

# Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters

*Now in its 38th year!*

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2016-2017

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## 2016 Award Winners Honored

The Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters (MIAL) honored its award winners for works first published, performed, or shown in the year 2015 at the MIAL annual Awards Banquet held in the Grand Hall of the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson, Mississippi, on June 11, 2016. Readings and signings by award winners took place at Lemuria Bookstore in Jackson on the afternoon of June 11.

The Noel Polk Lifetime Achievement Awards this year go to William Baggett and Ron Dale. William Baggett, Professor Emeritus of Art and Design at the University of Southern Mississippi, has an illustrious career as a painter, muralist, and color lithographer. With two degrees in art from Auburn University, Baggett taught in university art and design programs for thirty-nine years. He has been featured in numerous exhibitions and publications; and his paintings and printmaking works are included in collections throughout the United States, Europe, and Japan. His work is also included in the U.S. Embassies Overseas Collection overseen by the U.S. Information Agency. From 1980-1995 Baggett worked with French and American art publishers in the execution of fifteen original print editions. Baggett created three monumentally-scaled figurative murals for the Library of Hattiesburg, the Winfred L. Wiser Hospital for Women and Children at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, and the auditorium for the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art at Auburn University. In 2014, William Baggett was the recipient of the Governor's Award in Visual Art presented by the Mississippi Arts Commission for career achievement. He maintains studios in Mississippi and Maine.

Ron Dale, a leading figure in contemporary American ceramics art, also received the Noel Polk Lifetime Achievement Award. Dale holds a B.F.A. from Goddard College and an M.F.A. from Louisiana State University and is Professor Emeritus at the University of Mississippi. His work has been featured in 26 solo exhibitions and in almost 100 group exhibitions and has won numerous awards, including the MIAL Award for the Visual Arts. His ceramic art follows two paths: one making dinnerware, trays, vases and bowls; and one using clay and wood to create multidimensional sculptures. He explains these paths: "My sculptural work has evolved out of the traditional vocabulary of the vessel. Dale pays homage to the Mississippi potter George Ohr in his important work, *Is This My Graceland?* Dale has also taught courses at Penland School of Crafts in North Carolina; at Blackhills Pottery in Elgin, Scotland; and in Cortona, Italy. He owns and runs Irondale Studio in Oxford, Mississippi.

Taylor Kitchings is this year's winner of the MIAL Fiction Award for his novel *Yard War*. Kitchings received his undergraduate degree from Rhodes College and his M.A. from the University of Mississippi. A musician and songwriter as well as author, Kitchings teaches English and Creative Writing at St. Andrew's Episcopal School in Jackson. *Yard War*, a young adult novel, is his first book and is set in Jackson in 1964. It tells the story of a twelve-year-old boy who encounters racial prejudice for the first time. The novel was chosen as a 2015 Junior Literary Guild Selection.

Winner of the Nonfiction Award is Joseph T. Reiff for *Born of Conviction: White Methodists and Mississippi's Closed Society*. Born in Jackson, Mississippi, Reiff holds a B.A. from Millsaps College, the M.Div. from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, and the Ph.D. from Emory. He is currently department chair and Floyd Bunyan Shelton Professor of Religion at Emory and Henry College in Emory, Virginia. Combining memoir and biography, Reiff's book tells the history and the aftermath of the "Born of Conviction" statement signed

2016 Award Winners Honored (continued)

by 28 white Methodist pastors and published in the Mississippi Methodist Advocate on January 2, 1963.

R. Flowers Rivera, a Mississippi native, is the winner of the Poetry Award for her collection *Heathen*. This collection “melds classical myth and modern living” and stands as “a metaphor for how the disparate ages assembled here are more alike than we realized,” according to Mitchell L.H. Douglas, this year’s poetry judge. The poet herself refers to *Heathen* as “revisionist mythology.” The book also won the 2015 Naomi Long Madgett Poetry Prize. Dr. Rivera holds a B.S. from the University of Georgia, an M.S. from Georgia State University, an M.A. from Hollins University, and a Ph.D. from Binghamton-SUNY.

