

FSSA attorney releases first novel

“In the Belly of the Bell-Shaped Curve” was released on Oct. 30

Boredom, exasperation, annoyance and mediocrity.

These are definitely not words to live by, but attorney Michael Carter, who serves FSSA as the Division of Family Resources’ director of contract compliance, put them together along with an idea. The result was his first published novel, “In the Belly of the Bell-Shaped Curve,” which was released on Oct. 30, 2021.

And the book is anything but mediocre. “In the Belly of the Bell-Shaped Curve” has a glowing take from Kirkus Reviews, one of the gold standards in publishing. Kirkus said Michael’s creation was “an often funny satire of the excesses of the free-market ethos.”

“In the Belly of the Bell-Shaped Curve” was also selected for inclusion in the iUniverse Rising Star program, which recognizes excellence in writing and overall potential. This is quite a feat for a first-time author who had always wanted to write a book.

Michael is a graduate of Indiana University, earning a bachelor’s in English and Doctor of Jurisprudence from the McKinney School of Law. Before working for FSSA, Michael also practiced law for years as a trial lawyer and as a deputy attorney general.

He completed his manuscript and submitted it to his publisher prior to the pandemic but said the back-and-forth editing process continued well into the pandemic.

“The novel is a humorous satire on our society, which is at times surreal and absurd, but is plausible within the mind and experiences of the lead character, Turk,” Michael said. “At other times, it is deeply serious.”

As for the title, Michael explained it this way.

“One of the themes of the book is the frustration the lead character feels being stuck in the middle of the bell-shaped curve, the belly, and his apparent averageness compared to

the ideal on social media, TV, movies, magazines, and other media, to which he cannot measure up.”

Michael’s novel is available on [Amazon](#), [Barnes & Noble online](#) and in their bookstores and his publisher’s online bookstore, [iUniverse](#), and it’s currently available in a variety of formats.

“Hard copy, paperback, e-book (Kindle) and audiobook,” Michael said. “Listening to the audio is fun for me because the actor emphasized most of the words and phrases in the same way that I heard (?) them in my head.”

Recently, Michael was tabbed as a feature author for the Indianapolis Public Library’s Indy Author Fair and at the Miami Book Fair in Miami back in November.

Michael clearly enjoyed writing his first novel, but when asked what was more fun, writing or practicing law, Michael stated both.

“Creative writing and fiction are more fun, but I also love my present job (with DFR). My routine was to get up one hour early each

day and write before I went to work. I would be too tired to try and write in the evening.

“I spent years as a trial lawyer and loved the thrill of doing jury trials, despite the pressure to win,” Michael added. “There is nothing like the feeling you have when you have finished closing arguments and the judge has read the instructions to the jurors and sent them to the jury room for deliberations. You have put all your energy and your passion into this case, worked countless hours, survived on little sleep, and are still experiencing an adrenalin rush and all you can do now is wait for the verdict.”

Sounds like the basis for a future novel.

You can find out more information on Michael and his book at his website, [michaellcarter.com](#).

