

February 2017

Full Issue of MAPWriting Spring 2017

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Recommended Citation

(2017) "Full Issue of MAPWriting Spring 2017," *MAPWriting*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 1 , Article 21.

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MAPWriting

The Magazine for the MA in Professional Writing at KSU



Spring 2017

Featuring Stories from our Alumni

Spring Issue

2017

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From the Editor:

Prior to applying to the MAPW, I remember conducting quite a bit of research about careers in professional writing. I always wondered what graduates of writing programs were doing with their degrees and wished for a document that had different outlooks on writing as a career. I wanted opinions, the good, and the unfavorable.

MAPWriting is what we hope to be a step toward creating more conversations within our community of writers, both at KSU and beyond. This will be a space where alumni, faculty, and students will share their stories and where students and others interested in pursuing a degree in professional writing will learn of opportunities in the field.

Every writer's path is different. However, for those who are just beginning their careers it is very helpful to have some guidance as to what other professionals in the field have done with their professional writing degrees, by listening to the voices of the graduates of our own program. The alumni that will be featured in this issue have taken the time to share their knowledge and experiences. Many of them are highly active in the community, some even make part of local writing organizations and continue to support our KSU community.

I truly hope you enjoy reading the stories of our alumni and make part of this conversation.

Sincerely,

Estefany Palacio
Managing Editor

A Message from Dr. Susan Hunter



As founding director of the Master of Arts in Professional Writing degree program at Kennesaw State University, I am proud to celebrate its 20th anniversary. In 1995, when the first graduate students began taking classes, the MAPW program was innovative-- one of the first career-oriented Master of Arts degrees of its kind in an English Department in the University System of Georgia. As a testament to our vision twenty years ago, MAPW alumni continue to publish, teach, and do research throughout communities of the Northwest Crescent and well beyond.

Congratulations to MAPW faculty, alumni, and students--past, present, and future--as you celebrate this milestone of 20 years of personal and academic successes in professional writing.

Dr. Susan M. Hunter,
Professor Emerita of English,
Clayton State University

Dr. Jim Elledge: A Student's Appreciation

By: Michael Goodwin

Dr. Jim Elledge served the MAPW program well in his tenure as director, and I commend him for that, but my thanks to him are far more personal. Long before I ever wrote stories or games, long before I was published, I was a poet. I got my start as a writer with the usual angsty teenage poetry that any decent writer cringes to look back on, but poetry is poetry, and verse has lived at the heart of my identity as a writer from the day I considered myself one.

While I have had other skilled poetry teachers over the years, Dr. Elledge brought out the best in my work. He gave me permission to speak with an unfettered voice, to not only indulge my passions but exult in them. He dared me to be bold, to say what I dared not say in day-to-day life. He pulled out my voice, sometimes trembling and hesitant, and in so doing, he made that voice soar. That was the essence of his teaching. He did not make poets. He made poets better. In this, he was a living muse, a dear friend and confidante with whom I could wrestle the challenges of life and figure out how to talk about them.

For all he did to nurture my talent with overbrimming positive energy, my fondest memory of him as a muse was when he cracked down on me to finally finish my capstone project or be ejected from the MAPW program. This was not meanness or spite, and he was very calm in his delivery. He did not want to kick me out. He knew I was capable and very much hoped that I would rise to the challenge before me. And so I did. I am a better writer for having been his student. More than that, though, I am a better and more thoughtful person. I will always count Dr. Elledge among my greatest mentors. He believed in me, as was his way to believe in all his students. When I needed soft encouragement, he gave me that in glorious abundance. When I needed firm direction, he did so without a hint of tyranny. Truly, he was as much a master in his handling of students as he was a master of his own writing craft.

I could not have asked for a kinder, wiser, or more brilliant teacher. Thank you, Dr. Elledge, and may you enjoy your well-earned retirement. I am proud I was your student. I am proud that I made you proud. And I know am very much not alone. So, I think I speak for the multitudes you have taught when I salute you in the fine tradition and fitting verse of Dead Poets Society, "Oh Captain, my Captain." Be well and my love to you always.

Princella Howard Dixon and the March to Selma



Princella H Dixon with copy of Freedom's Children
photo Robert Anthony Stalcup

In March of 2015, MAPW student Princella Howard Dixon shared with the nation the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Selma-to-Montgomery March for Voting Rights. The Selma March is also the subject of the 2015 Academy Award- nominated film *Selma*. The film covers the fateful attempt of marchers to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge on "Bloody Sunday," March 7, 1965, and the aftermath of that event.

Princella, who at the time of the march was a freshman at an Iowa college, served as president for the youth division of the NAACP for the State of Iowa. She answered the call to the nation from Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) president, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and returned to Montgomery, Alabama, her native city and state.

With thousands, she marched from Selma to Montgomery on March 21 through 25, continuing to the Alabama State Capitol. With Alabama Governor George Wallace, reportedly, viewing the massive gathering from the capitol window, Princella stood in the crowd and listened to Dr. King give one of his most noted speeches, "How Long, Not Long." This was less than two years after King's historic "I Have a Dream" speech.

The previous summer, Princella had been appointed by Andrew Young as the youngest field state representative for SCLC, and with a self-selected staff of five young

people, had travelled to Pritchard, Alabama, a community near Mobile. There she led daily voter registration rallies. In 1972, less than a decade later, Algernon Johnson (AJ) Cooper was elected mayor of Pritchard. He became one of the first black mayors in the nation.

For Princella, who had been nurtured in a progressive family and community, the Selma March was a milestone for the work that she and her family had been doing throughout her life. She was born in Montgomery, Alabama, and grew up there. Though she was only a child when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., came to Montgomery as pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Princella had already been taught by her parents to take on an active role in the community.