Chosen for the Visual Arts Award is Martha Ferris, a Mississippian who grew up on her family farm out from Vicksburg and studied at Lake Forest College near Chicago. She wins the award for her exhibit *Foreign and Familiar Places: Paintings by Martha Ferris*, a 2015 exhibit at Fischer Galleries. These works display her love of exacting geometry and vivid colors and illustrate her response to cities far around the world and to places as close as her family farm. She is a mixed media artist committed to continuous experimentation and has done paintings on steel, paper, wood, canvas, and clayboard and created three-dimensional Blues Boxes, mosaic splash pools, and large murals.

Maude Schuyler Clay is the Photography Award winner for *Mississippi History*, a collection of color portraits of Mississippians. As Richard Ford wrote in his foreword to the book, “Clay’s photographs are especially human-in their subject matter, and in the photographer’s insistence that we be moved by art to look closely, and that photographs are good when they are as complex as we are.” A native of Sumner, Mississippi, Clay studied at the University of Mississippi and the Memphis Academy of Arts. She worked for the photographer William Eggleston and also as a photography editor and photographer for *Esquire*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Oxford American*. She has previously won the MIAL Photography Award.

Congratulations to our 2016 winners at the 37th Awards Banquet in Jackson. Pictured (left to right) are Ron Dale, Noel Polk Lifetime Achievement Award; R. Flowers Rivera, Poetry; Mac McAnally, Music Composition — Contemporary; Taylor Kitchings, Fiction; Joseph T. Reiff, Nonfiction; Maude Schuyler Clay, Photography; Martha Ferris, Visual Arts; William Baggett, Noel Polk Lifetime Achievement Award; and Timothy Coker (accepting the Music Composition —Classical for Samuel Jones).

—Classical for Samuel Jones).

The winner of the Music Composition (Classical) Award is Samuel Jones for his *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*. A native of Inverness, Mississippi, and a graduate of Millsaps, Jones holds the M.A. and Ph.D. from the Eastman School of Music. He is a past president of the Conductors’ Guild and the founding dean of the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. He also served as Composer in Residence of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra for fourteen years. A Grammy nominee, he is a winner of the MIAL award multiple times. Judge Quinton Morris describes Jones’ concerto as “...the perfect blend of pain and pleasure and delight and discomfort. This is a piece that I hope eventually makes its way into the standard violin repertoire.”

Mac McAnally is the winner of the Music Composition (Popular) Award for *AKA Nobody*. This Mississippi musician has won the CMA Musician of the Year award for an unprecedented eight years in a row and is in the Nashville Songwriters’ Hall of Fame and the Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame. Judge Steve Markland says of McAnally’s winning work, “Mac’s album, *AKA Nobody*, is nearly a perfect well-crafted album from start to finish. This would be the album I would give to aspiring writer artists to study the craft of songwriting.”

Cash awards for the category winners are made possible each year by the generous contributions of awards sponsors. We appreciate the following sponsorships: Fiction, The Mississippi Quarterly; Nonfiction, George T. Shawhan and Jimmy and Margaret Robbins in memory of Dorothy Shawhan; Poetry, Mary Thompson, Jenny Long and Damian Augsberger in honor of Samuel William Long; Musical Composition (Classical), the Family of Keith Dockery McLean; Musical Composition (Contemporary), Nan and Mike Sanders; Photography, Jean and Tim Medley; Visual Arts, Gemma and David Beckley in memory of Gwendolyn Magee. Sponsorship for the Noel Polk Lifetime Achievement Award was given by Dr. Polk’s children, Scott E. Polk and Jennifer Polk Heidelberg. We thank these dedicated sponsors for their support.



Photo by Kim Rushing

## 2017 Awards Banquet June 3, 2017 in Cleveland, Mississippi

Nancy LaForge, Cleveland, is serving as chairman of our 38th Awards Banquet which will be held at Delta State University on June 3, 2017. Plans are well under way, and we hope you will attend. Each gala is a unique experience and a reinforcement of our commitment to recognize the worthy and talented individuals from our state. We promise you a memorable event, not just another sleepy, dusty Delta day! Combine this event with a visit to the state of the art Grammy Museum for an enjoyable weekend get-away.

