Maggie Burch, '14, A Spider with the ‘Write’ Stuff

For Maggie Burch, '14, the University of Richmond was an easy choice. Not only was the campus beautiful and the size just right, but Richmond had something unique to offer her that not many other universities did – a journalism specific program. While you can walk onto almost any campus and hear about a communications program, Maggie knew she wanted something unique, and UR was the place to get it.

Turns out, Richmond was not only an easy choice, but a perfect one, as it set Maggie on a path to where she is now, almost five years post-graduation. While at UR, she was able to spin her love of English and writing into a “practical and achievable” career path. The passion to tell stories was always within Maggie, but it wasn’t until late in her UR journey when she realized how this passion could manifest itself. Maggie sees journalism as a way to seamlessly combine the art of storytelling with her desire to ask questions and analyze situations, in order to get to the heart of whatever it is she’s curious about.

In May of 2014, Maggie moved to New York City to attend NYU's Summer Publishing Institute. The Institute is a 6-week program focused on book and magazine publishing. She describes it as “a crash-course in all aspects of the industry with a lot of amazing networking opportunities.” Through the program Maggie connected with an HR representative at Time Inc., which led to her first job at People StyleWatch magazine. While this connection helped get her foot in the door, Maggie believes the skills-based training she received from her dedicated UR professors, from copyediting to layout design, set her apart as a newcomer to the industry.

After reporting for People StyleWatch, Maggie joined the team at Glamour.com as the Production and Operations Editor. In this role, she worked with both the editorial and engineering teams to manage the content being published to the site. While this was the right role for her at the time, she missed the creative aspect of writing, and after three years was ready for the next step. So, she amicably quit her job, and moved back to Georgia in the fall of 2018 to launch her freelance career. Since then, Maggie’s authored pieces for Southern Living, House Beautiful, The Everygirl, and Atlanta Magazine, to name a few.

Why freelance? “I really love the flexibility and freedom that comes with freelance writing. I can work from anywhere, on the schedule I want,” says Maggie. She also embraces the challenge arising from writing for sites with varying audiences, which requires the ability to write in diverse tones. Transitioning to being her own boss has taken discipline and plenty of hustle; however, Maggie’s found it fulfilling to prove to herself that it’s not only something she can handle, but excel at. While Maggie acknowledges the importance of planning ahead and charting out a career path, she knows that sometimes a step you weren’t expecting will lead you towards something you end up loving.