It was important to them that whatever privilege they had be shared with others, that church be more than someplace one attended on Sunday, that love be extended to all, regardless of skin color, class status, or any other external characteristic. It was this sort of active progressivism that Dr. King drew upon and was influenced by when he and others formed the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) and took on the formidable task of facing down oppression in the 1955 Bus Boycott. The Montgomery Bus Boycott was the first major protest of what would become the Civil Rights Movement.

Princella's family was active in support of the MIA. Her father used the taxi service he owned to help shuttle African American men, women, and children to school and places of employment. This alternative transport by taxicab companies, in addition to the many church-sponsored station wagons, provided some relief to the people of the community and helped to sustain the one-year boycott of the Montgomery city buses.

At the first mass meeting of the boycott, Princella's mother helped to prepare the young people who sang in the chorus. Rosa Parks, Ralph Abernathy, and Martin Luther King, who came to national acclaim with the advent of the boycott, were not just people on the news. They were people with whom she and her family interacted. In cooperation with other members of the African American community and some especially brave white individuals, they worked together to break the cycle of discrimination that existed throughout the South and in much of the rest of the country.

Princella remembers well the feeling that hung in the air in those early days of the movement: “One thing we all knew: something had to give. It was like a keg full of dynamite. Even in the quietness, it was too quiet. The whole country was too quiet.” These words appear in Ellen Levine’s [Freedom’s Children](#), a book that celebrates the contributions of Princella and other young people to the student leadership of the Civil Rights Movement.

Princella was actively organizing students for voting and equal citizenship rights as she completed high school in the spring of 1964 at St. Jude High School in Montgomery. It was on St. Jude’s campus, one year later, as referenced in the film *Selma*, that the marchers settled and were entertained with a concert, entitled “Stars for Freedom.” Princella attended the concert, headlined by artists such as, Tony Bennett, Harry Belafonte, Peter, Paul, and Mary, Nina Simone, Sammy Davis, Jr., Joan Baez, Pete Seeger, and Leonard Bernstein.

During the summer following her high school graduation, Princella co-chaired the Montgomery Student Movement.

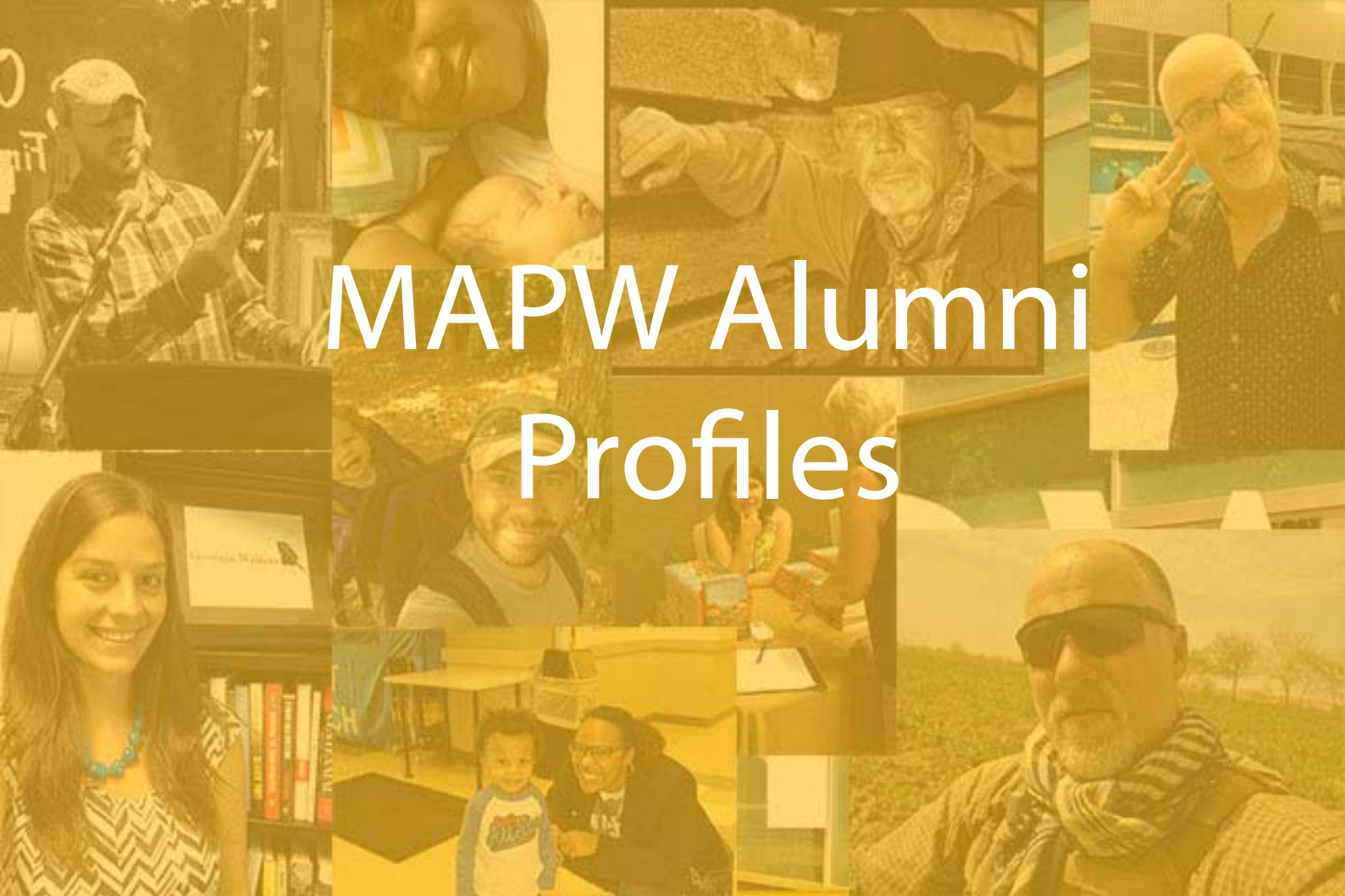
When the mayor of Montgomery closed city parks rather than abide by federal statutes requiring that they be integrated, Princella wrote a letter of protest, a letter that is archived in her family collection of Civil Rights documents. Princella also worked with the founders of *The Southern Courier*, a newspaper that covered the Civil Rights Movement and the region’s volatile racial transition from 1965 until 1968. Princella wrote the *Courier*’s account of Governor George Wallace’s visit to Governor Lester Maddox at the Georgia Governor’s Mansion. This article is archived as a part of a collection at Tulane University in New Orleans.