## Endowment Fund

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MIAL

Please consider the MIAL Endowment Fund in your estate planning, as well as with your memorial gifts. Notes of acknowledgement for your gift will be sent to the family. Contributions to MIAL are recognized by the IRS as tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Donations may be made on-line from our MIAL website [www.ms-arts-letters.org/membership](http://www.ms-arts-letters.org/membership) or by mailing to:

MIAL Endowment Fund  
Jan Taylor  
P. O. Box 2346  
Jackson, MS 39225-2346

## MIAL Web Site Receives a New Look

[www.ms-arts-letters.org](http://www.ms-arts-letters.org)

Our thanks go to the talented Peter Halverson, Jackson, for updating the MIAL web site. Peter, an artist and graphic designer who studied Fine Arts at Millsaps College, has been a member of our Board of Governors since 2010. Since joining the Board of Governors, he has designed all of our Award Banquet Invitations and Program Booklets. He is employed at University Press of Mississippi as Senior Book Designer.

Please visit our web site to learn more about MIAL, renew your membership, make donations or memorial gifts, to get current information on making nominations, or to view a list of previous winners. You will also find up-to-date news regarding the yearly awards banquet as plans are made, ways to order tickets to the event, and much more.

## MIAL and Social Media

MIAL wants to be part of your "social" life! We have a presence on Twitter (@MSArtsLetters) and on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/MSArtsLetters](http://www.facebook.com/MSArtsLetters)). We love to share news of the wide variety of literary, artistic, and musical events around the state. Tag us with your news, and we will share on Facebook and Twitter! Also, like and follow our accounts to keep up with all of the latest MIAL and Mississippi arts news!

## THANK YOU, DONORS AND FRIENDS

MIAL's Board of Governors is grateful to the following friends, businesses, and institutions for support in 2015-2016.

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Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Perkinston  
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University of Mississippi, Oxford  
University of Mississippi Museums, Oxford  
University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg  
University Press of Mississippi, Jackson  
Thad and Gerry Waites, Hattiesburg  
William Carey University, Hattiesburg

## Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Award Nomination

MIAL members are encouraged to make nominations to honor the artistic achievements of living Mississippians (current residents or former ones with continuing, significant ties to the state). Judges will consider only work shown, published, or performed in **2016**. Members may nominate more than one individual in any category. Nominations should include place and date of birth. Please make additional copies of this form if needed.

**Only MIAL members may nominate.**

**Award Categories:**

**VISUAL ARTS** (painting, sculpture, drawing, print, graphic arts, etc.) Eligible are thematic bodies of work, or up to 15 individual pieces, first publicly shown or published in 2016. Submit CD, slides, prints, or published work.

**PHOTOGRAPHY** (color, black and white, combination) Eligible are thematic bodies of work, or up to 15 individual photographs, first publicly shown or published in 2016. Submit CD, slides, prints, or published work.

**FICTION** (novel, short story collection, etc.) Eligible is work first published in 2016. Submit author's name, publisher, title of publication, and date of publication.

**NONFICTION** (any literature that is not fictional) Eligible is work first published in 2016. Submit author's name, publisher, title of publication, and date of publication.

**POETRY** Eligible are up to 15 poems published individually for the first time in 2016, or a collection of at least 15 poems published in book form for the first time in 2016 (poems in the collection may have been first published earlier than 2016). Submit complete tear sheets or publication.

**MUSIC COMPOSITION—CLASSICAL** (song, opera, composition, instrumental music, etc.) This award is for works first published or performed publicly in 2016. Submit evidence of initial performance or publication (MP3 preferred. Or book, CD, tape, score) in 2016.

**MUSIC COMPOSITION—CONTEMPORARY** (blues, country music, jazz, rock, etc.) Submit published scores or the commercial recording first released in 2016. (Songs in a collection may have been 1<sup>st</sup> published earlier than 2016.)

**Deadline:** Nominations must be postmarked on or before **January 15, 2017**. Attach the artist's representative work (slides, photographs, CD's, etc.). Please mail the nomination to the appropriate address according to the awards category entered or e-mail to **ms.arts.letters@gmail.com**.

