Dotty Griffith grew up in East Texas. She became interested in journalism by ‘60s enlightenment uprisings and political turmoils around the world. Griffith studied journalism at University of Texas in Austin, where she wrote for and edited the school newspaper, the Daily Texan. At the Texan, Griffith felt the rush of covering the Texas state capitol and politics. She says journalism gave her an “excuse to talk to anyone about anything.” After graduating, she was immediately hired on as a reporter for the Dallas Morning News.

Like most reporters new to the Dallas Morning News, Griffith started out working the city desk. Her experience at the Texan prepared her to deal with Dallas police and county sheriffs. Sexism, and racial prejudice, were big problems in Dallas law enforcement in those early days. Sometimes, police or other officials would hit on her as she was on assignment, but that didn’t hold Griffith back from getting the stories she was after.

After a few years as a reporter, Griffith was transferred to what would now be the metro desk to become the Morning News’s food editor. The food section of the newspaper was in the women’s section in those days. Griffith was hesitant to take the position because she was a serious journalist who got a rush out of hard-hitting news stories and powerful characters. However, she saw an opportunity to improve food reporting and bring it into the realm of serious journalism, so she accepted despite her doubts.

When new wave of attention to food and cuisine raised in Dallas Morning News she was offered a position as food critic. She accepted, which became a new beginning for her professional life. She was eventually offered a position as the editor for the food section. She was hesitant to
move over to the “woman’s section” of the newspaper, but eventually accepted. There she wrote articles about cookbooks, recipes, and while there she introduced the farmer’s market reports, which is still there today.

When Griffith became a food writer, most illustrations and photographs used by newspapers in food sections came from food companies. Griffith took the food section beyond that era with her journalistic professionalism. Under Griffith, the Dallas Morning News began to produce its own photographs and illustrations for food stories. A kitchen was installed in the paper’s office for food to be prepared, often by Griffith herself.

Griffith worked as the food editor for about 16 years before becoming a food critic. As a food critic, she wrote reviews on restaurants and their food. Altogether, she has spent over 30 years working as a journalist for the Dallas Morning News.

During her time as a food reporter and editor, she also wrote a few cookbooks. Her first book, Wild About Chili, was published in 1985. She had received a call from a publisher, asking if she knew anyone who could write a cookbook about chili and she decided to write it herself. In total, she has published eight books about cooking and food. Currently she is planning on co-authoring another cookbook with Houston-based chef Sylvia Cazares.

After leaving Dallas Morning News, Griffith continued to write for local publications, like Katy Trail Weekley, and for her own website. Griffith enjoys hunting and spending time with her friends in the outdoors. Hunting is a tradition in her family, and it is also a way to fill her freezer with wild meat. She enjoys cooking chili with her venison to show people how delicious wild game is.