In his speech commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Selma March, President Obama stated that though we have yet to achieve the equitable society those marchers sought that day in Selma, “Our job is easier because somebody already got us through that first mile. Somebody already got us across that bridge.” For those of us in the English Department and the MAPW program, it is inspiring to know that one of our own braved the danger and walked the path before us.

On March 4, 2006, in Selma, Alabama, at the Commemorative Banquet of the Selma-to-Montgomery March, Princella Howard Dixon was presented with the Freedom Flame Award for her work to fulfill the American creed of freedom, justice, and equality.

“The boycott was a real movement. It was so powerful. In a year you can build great momentum. It brought together even people who were generally at odds with each other”

-From *Freedom’s Children*



MAPW Alumni Profiles

Drew Brown



Drew Brown

My Journey from MAPW Student to War Correspondent

By Drew Brown

Drew Brown ('98) was a member of the inaugural class of the MAPW program and graduated with a concentration in creative writing. Having worked as a journalist covering the wars in the Middle East, he now spends his days as a freelance writer living between DaNang, Vietnam and Lizella, Georgia, USA.

I credit the MAPW program for launching me into my journalism career. If I had not taken the feature writing course, and already been trying to freelance a bit, I don't think I would've had the confidence to answer the ad for my first newspaper job in Carrollton.

I worked as a journalist from 1997 through 2010. I still occasionally do a little freelance. I began working as a general assignment reporter for the "Times-Georgian" of Carrollton while still a MAPW student. I got hired by the Macon Telegraph to cover Robins Air Force Base in 1999. Soon after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks occurred, I got loaned out by the Telegraph to the Knight Ridder Newspapers Washington Bureau, which was looking for volunteers to cover what everyone knew would be a war in Afghanistan. The bureau wanted people who had covered war, or had served in combat, or had served in the military, or had experience covering the military and who were comfortable traveling and working overseas.

I had served as a U.S. Army Ranger from 1989 to 1993,

and was a combat veteran of the 1989 invasion of Panama. I had trained in Kuwait in the aftermath of the 1991 Persian Gulf War. I had also traveled extensively in Mexico, Central and South America. When I saw the email from Kathleen Carroll, who was then the Knight Ridder DC bureau chief, I called her, and told her a little about my background and my work for the Telegraph. "I'm the man for the mission," I told her. "And I'm not going to take no for an answer."

I ended up covering Afghanistan and Iraq for the Knight Ridder Washington Bureau from 2001-2003. The bureau hired me full-time during my first trip to Afghanistan. I covered the Pentagon full-time for Knight Ridder from 2003-2007, but was never very good at it. I took a job in 2007 as a writer and photographer with Stars and Stripes, the U.S. military newspaper for troops overseas, and covered the war in Iraq for them from 2007-2008 and the war in Afghanistan from 2008 through the end of 2010.

One of the things I regret most about my journalism career is that I essentially stopped writing fiction as soon as I got my first newspaper job. I never really learned how to balance the two. Also, war journalism is all-consuming, and over time, I just put my fiction aside. However, since I'm no longer working in daily journalism, it is something that I plan to take up again. Like most newspaper journalists, I feel like I've got a novel or two in my head just waiting to be written.

I have fond memories of the fiction and poetry workshops and the camaraderie I enjoyed with fellow students in the MAPW program. Our nights at the Taco Mac were always a lot of fun.

My best advice to current or prospective MAPW students is to take as wide a variety of writing classes as possible. Looking back, I wish I had focused a bit more on technical writing, marketing and blogging, although the latter was very much in its infancy back then. Some of the lessons I've learned over the years include: network as much as possible and stay in touch with classmates after you graduate.

Never give up on yourself or your talents or your commitment to your art or your craft. Never be afraid to take chances. There is a lot of truth in the saying "fake it until you make it." Keep abreast of emerging technologies and trends in your chosen field. If you don't, then it's very easy to get left behind.

I'm really not working on anything at the moment. But

one of the projects I'm most proud of is a story and photo project I did for McClatchy Newspapers on Agent Orange three years ago while living in Vietnam. I'm also rather proud of a project I did on Qaeda got away from Tora Bora in Afghanistan early in the war. That latter one seems like ancient history now. There are, of course, many stories from both wars that I'm proud of, but I wrote hundreds, so it's kind of difficult to pick just a handful. I started putting together a page with a bunch of story links to put on my photo website a couple of years ago, but I never finished it.

It's interesting sometimes to see where my work has ended up. One of the great things about working for a news service is that a story you write can end up literally anywhere in the world. Even now, when I go back and google some of my work, the original story links have sometimes disappeared, but the stories live on where they have been picked up on other sites.

I do have a [photo website](#), but it is in dire need of updating. I had hoped at one point to segue from writing into photojournalism, but I think I probably started too late, and it did not help that my journalism career spanned the last good years and then the sad decline of the newspaper business.



Drew Brown

More about me:

[Facebook](#)

[McClatchy DC-World](#)

[McClatchy DC-World](#)

[Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

[The Wichita Eagle](#)

Jarnea Paden

“MAPW gave me writing courage, and a nature to embrace my idealist views and become visionary”



Jarnea Paden and son, Jrue



Jarnea Paden and daughter, Jai

Jarnea Boone Paden (09) is a Creative Writing/Composition Rhetoric graduate of the MAPW program.

