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Spotlights: Faculty, Alum, Kaigler Children's Book Festival

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Spotlight—Faculty:



Dr. Brendan Fay Brendan Fay joined SLIS in July 2022 as an Associate Director and Associate Professor. Prior to coming to Southern Miss, he served seven years as faculty member in library science at Emporia State University and also worked as an Instructional Librarian at Wasburn University in Topeka, KS. He holds a B.A. in History from The University of Texas—Austin and earned his M.L.S. and Ph.D. from Indiana University. He teaches a broad array of courses across the core curriculum, including in the fall semester where he is teaching the undergraduate course “Cataloging and Classification” and the graduate course “Reference and Information Services”.

Dr. Fay comes to SLIS with strong research interests in book and information history, particularly as these relate to twentieth-century Germany. He is interested in how ordinary Germans understood the world and Germany’s place in it amid the backdrop of war and genocide, and how these perspectives compared with people living in other kinds of closed societies, whether Stalinist Russia or fascist Italy. He is currently researching the role of conspiracy theories during Nazism and is working on a book project tentatively titled *The Power of Conspiracy: Nazi Information Worlds between Weimar and the Third Reich*. This research informs his teaching, and he plans to offer an array of electives within SLIS going forward—from conspiracy theories in the modern world to history of libraries to contemporary publishing.

Spotlight—Alum:

Kristen Hillman was born in and spent summers in North Carolina, grew up in Florence, MS, and has been a fan of the public library since before she can even remember. Her mother, Roma, read to her during a nightly routine that took all of about 15 minutes, but made a lasting, lifetime impact. It was then that she discovered some of her favorite friends, such as Syd Hoff’s *Dinosaur*, Francois Crozat’s *Little Cat*, and all sorts of characters from a plethora of Halloween-related picture books. Kristen has always loved working with youth and children, so she decided to get her B.A. in Secondary English Education at the University of Mississippi and teach English II, AP English III, Creative Writing, Theater I and II, and English IV. In 2017, Kristen left the classroom and began anew at Pearl Public Library (CMRLS) that same year and has not looked back since.

Now, with an incredible staff of talented women at the Ridgeland Public Library, Kristen is branch manager of her very own public library. After much thought and a lot of reflection about returning to school, Kristen, finally, received her MLIS through the University of Southern Mississippi in December of 2019. Though she is proud to be a lifetime native of the South, Kristen has not always liked what she has seen, and experienced firsthand working with youth who were at-risk of dropping out of school, or the ways that marginalized individuals and groups are treated. That is why she and her staff at the Ridgeland Library are committed to making sure that issues like bigotry, racism, and the taking away of basic human rights are addressed directly and are not allowed to prosper in our library. All are welcome and represented here!



Spotlight—Program “The Fay B. Kaigler Children’s Book Festival

We are pleased to announce that the 2023 Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival will once again be in person April 12-14, 2023, on the Southern Miss campus in Hattiesburg, MS. The 2023 Southern Miss Medallion winner is Gene Luen Yang.

Gene Luen Yang- 2023 Southern Miss Medallion Winner

Gene Luen Yang joined the Kaigler Festival family in 2015 as a keynote and we are delighted to celebrate his return as the 2023 Southern Miss Medallion winner. Gene Luen Yang began making comics and graphic novels in the fifth grade. In 2006, his book *American Born Chinese* was published by First Second Books. It became the first graphic novel to be nominated for a National Book Award and the first to win the American Library Association’s Printz Award. It also won an Eisner Award for Best Graphic Album – New.

In 2013, First Second Books released *Boxers & Saints*, a two-volume graphic novel about the Boxer Rebellion. *Boxers & Saints* was nominated for a National Book Award and won the L.A. Times Book Prize. Yang has done numerous other comics, including Dark Horse Comics’ continuation of *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and DC Comics’ *Superman!*

Amy Bluemel- Coleen Salley Storytelling Award Winner

Amy Bruton Bluemel is a gifted storyteller and educator, artist, and stomp dancer. As the great-granddaughter of Eastman Kaney (an original Dawes Commission enrollee), Amy’s a proud member of the Chickasaw Nation. She often performs with the dance troupe Chikashsha Hithla. She shares Chickasaw customs (and those of other southeastern tribes) with audiences of all ages through lively programs. Amy was one of 36 Native American artists chosen to show and sell her art at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Native American Art Market in Washington DC 2019.

Linda Williams-Jackson

Author of critically acclaimed, Mississippi-based historical novels *Midnight Without a Moon*, *A Sky Full of Stars*, and *The Lucky Ones*, Linda is plump-picking proud to still call Mississippi home. Born and raised in the Mississippi Delta in the teeny-tiny town of Rosedale, Linda Williams Jackson likes to spin stories about everyday people in small-town settings.

Ann Clare LeZotte

Ann Le Zotte is completely deaf and a bilingual-bicultural (ASL/English) member of Deaf community. Ann supports every kind of D/deaf person and the choices they make in terms of communication (she is oral and lipreads) and assistive hearing devices (she doesn’t wear any). She has worked in public library youth services for over twelve years, with a focus on intergenerational ASL literacy and inclusive programming. An inclusive cis lesbian (she/her), she was a pioneer in working with LGBTQIAP+ teens in her district.

Loren Long- de Grummond Children’s Literature Collection Lecturer

Loren Long is the author and illustrator of the New York Times bestselling picture books *Otis*, *Otis and the Tornado*, and other Otis titles. He is the #1 New York Times bestselling illustrator of President Barack Obama's picture book *Of Thee I Sing*, Matt de la Pena’s *Love*, the re-illustrated edition of *The Little Engine That Could* by Watty Piper, and *Mr. Peabody's Apples* by Madonna. Loren's new edition of Clement C. Moore’s *The Night Before Christmas* is a modern, more inclusive take on the classic. His most recent works are *Someone Builds the Dream* by Lisa Wheeler and *Change Sings* written by Inaugural Poet Amanda Gorman.

Kyle Lukoff

Kyle Lukoff writes books for kids and other people. Before becoming a full-time writer, Kyle worked at five bookstores, in four libraries, for three schools, as two genders, through one intersection: people, and books. Kyle is represented by Saba Sulaiman at Talcott Notch. Find him on Twitter at @KyleLukoff, Instagram at @kylelukoffwrites and Facebook at fb.me/kylelukoffwrites. All purchasing links are through his affiliate page at Bookshop.org.

Vikram Madan

Vikram Madan grew up in India where, despite spending his childhood rhyming and doodling, he ended up an engineer. After many years of working in tech, he finally came to his senses and followed his heart back into living the creative life. When not making whimsical paintings and public art, he writes funny poems and books for kids, including *A Hatful of Dragons*, *The Bubble Collector*, *Lord of the Bubbles*, *Bobo & PupPup*, and *Owl & Penguin*.

Angie Manfredi- Southern Miss SLIS Lecturer

Angie Manfredi is a librarian, writer, and editor. She has a special interest in and focus on spotlighting and uplifting marginalized voices in both youth literature and librarianship. She passionately advocates, in the words of Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop, giving readers “mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors” in all the books shared with them. Angie is fat and not sorry about it.

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— 2023 —
FAY B. KAIGLER
CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL
APRIL 12-14, 2023



SOUTHERN MISS
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GENE LUEN
— YANG —

Please visit <https://www.usm.edu/childrens-book-festival> for information on registration and updates on the Festival. We email Festival updates via Constant Contact. Please email Festival Coordinator Karen Rowell at karen.rowell@usm.edu to be added to the Kaigler mailing list.

Questions about registration? Please email our registration coordinator Ashley Marshall at ashley.marshall@usm.edu.