**POETRY**  
Bridget Pieschel  
1413 College Street  
Columbus, MS 39701  
bpieschel@gmail.com

**MUSIC COMPOSITION—CONTEMPORARY**  
Lawrence Deas  
2659 Lake Circle Dr.  
Jackson, MS 39211  
Lawrence@listondeas.com

**VISUAL ARTS**  
Sandra Shellnut  
7 Park Ridge Lane  
Pass Christian, MS 39571  
sandrashellnut@gmail.com

**NONFICTION**  
Ted Atkinson  
P. O. Box 5272  
Mississippi State, MS 39762  
tba34@msstate.edu

**PHOTOGRAPHY**  
George Bassi  
565 N. Fifth Avenue  
Laurel, MS 39440  
gbassi@LRMA.org

**MUSIC COMPOSITION—CLASSICAL**  
David Beckley  
P. O. Box 486  
Holly Springs, MS 38635  
dlbeckley@rustcollege.edu

**FICTION**  
Marion Barnwell  
850 Fairview Street  
Jackson, MS 39202  
mgbarnwell@bellsouth.net

**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY:**

NAME OF **MIAL MEMBER** MAKING NOMINATION: \_\_\_\_\_

NOMINATOR'S ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: HOME \_\_\_\_\_ WORK \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

AWARD CATEGORY: \_\_\_\_\_ MEDIUM: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE OF WORK: \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST SHOWN/PUBLISHED/PERFORMED: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF **NOMINEE**: \_\_\_\_\_ NOMINEE'S ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: HOME \_\_\_\_\_ WORK \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

NOMINEE'S DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_

NOMINEE'S EDUCATION (SCHOOLS AND DATES GRADUATED): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



*Photo by Julian Rankin, Marketing Director, Mississippi Museum of Art*

Pictured are members of the 2016-2017 MIAL Board of Governors: (front row, left to right): Nancy Guice, Laurel; Margaret Anne Robbins, Pontotoc; Marion Barnwell, Jackson; Mary Thompson, Clarksdale; and Lester Senter Wilson, Jackson; (back row, left to right): James G. Thomas, Jr. Oxford; Nancy LaForge, Cleveland; JoAnne Morris, Jackson; Sandra Shellnut, Pass Christian; Robin Dietrick, Clinton; Jennifer Long, Greenwood; Mark Wiggs, Jackson; Bridget Pieschel, Columbus; Kim Rushing, Cleveland; Ann Abadie, Oxford; George Bassi, Laurel; Peter Halverson, Jackson; Swan Yerger, Jackson. Other members not pictured: Ted Atkinson, Starkville; David Beckley, Holly Springs; Lawrence Deas, Jackson; Jennifer Polk Heidelberg, Jackson; Beth Kander-Dalphin, Chicago, IL; Donzell Lee, Alcorn; Aubrey Lucas, Hattiesburg,(Emeritus); Jean Medley, Jackson; Scott Naugle, Pass Christian; Jan Taylor, Jackson; Leila Wynn, Greenville; and Cora Norman, Crossville, TN (Emerita).

**2016-2017 MIAL Membership Dues**

Please complete and return this form. Payment may also be made from our website:

<http://www.ms-arts-letters.org/membership.html>

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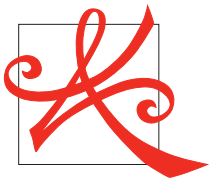
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### *Elected to MIAL Board of Governors*

We welcome Lester Senter Wilson, Jackson, newly elected to the MIAL Board of Governors at the Annual Membership Meeting on June 11, 2016. We are grateful to Ms. Wilson, a mezzo soprano and pianist, for the musical experience she brings to our board.

We thank Marjorie Selvidge, Oxford, for her years of service on our Board of Governors. We wish Ms. Selvidge well as she moves to new endeavors.

### *MIAL Call for Nominations*

Nominations are due January 15, 2017, for this year's awards. Members only are allowed to nominate individuals for awards. MIAL welcomes new members, and anyone may join. Please see the Membership and Nomination form in this newsletter or visit our website at [www.ms-arts-letters.org](http://www.ms-arts-letters.org). For more information contact Margaret Robbins, Executive Secretary, 662-523-0899 or [ms.arts.letters@gmail.com](mailto:ms.arts.letters@gmail.com).

### *MIAL Participates in Mississippi Book Festival*



Pictured are Robin Dietrick, Clinton, and Lawrence Deas, Jackson, as they set up and greet at the MIAL booth at the Mississippi Book Festival held on the grounds of the state capitol in downtown Jackson on August 20, 2016. Posters, MIAL bookmarks and membership brochures were among the items given away at the booth. Many previous MIAL Award winners, as well as MIAL members, were on the program for the day.