While studying at KSU, I was able to seize the opportunity to serve as an editorial assistant, after completing an internship in the College of the Arts (COTA) public relations office. In addition to directing a team of five intern writers and photographers, and writing unassigned pieces, I wrote over eight issues for *Flourish* magazine.

This experience granted me my first “real life” magazine cover story. It also provided me with an additional opportunity to write an article highlighting the partnership between the Atlanta Ballet and the KSU Dance Department that appeared in *Atlanta ShowGuide Dance 2010*.

After obtaining my degree, I married, and shortly after was lucky enough to acquire teaching and freelance tutoring positions, as well as part-time work in Human Resources.

Using the Composition/Rhetoric side of my degree first, I worked as a certified professional writing tutor for a local college and was hired as an Adjunct Instructor for a technical college, serving for a short time as Associate Dean of General Studies.

I was able to secure a position as an online English Composition adjunct for the Dual Enrollment program at a Georgia high school but am currently choosing to “pause” my adjunct teaching to begin a parenting blog

and to place a greater degree of focus on the antics of Jrue, my toddler, and Jai, my baby girl.

I have a full-time position as a Human Resources Generalist and Office manager with a local security company, but I stay warm in my writing by journaling and micro blogging each day, and through daily human resources writing tasks.

Presently, I am in the exciting “business plan” stage of a parenting blog I’m attempting to find the time to launch, since the birth of Jrue in 2013.

MAPW gave me writing courage, and a nature to embrace my idealist views and become a visionary. When I first began the program in 2006, I would balk at unorthodox, unearthed ideas and scurry from “my own characters’ voices,” speech that would haunt me for hours after I was done writing for the day.

Now, I allow myself to be free, and this freedom has given me permission for more exploration and has made me more creative, more able to be empathetic in my day career, and of course, has made me one heck of an imaginative, story-telling mommy.

More about me:

[Selected Works](#)

[Linkedin](#)

[Facebook](#)

Scott Singleton



Scott Singleton and wife, Lucia, at Bear Lake, Colorado

For me, college was always about finding the right professor. As an undergraduate student at KSU, those professors were Dr. King and Dr. Watson; as a graduate student, they were Dr. Guglielmo and Dr. Harper. The best instructors challenged me and force me to grow—or perhaps they simply affirmed something I needed help affirming. I think this is even more important than selecting the right courses. I attended KSU for my bachelor's degree in English, and so the entire English Department has been invaluable to my work as a writer. My undergraduate degree was largely a foundational experience, and it was as a graduate student in the MAPW program that I learned to apply this foundation to specific industry-related skills. Without that application and development, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing today. My studies in the MAPW program are an essential piece of everything I write.

In my first semester of the MAPW program, I interned at the KSU College of the Arts (COTA). That internship led to a part-time job as an Editorial Assistant, which led to a full-time job as a Communications Professional (also at COTA). Without that experience, I would never have been able to jump into a full-time technical writing position so soon after graduating. Working at KSU while participating in the MAPW was the perfect blend of learning and applying.

Along with three other MAPW students, I participated in a Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in Las Vegas, NV in 2013. Our project came out of our work in Dr. Guglielmo's course on Writing for Social Media. Under her guidance and expertise, we put together a presentation with the theme of social media and the public work of composition, and

I presented on the idea of remix and how social content can conflict with copyright law, and how to address these issues in the composition classroom. That presentation eventually became the subject of my capstone and it was a fantastic experience. The Bedford-St. Martin's sponsored party on the hundredth floor of the Stratosphere hotel was another highlight of the trip! I thoroughly enjoyed attending and participating in the academic conference, and I'm grateful for Dr. Guglielmo's guidance in the whole process. Although I chose another direction for my career, I appreciated the glimpse inside the world of teaching college composition I was afforded.

While a student in the MAPW program, I was fortunate enough to take one creative writing course. It was Play Writing, and it was a blast—a nice break from my applied courses. With no previous experience in play or screen writing, it was challenging at times, and work-shopping my play to the whole class was a new experience. The creative writing students were awesome and hilarious, and I'm glad I took that course, even if I'm currently not writing any scripts. However, if I were ever to pursue a side project, it would definitely be a screenplay. I'm a big film fan, and I find the process of writing a screenplay and bringing it to life on the screen fascinating.

A few months after graduating from the MAPW program, I began work as a Technical Writer/Editor for a local software company. I've been here nearly three years and it's going really well. I write the documentation for the software (user guides, release notes, etc.) and all the marketing copy (website, emails, social, advertising, case studies, press releases, direct mail, newsletters, convention materials, etc). We are a small company, so I get to write both technical documentation and marketing copy. Not all technical writers participate in marketing, but I really enjoy it. The marketing work can break up the monotony of documentation, and the documentation can offer a nice cut-and-dry escape from the world of digital marketing, which can be difficult to track and measure the impact of our campaigns. It's a good balance. I also edit all mass communications for the company and maintain a variety of internal documentation. I just completed all of our website's copy. The company adjusted its marketing strategy for our web content and focused on increasing our SEO efforts, which were in need of adjustments, due to recent search engine changes. We are also increasing our email marketing and social networking efforts.

I do get to write some creative non-fiction occasionally, but that's at a minimum these days. I try to stretch as much as I can, mostly non-fiction—history, biographies, baseball, theology, technology, writing, etc. With the exception of my job, I don't get much of an opportunity

to engage in writing activity as much as I would like. My wife and I welcomed our second boy in June 2016—our first is two years old, so nearly all my free time is happily spent with them. My family spent some time in Colorado last year for our anniversary. We stayed in Denver and visited Rocky Mountain National Park and Boulder.

