

Lori Dendy-Molz: Talking Translating

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by Haley Herfurth

Having lived in Germany for nearly a decade, University of Alabama alumna Lori Dendy-Molz was confident enough to open her own translating business in 2000—ID Werk Translations (which translates roughly as “Idea Factory Translations”) —where she translates “all kinds of things” into English. She has now been in that country for 20 years, and her business is going strong. “I have great customers and I love my work,” she said, “even though I’d never imagined myself doing it when I was in school.”

Dendy-Molz graduated from UA in 1986 with a bachelor’s in journalism and then in 1992 with a master’s in journalism. That same year, she relocated with her husband, Michael Molz, to his native country. Born in Völklingen, Germany, he received his master’s in German literature from the University of Georgia in 1985 and was working for Kappler Safety Group in Guntersville, Ala., when the two became acquainted. “Shortly after we met, the company he was working for sent him back to Germany. So we had a long-distance romance for a couple of years,” she recalled, saying she visited him at Christmas and in summers. A few weeks after Dendy-Molz finished her master’s program, she and Michael were married at the restaurant in Guntersville where they first met. Now married for 20 years, they have two sons: Max, 14, and Nicky, 9. Dendy-Molz said she loves that Germany is “neat and orderly,” and since she and her family live on the country’s shared border with France and Luxembourg, there are many interesting places to visit within an hour’s drive.



Dendy-Molz in her home office

After doing the “odd translation here and there,” Dendy-Molz said she fell in love with the work, and has been working as a full-time translator since 1998. “I love getting to do something different and learning something new practically every day,” she said. “I honestly can’t think of anything I’d rather be doing.” Her studies at the University helped her with her career in translating by polishing up her writing skills, she said. Her experiences at UA also helped her learn to keep deadlines, which are important to her clients, especially those working with layout departments and printers. “It can be a little stressful, but working as a daily beat reporter definitely prepared me for frequent deadlines,” she said. “In fact, I don’t know if I’d ever get anything done without deadlines.”



Dendy-Molz with the family dog, Viktor.

Dendy-Molz has had her hands full ever since her company’s opening, translating mostly marketing, advertising and management materials, which can range up to many thousands of words. She said that the business can even get a little bit steamy. “My most unusual job was probably translating a website for a very high-end call girl agency, which are legal and regulated in Germany,” she said. “The website emphasized the good educations and interesting hobbies of the women, and went into quite a lot of detail about all of the places they’d traveled and previous careers they’d had—careers that were often quite different from their current occupation,” she said. One woman had even worked as a translator. “It didn’t really make me consider switching jobs, though,” she said with a chuckle.

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