

# Canton native to kick off fantasy series this summer

By **Shelby Harrell** | Guide Editor

For Kyle McNeal, 40, of Fort Mill, South Carolina, releasing his first fiction book, "Birthrights," is the start of a long-time dream coming true.

McNeal, who grew up in the Beaverdam community of Canton, had the idea of writing fantasy books since he was a child. Though it was delayed somewhat throughout his life, his first book will be hitting the shelves this summer — kicking off his first book of four volumes in a series called "Revisions of the Truth."

The first book of the series, "Birthrights," is scheduled for release on June 6.

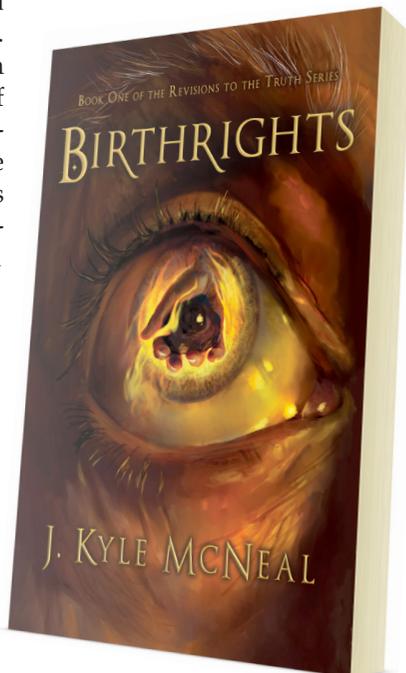
Writing has always been a way for McNeal to escape into a magical world beyond reality, and this same world he imagined vividly comes to life in his books.

Through his writing, McNeal attempts to merge the magic of imagination with real-life situations and themes, thus providing readers with an interesting story and perhaps a different way of thinking.

"I have always been enthralled by where fantasy can take you, and I've always had a passion for telling a story along those lines," McNeal said in a recent interview. "The best fiction is basically the truth, but you're allowed to make those truths real in a way that sparks people's imagination rather than relying on experience."

"Birthrights," tells the story of two characters, Whym and Quint, and the separate jour-

neys they face as they struggle to discover who they really are.



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Conflict arises while these two men attempt to decipher the truth about themselves and the world they live in—and as they figure out what to believe, they must make a decision about which side they will stand on during the conflict.

"I think the overwriting theme to the book is that there is no one, single truth," McNeal said. "Even one person's truth may shift over time. I also hope it's enjoyable and thought-provoking. I hope the readers take away what I intended them to."

Growing up in the Beaverdam community helped shape McNeal as a young writer, and those memories

of "home" still serve as inspiration.

"Back when I lived there, you couldn't see another house where you lived," he said, noting that the feeling of being isolated only fed into his imagination. "I credit that time with really influencing me, and living in that kind of small community helped to form who I am. No matter where I've lived, I've always considered the mountains of Western North Carolina home."

McNeal's original plan to write the books didn't happen as quickly as he'd hoped. A five-year plan to write fantasy eventually turned into 20 years, as McNeal found work in management consulting and eventually helped run an operation in China with nearly 1,000 employees.

However, the time came for McNeal to return home and follow his original dream. Today as he currently lives with his wife and 2-year-old daughter in Fort Mill, he spends most days hidden away in his room, writing until he is drained.

"I could have stayed in a good role, but I wanted to do something that would last," he said. "I always wanted to create something everlasting."

Now that the first book is complete, McNeal is both thrilled and anxious about the response it will receive. He is currently writing book two of



Kyle McNeal / Donated photo

the series, which he hopes to release next year.

"My pledge is to get one of the books out every year, so people aren't stuck in a series that will take forever," he said.

For more information, or to pre-order the book, visit [www.jkylemcneal.com](http://www.jkylemcneal.com), or contact him at [jkylemcneal@gmail.com](mailto:jkylemcneal@gmail.com). Also, find him on Facebook at @jkylemcneal.

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