If I were to give advice to incoming MAPW students, I would let them know that it is helpful to identify and write down their goals for the program. This should help them to decide on the appropriate concentration, courses, and professors. One of the strengths of the program is the range of courses. I really enjoyed taking courses on technical editing and teaching writing at the same time, since teaching was my backup plan, and something I might still pursue one day. Although the range of options is one of the strengths of the program, if students do not develop a strategy and plan ahead of time, they might not get the most out of the program.



Scott Singleton and son, Cormac

More about me:

[Capstone](#)

[Kennesaw Journal of Undergraduate Research](#)

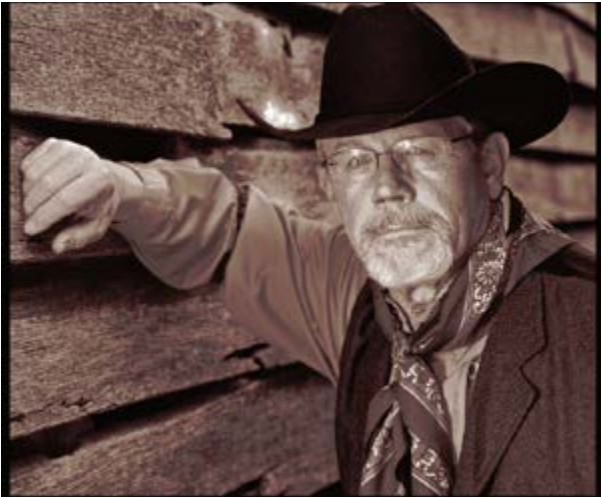
[Flycatcher](#)

[Twitter](#)

Running Georgia's Literary Centers

Georgia has long been the home to writers' organizations, including some of the oldest in the USA. The Atlanta Writers' Club, for example, was founded in 1914 and still provides literary services for writers after more than a century. The organizations range in size and type, from loosely organized groups that sponsor open mics to incorporated nonprofits like the Decatur Book that sponsors the largest independent book festival in the USA. Among these groups, several are currently run by MAPW alums, who are carrying on the MAPW's mission of outreach to writers.

T.W. Lawrence



T. W. Lawrence

T.W. “Walter” Lawrence (’05) is the founder of the Booth Writer’s Guild (BWG). He mentioned, “I was invited by the Booth Western Art Museum to help them put together and direct a writers’ group organized around the genre of the classic Western.” Walter organized the group which is open to writers working in all literary genres associated with Western, including song writing.

The organization meets regularly at the [Booth Western Art Museum](#) in Cartersville. “I was drawn to this opportunity because of the powerful artwork in the building. Growing up in Texas, there was a bit of nostalgia involved, but also there was a way of life that needed to be carried on,” said Walter.

Several of the BWG writers are published, one a two-time winner of the [Georgia Writer of the Year Award](#), and members learn from each other as they share their writing experiences. In addition to meetings, BWG offers a free program called “Art at Lunch” that brings in both visual artists and authors to make presentations about their works. It’s an intimate setting with a robust Q&A afterwards.

The BWG records an audio interview with each author about his or her writing style and techniques, and other matters that might interest the Guild. This November, the BWG will participate in the [Texas Book Festival](#) in Austin, attending sessions and selling members’ books at a BWG vendor’s table.

Q&A

Do you have any special stories to share about your MAPW experience?

While workshoping one of my short stories,

set in Oklahoma, the description of the landscape included a line that said, “there was nothing between the Canadian border and the Cibolo Creek on whose banks I was standing...,” when member of the critique group commented that I might want to check my facts, because Oklahoma did not actually border Canada. Several heads nodded. I lost half of my intended audience in one short paragraph!

Tell us about your writing projects, either those you pursue independently or those you pursue as a part of your job

I made a bet with myself. I said I bet that I can earn enough writing fees by selling articles, selling books, teaching writing classes, and working on writing projects to pay back the amount of money I spent on tuition and books earning the MAPW degree. I did. It took 5-1/2 years, but I did it.

On the Job: Currently working with a statewide legal organization compiling a manual of best-practices. A well organized and easy-to-read writing style helped secured that project.

Freelancing: Beginning to compose a series of short stories for the young adult market set in the West circa 1905. This anthology will be used as a teaching resource for youth ministers at the local Cowboy Churches. It’s more-or-less a sequel to my Dusty and the Cowboy series.

What advice would you offer to current or prospective MAPW students?

Actively seek to get a magazine article published (paid or not) because it has you working with a professional editor and it teaches you how to write “tight” and write “grabber” intro paragraphs.

More about me:

[Website](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

Joellen Kubiak-Woodall



Joellen Kubiak-Woodall

One of the models for SHORE was Joellen Kubiak-Woodall's ('09) Marietta Square-based Play Pen [Open Mic](#) series. The mission of the monthly series, according to Joellen is two-fold: It supports the local artists and involves the community. The performers who share their work learn to audibly edit the work based on audience involvement. They develop a performance personas, build confidence, and hopefully gain a following. Because we hold Play Pen at Johnnie McCracken's Celtic Pub, we attract an audience not normally found at a book signing, gallery, or poetry reading and cultivate an appreciation of the written word and writers."

Joellen founded the reading series as an outreach of her online journal, [The Write Room](#). "I started the magazine because I wanted to provide a none intimidating environment for my fellow students to submit their work. Once the magazine site was live, I started receiving submissions from all over the world." The reading series includes a variety of literary artists from slam poets to playwrights and story-tellers. "Performing is fun and anybody can participate," Joellen says, but also notes the benefits of participating go beyond writing. "Learning to overcome rejection, to control an audience is an essential skill for life as well as art. Job interviewing, networking and social skills are greatly improved from participation in a project like Play Pen."

Q&A

Do you have any special stories to share about your MAPW experience?

As a non-traditional student, my biggest challenge was learning to type and to use a computer. In my first class I was asked to open a Word document

and free write. The student next to me helped me get started. The professor asked what the problem was and I had to explain. She said, I guess you can just use paper then. I said, Nope, I got myself into this and I have to learn sometime. I learned to choose my words carefully because there was going to be very few of them.

