty on September 29th, 2000. John fell through a false ceiling while investigating a break and enter complaint at a warehouse. It is a journey through my first year of grief, so it combines the stages of sorrow, anger, confusion, denial, guilt and regret. It's always brutally honest and I think that is its greatest strength.

## Q: Why did you choose this venue to cope with your grief?

A: I wanted to be a writer since I was seven. Prior to John's death, I was half-heartedly writing a novel. The day before he passed away, we had an argument and I told him how scared I was of waking up twenty years later and still not have finished writing a book. He looked at me and said, "You're probably right – as long as you know that will have been your choice." So when he died the next day, I knew exactly what I had to do. Two weeks later, I started writing what would become *A Widow's Awakening*.

## Q: What is the John Petropoulos Memorial Fund and what is its connection with the book?

A: The John Petropoulos Memorial Fund (JPMF) was established after John's death by several of his police recruit classmates. It has evolved into a non-profit organization that raises public awareness about workplace safety issues facing emergency services personnel. 20% of the proceeds from the sale of the book go towards the Memorial Fund's safety initiatives.

## Q: What do you hope the reader will take away from your book?

A: If they are grieving themselves, it's most likely they will identify with what I experienced and possibly be reassured to know that they are not alone – nor crazy. If they've never experienced a significant loss, then they might be more empathetic to someone in their lives who has. This book will be of special interest to those who are married to a police officer, as it tends to be a very different type of marriage with unique stresses. For the general reader, I hope they enjoy the journey of a great story and be inspired to take action in their own lives.

## Q: What exactly does *A Widow's Awakening* mean?

A: Waking up to reality...it's an awakening of the soul to what's important in our lives. I had never given workplace safety much thought before John died. Now it has become an integral part of my life. Likewise with my writing – before John passed away, I thought I had all the time in the world to pursue my dream. But his death woke me up to the fact that life is precious and can end at any moment, so it's important I make every day count and do the work I need to.

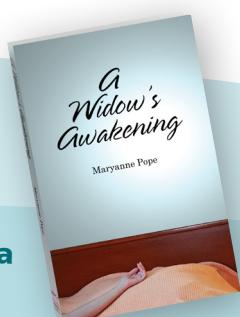
*"A brilliant tale of rage and redemption...prisoner, prophet, victim or visionary, Pope is a master of dialogue who lays her soul bare...an exhilarating ride!"*

Claire Scott, Author, *Butterfly Blessings* and *Butterfly Wisdom*

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“ It was a gripping read...so intense that I read it in small bits, so that I could absorb all the information. Your book has also made me more aware of my surroundings, not only at work, but everywhere.” Lesley, Paramedic, Halifax, NS



“ Your book is FABULOUS . . . I couldn't put it down! The story is gripping, and the writing is fluid and engaging. Bravo!! What I found the most intriguing is the religion/spirituality topic. I have already suggested the book to one of my clients and several of my friends..”

Susan Rochow, Registered Therapist

# Testimonials

“ In this remarkable, can't-put-it-down book, Pope lays bare the raw, painful and sometimes embarrassing truth of what it means to lose a soul-mate love to the hazards of law enforcement – including the wrenching truth that her husband didn't have to die the way he did.” Chuck Remsberg, PoliceOne magazine

“ All I can say is WOW! How did you do it? I laughed, I cried . . . I laughed again and cried some more. It was the bravest piece of literature I have ever read.”  
Ann Lebitka, Calgary, AB

“ What an incredibly powerful and moving book! Although I had tears in my eyes as I read each page, I think your messages are uplifting and are so important in challenging the human spirit to make our lives mean something. It is so cleverly written and thought-provoking. I haven't enjoyed a book this much since I taught classic literature to high school students a few years ago.”  
Sarah Hourihan, Calgary, AB

“ The author's vulnerability in describing the events of the day of her husband's death and her minute by minute survival is the closest I have encountered to being inside someone else's skin. A Widow's Awakening will give great insight to those of us who have not experienced this loss.”  
Deborah McInnes, Off Duty Partners

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# About the John Petropoulos Memorial Fund



Creating Partnerships  
for Safer Workplaces

[www.jpmf.ca](http://www.jpmf.ca)

**20%** of the proceeds from the sale of *A Widow's Awakening* go to the JPMF, a non-profit society committed to raising public awareness about workplace safety issues facing emergency services personnel.

Cst John Petropoulos of the Calgary Police Service passed away in the line of duty on September 29th, 2000 at the age of 32. John was investigating a break and enter complaint at a warehouse when he fell through a false ceiling and succumbed to brain injuries. There was no safety railing in place to warn him of the danger. The alarm turned out to be false; there was no intruder in the building.

*"A Widow's Awakening is a bold, honest and gut-wrenching account of a police officer's death and his spouse's struggle to rationalize its meaning. It is a must read... John's death and Maryanne's life bring to the forefront the issue of workplace safety after hours."*

Staff Sergeant Darren Leggatt, Calgary Police Service

## Safety Initiatives

The JPMF has produced two 30-second workplace safety public service announcements (PSAs) – *Make Your Workplace Safe for Everyone* and *SLOW DOWN: It's No Picnic Out Here* – that have aired on TV over 100,000 times since 2004.

In 2010, the JPMF will launch the *Put Yourself in Our Boots* safety campaign, comprised of three additional 30-second PSAs and a 10-minute safety video, that will provide the public with tangible tools they can implement in their own communities to help ensure emergency workers make it home safely after every shift.

## About Pink Gazelle Productions

Started in 2002 by Maryanne Pope, Pink Gazelle Productions Inc creates imaginative works of literature, theatre & film that entertain, enlighten and encourage people to effect positive change in themselves and the world around them.

Projects include *A Widow's Awakening* creative non-fiction book, *Whatever Floats Your Boat...Perspectives on Motherhood* documentary, *The Widows* one-act play, *Saviour* full length play script, *Face the Future* environmental campaign, *God's Country; The Nell Shipman Story* screenplay and *C's Trial*, a short film script about the Alberta oil sands.

*"Thanks so much for sharing your book with me and I wish you and your company all the best in spreading words and stories that mend the world. What else do we have?"*

Evan Solomon, Host CBC News: Sunday and Sunday Night



Synergy in Action  
[www.pinkgazelle.com](http://www.pinkgazelle.com)

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