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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Monroe Releases First Picture Book**

**Mt. Pleasant, S.C.** (January 4, 2007) – As *New York Times*, *USA Today* best-selling novelist Mary Alice Monroe releases her new adult novel, she will also release her first picture book, “*Turtle Summer: A Journal for my Daughter*.”

“*Turtle Summer*” is a companion book to the novel “*Swimming Lessons*,” Monroe’s highly anticipated sequel to “*The Beach House*” (both published by MIRA Books). In “*Swimming Lessons*,” readers witness a young mother making a scrapbook-journal for her daughter. “*Turtle Summer*” is the journal she writes! Using original photographs by Charleston, S.C., resident Barbara Bergwerf, the picture book explains the nesting cycle of loggerhead sea turtles and the natural life along the southeastern coast.

“I’m thrilled to be working with Sylvan Dell Publishing as ‘*Turtle Summer*’ comes to life,” says Monroe. “It’s been very exciting to build this scrapbook with Barbara, and I am hoping that our book brings the wonder and excitement of a Turtle Team’s summer to children.”

Like every Sylvan Dell book, “*Turtle Summer*” contains a “For Creative Minds” educational section in the back of the book. The section includes fun facts about the endangered loggerhead sea turtle, a shell identification craft, a Make-Your-Own Nature Scrapbook activity and information on Turtle Teams and the items members carry to help sea turtles. In addition, Barbara Schroeder of NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Protected Resources, and the staff of the South Carolina Aquarium have vetted the picture book for scientific accuracy.

“*Turtle Summer*” is also under consideration for the Accelerated Reader Program, which is used in over 57,000 schools. To date, all of Sylvan Dell’s 2005 and 2006 titles have been accepted into the program.

Monroe is the critically acclaimed author of 10 novels, including “*Sweetgrass*,” “*Skyward*,” and “*The Beach House*,” and is known for richly textured books that explore the compelling parallels between nature and human nature. A resident of the South Carolina Lowcountry, Monroe is an active conservationist. Her dedication is evident in her novels; *Publishers Weekly* wrote, “Monroe is in her element when describing the wonders of nature and the ways people relate to it.”

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Bergwerf met Monroe on the Isle of Palms Turtle Team. She is no stranger to the world of picture books; in fact, she photographed Sylvan Dell Publishing's award-winning 2005 release about one loggerhead turtle's recovery at the South Carolina Aquarium's Sea Turtle Hospital. The picture book, written by Donna Rathmell, is titled "*Carolina's Story: Sea Turtles Get Sick Too!*" and received the Florida Publishers Association's 2006 Best Children's Nonfiction award. Both of Bergwerf's books stem from her volunteer involvement with the South Carolina Aquarium and her work on the Island Turtle Team.

Monroe is planning a national satellite media tour for both books as well as a regional tour of the Southeast throughout the spring. Her official launch party for "*Swimming Lessons*" and "*Turtle Summer: A Journal for my Daughter*" will be held just before the sea turtle nesting season begins on Tuesday, March 27 at the South Carolina Aquarium.

Sylvan Dell Publishing is a young company on a mission to create picture books that excite children's imaginations, are artistically spectacular and have educational value. Readers can ask for "*Turtle Summer*" and other Sylvan Dell titles at their favorite local or online bookstore. They can also find more information about the picture book, Mary Alice Monroe, Barbara Bergwerf and the "*Swimming Lessons*" / "*Turtle Summer*" tour by calling Sylvan Dell Publishing's publicist, Katherine Miller, at (877) 958-2600 or by visiting [www.SylvanDellPublishing.com](http://www.SylvanDellPublishing.com).

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