Tell us about your writing projects, either those you pursue independently or those you pursue as a part of your job

Currently I am an editor and business owner. I run an online vintage and thrift store called Cicadas and I am the editor of [The Write Room](#), an online literary magazine that I founded when I was in the MAPW program. Additionally, I host and perform at our monthly open mic, Play Pen. I went back to KSU as a continuing education student and earned a certificate in Web Design and Development.

I am the web master for [The Write Room](#) and [Cicadas](#). I switch between the more literary challenges of editing and writing sales copy. I use my writing and research skills daily. I also have to locate, edit or create images and graphics, the magazine, the shop, and Play Pen. I try to keep up with all the social media associated with my multiple projects. I am also on the cusp of joining IATSE the entertainment union to pursue a career as a buyer or costumer in the film industry.

As for hobbies, I upcycle clothing and handbags for resale. I like the idea of green fashion. Lucky me, I've managed to turn my hobbies into my profession. When you are in school your job is making time to write. Once you are out and in the workforce it takes discipline and commitment to continue to grow as a writer. I read my original work every month at Play Pen. I know as that date approaches I better have something new to perform or rework a previous piece. In a sense, I'm still assigning myself writing and workshopping time by performing. Most of the stories I read are part of two in-progress memoir projects, [Clay Pit Road](#), based on growing up in South Carolina in the 60's, or [Ridge Riders](#), my teen years living between South Carolina and Southern California in the 70's.

What advice would you offer to current or prospective MAPW students?

Make and maintain the relationships you form with other MAPW students and your professors. Those relationships with other creatives are hard to come by once you enter the workforce.

More about me:

[Facebook](#)

Sally Kilpatrick



Sally Kilpatrick

Sally Kilpatrick ('10) became acquainted with [Georgia Romance Writers](#) (GRW) because of a project in her PRWR 6000 course (Issues and Research in Professional Writing), and became interested in the organization. "By combining the camaraderie and practicality of GRW with the technique and artistry of my MAPW studies, my writing began to slowly but surely click," Sally said.

"For this reason I would encourage all students to find writing groups to complement their studies in the MAPW program. While MAPW taught me to hone my craft, GRW helped me look ahead to the business side of writing: query letters, submissions, agents, and editors. Also GRW taught me to pragmatically channel the elements of fine writing into a compelling story and, more importantly, I learned what I was writing. I refuse to sacrifice artistry for a commercial story but I also learned that all of the pretty sentences in the world won't do you any good without a compelling story underneath."

Sally has made invaluable industry connections through her roles at GRW as Conference Co-chair, Vice President of Programs, and then President. GWR is unique according to Sally because of its focus on romance and women's writing. It is primarily an organization of women. Also, "GRW truly believes in giving back and offer opportunities for unpublished authors to receive critiques and give feedback on contest entries from published authors."

Q&A

Do you have any special stories to share about your MAPW experience?

A memorable moment came in my first class with Tony Grooms. He asked me which draft I was on. I must've given him a really puzzled look because he went on to explain the concept of putting aside one draft and starting another from scratch. I had been tinkering with the same set of words in the same document. Putting that old draft to the side and rewriting with a blank document was, and still is, both freeing and terrifying. That said, it's such an important skill for writers, and I would've never been able to publish book two or three without redrafting.

Tell us about your writing projects, either those you pursue independently or those you pursue as a part of your job

I've now embarked on a new chapter of my writing career: writing a manuscript on deadline. I sold book four based on a synopsis and first three chapters. Book five I sold totally blind. So, I'm working on Bless Her Heart, a story that centers on what happens when a jilted preacher's wife gives up church for Lent and then decides to sample the Seven Deadly Sins. I may have discovered that I'm a plotter, but my characters surprise me every day as I draft. Oh, and while I'm thinking about it, do remember to set a personal deadline before your professional deadline because, um, life.

What advice would you offer to current or prospective MAPW students?

I have two more pieces of advice for my MAPW writers. One, keep writing. I started what would become The Happy Hour Choir the spring I graduated from the MAPW program. It took me two years to get an agent and another year beyond that to sell. While I was querying and later waiting while my agent shopped [Happy Hour](#) around, I wrote [Bittersweet Creek](#) and [Better Get to Livin'](#) —that's how I managed to have three books release in a little less than two years.

The key was that I had already written the first two and three-quarters of the third. Not only did that mean I had enough written for a three-book deal, but it also meant I could take some time to concentrate on revisions, copy editing, and page proofs without simultaneously being under deadline for a novel I had to write from scratch.

More about me:

[Website](#)
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Jessica Wilson



Jessica Wilson

Jessica Wilson ('09) is Administrator for the [Georgia Writers Association](#) (GWA), a position formerly held by MAPW alumna Lisa Russell. The GWA has had a long and intimate association with KSU and the MAPW. One of its founders was Professor Tony Grooms, and since 2006, when it came to be housed at KSU, its executive directors have been KSU faculty. Professor Ralph Wilson has been a past director and Professor Margaret Walters is the current executive director.

The GWA is dedicated to encouraging and promoting writers throughout Georgia. Monthly workshops offer writers the opportunity to hear from successful, published writers and learn from their experiences. As the Administrator, Jessica organizes the events and runs the day to day business of the organization in consultation with the executive director and the Board of Directors, which includes MAPW alumnus and GWA President Christopher Ward. GWA has over two hundred active members. Members vary in writing genres and backgrounds, but, in concert MAPW goals, are striving to improve their work and to publish.

“To current MAPW students,” Jessica advises, “take advantage of available internships and to seek out writing groups, such as the Georgia Writers Association, to begin building professional connections in the local literary field. As a MAPW student I interned with Georgia Writers Association and that foundation of knowledge gave me an advantage when I applied for my current job

as Administrator to Georgia Writers Association.”

The GWA hosts two annual events, the [Georgia Author of the Year Awards](#) (GAYA) and the [Red Clay Writers Conference](#). The GAYA ceremony has the distinction of being the oldest literary awards ceremony in the Southeastern United States. It honors both independently published authors and those whose books are published by traditional publishing houses.

The Red Clay Writers Conference is the annual conference of the GWA. Red Clay has been hosted since 2009 to encourage and inspire writers across Georgia through a full day of panels and workshops that focus on the art and craft of writing. The next Red Clay will be held on April 22, 2017.

Other GWA projects include [Exit 271: Your Georgia Writers Resource](#), both a writer's resource magazine and a literary journal; and, [The Exit 271 Studio](#), an extension of the Exit 271. The Studio is comprised of a small group of nurturing editors who make revision and editing fun. According to Jessica, “We help writers revise their work like seasoned editors and get published.”

Q&A

Tell us about your writing projects, either those you pursue independently or those you pursue as a part of your job

Since graduation I completed a draft of my first novel between listening to great imaginings of my young daughter and the endless barking of my two rescue dogs. In January 2016 I returned to the English building as a KSU staff employee. “Coming home” to these halls is a dream job. I get to work with the literary community through Georgia Writers Association, as the Administrator to the organization.

What advice would you offer to current or prospective MAPW students?

Jessica Wilson: To prospective MAPW students I would cheer you on to take the leap and begin a new chapter in your life. You never know what doors will open for you with a MAPW degree!

More about me:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

Chris Martin



Christopher Martin
photo-Kelly Ozmer Worms

Chris Martin ('13) also directs an organization affiliated with an existing fine arts center. [SHORE: Acworth's Creative Reading Series](#) is a monthly event he started this past year under the auspices of the [Acworth Cultural Arts Center \(ACAC\)](#), a fairly new nonprofit. Chris serves on the ACAC's board, where he is primarily responsible for literary initiatives and outreach, and SHORE is its banner literary event. The reading series is held in the Main Street Gallery in Acworth.

"It's a great space for a reading series," said Chris. "There are a couple restaurants and bars within a very short walking distance, so you can bring food and drinks in if you want, and we also provide a modest selection of drinks and light food at each event. It's an intimate and lovely setting, given the rotating gallery art, but also very casual. I like to think of it as a literary refuge and gathering place of sorts, and it's largely been that." The reading series is also unique in that it combines an open mic reading with readings by three featured authors each event. "And we're not focused on poetry alone. We've featured plenty of poets, of course, but we've also featured novelists of multiple genres, spoken word artists, playwrights, screenwriters, essayists, memoirists, satirists, and so on."

The name of the organization, Chris admits, is "a little tongue in cheek." It refers to the fact that Acworth is called "Lake City," and is a short walk from the shores Lakes Acworth and Allatoona. Also, the name refers to Chris's mission. "Acworth isn't exactly known as an arts haven, and I'm trying to change that, as are so many others. "Shore" can also mean "a prop to prevent

sinking," and the verb form of "shore" means "to support," which is exactly what we're trying to do with this series—to support literary artists and a sense of literary community."

Q&A

Do you have any special stories to share about your MAPW experience?

As far as challenges go—maybe unusual, maybe not—I was a full-time stay-at-home parent while in the program, which is to say that what made the program challenging for me is also what enabled me to be part of it. My son was born in December 2009, I started the program in August 2010, and my daughter was born in September 2011. I had to take a semester off in 2012 to focus completely on my kids and not deplete the reserves I'd need for a strong finish, but I made it.

As far as successes go, my first poetry chapbook was published while I was in the program, as were several individual essays and poems here and there. Two chapbooks closely followed my completion of the program, one of which was a collaboration with David King resulting from our independent study. Perhaps the biggest MAPW successes were being named the Outstanding Graduate Student of the Year for the program and winner of the Robert W. Hill Award, both of which meant a great deal to me.

Tell us about your writing projects, either those you pursue independently or those you pursue as a part of your job

I've kept one foot in that stay-at-home dad role—my son is in elementary school now, but my daughter is still in half-day pre-k—and one foot in the role of part-time English instructor. I've been teaching English as an adjunct at Georgia Highlands College since 2014 and I'm thrilled to say that I'll be returning to KSU to teach having just accepted a part-time English instructor position here.

I just won the Will D. Campbell Award in Creative Nonfiction for my book *This Gladdening Light: An Ecology of Fatherhood and Faith*, which will be out next year with [Mercer University Press](#). This will be my creative nonfiction book debut and my full-length book debut of any genre. There are pieces from all my MAPW classes in the book. My most recent poem publication is "At Paradise Garden," featured in the current issue of *Thrush Poetry Journal*, and two pieces of satire, one in [McSweeney's](#) (a white whale for me), and another in [Atlanta Banana](#).

What advice would you offer to current or prospective MAPW students?

Trail your obsessions. Slow down if you need to. Think of the program as a community. Use your time in the program to start putting your CV together so you won't have to build it from scratch later. If you're a creative writer, don't write just to satisfy a given assignment—well, you might have to do that every once in a while, but don't make it your general approach. Try not to look at the concentrations—creative, comp/rhet, applied—as mutually exclusive. Seek publication. Actively participate in various literary communities—local, regional, national, even global. If you're planning to teach afterward, at any level, go heavy on the comp/rhet, develop your teaching philosophy, and get some teaching experience if you can.

More about me

[Website](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Information on my three poetry chapbooks](#)

[Interview in the current issue of Poecology](#)

Resources for Writers

Below you will find the links to different sites where you can obtain more information about the MAPW, obtain help with your writing on campus, and also learn about writers' organizations outside of campus.

[MAPW Website](#)

[MAPW Facebook](#)

[MAPW YouTube](#)

[KSU Writing Center](#)

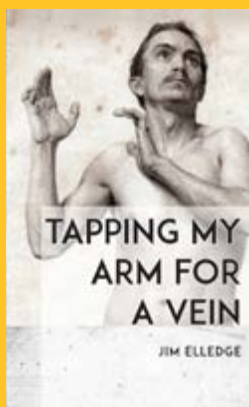
[Georgia Writers Association](#)

[Atlanta Writers Club](#)

[KSU English Department-Resources](#)

(The Spring 2017 issue of the *English Broadside* will be featured under this link)

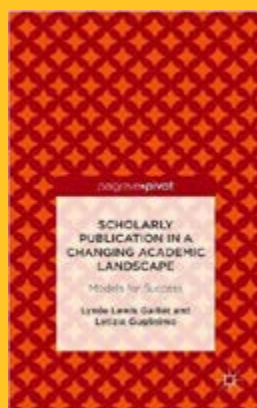
MAPW Faculty Publications: Books



Jim Elledge
Tapping My Arm for a Vein



Letizia Guglielmo
Contingent Faculty Publishing in Community
with Lynée Lewis Gaillet



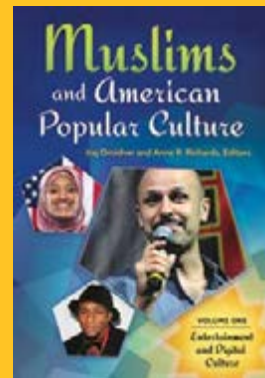
Letizia Guglielmo
Scholarly Publication in a Changing Academic Landscape
with Lynée Lewis Gaillet

Aaron Levy
Blood Don't Lie



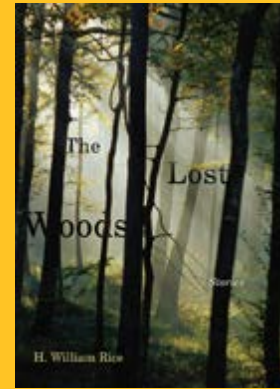
Melanie Sumner
How to Write a Novel

Anne Richards
Muslims and American Popular culture
With Iraj Omidvar



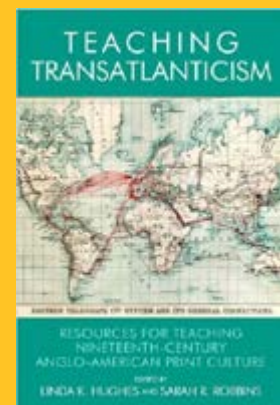
Anne Richards
*Historic Engagements
with Occidental Cultures,
Religions, Powers*
With Iraj Omidvar

H. William Rice
The Lost Woods



Jenny Sadre-Orafai
Paper Cotton Leather

Sarah H. Robbins
*Teaching Transatlanticism: Resources for Teaching
Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Print Culture*
Co-edited with Linda K. Hughes



**The titles mentioned have been
published within the last two years**

MAPW Faculty Publications

Jeanne Bohannon

“Not A Stitch out of Place: Assessing Students’ Attitudes Towards Multimodal Composition.” *Bellaterra Journal of Teaching and Learning Language and Literature*. Vol. 8, Issue 2, 2015.

“Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Differently: Assessing Teen Girls’ Tech-Writing Use.” *REx: The Research Exchange Index*, Colorado State University, 2015.

“TED as an Invention Tool: Students’ Perspectives” (with Ciara Morris), In *Media Res: a Media Commons Project*, 2014.

Permanent Regular Guest Blogger, *Multimodal Mondays: A Teaching Project from Andrea Lunsford and MacMillan Higher Education*, 2014-2015.

“Wiki Work: Recovering Forgotten Women in STEM Through Public, Collaborative Praxis.” *Peitho*, Fall 2016.

Sergio C. Figueiredo

“The Rhetorical Invention of Comics: A Selection of Rudolphe Töpffer’s Late Reflections on Composing Image-Text Narratives.” *ImageText: Interdisciplinary Comics Studies* 8.4 (2016). (International Journal) [Link](#)

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“Rudolphe Töpffer’s Graphic Novels: A Rhetorical Application Hegel’s Aesthetics of Physiognomy.” In *Media Res: A Media Commons Project*. 21 Jan. 2016 (Theme: Philosophy and Media). (International Journal) [Link](#)

Forthcoming Book: *Inventing Comics: A New Translation of Rudolphe Töpffer’s Reflections on Graphic Storytelling, Media Rhetorics, and Aesthetic Practice*. Trans. Anderson, SC: Parlor Press, forthcoming (est. 2017). In Pre-Production.

Beth Daniell, and Letizia Guglielmo

“Changing Audience, Changing Ethos.” *Rethinking Ethos: A Feminist Ecological Approach to Rhetoric*. Ed. Kate Ryan, Nancy Myers, Rebecca Jones. SIUP, 2016. 89-110.

Laura McGrath, and Letizia Guglielmo

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Chris Palmer

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Ralph Tejada Wilson

“Around Midnight.” *Poem Wednesday*. The antioch Review blog. March 2015. [Link](#)

Bob Barrier

Invited talk to the MAPW 20-year Anniversary. Also featured in the *English Broadside*. [Link](#)

**The titles mentioned have been
published within the last two years**

Spring 2017 Issue

We would like to thank all of the MAPW alumni who participated in this issue by sharing their stories about the program and their professional endeavors thereafter and by providing us with the images used in the magazine.

Also, a big thanks to the writers who worked on some of the alumni profiles. They are:

H. William Rice: “Princella Howard Dixon and the March to Selma” story; originally published in *The Broadside*

Judith Jones Birkett: Editor of Jarnea Paden’s and Scott Singleton’s profiles

Editors:

Managing-**Estefany Palacio**

Senior-**Tony Grooms**

Associate-**Sergio Figueiredo**

Are you involved with the MAPW and would like to be featured in our magazine? Contact us!

tgrooms@kennesaw.edu