



Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters

Now in its 46th year

OFFICERS

2024-2025

PRESIDENT

Julian Rankin, Ocean Springs

VICE PRESIDENT/PRESIDENT ELECT

Pete Halverson, Jackson

SECRETARY/EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Margaret Anne Robbins, Pontotoc

TREASURER

Jan Taylor, Jackson

ARCHIVIST

Sarah Frances Hardy, Archivist

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Laura Howell, Leland

BOARD OF GOVERNOR EMERITUS

Aubrey K. Lucas, Hattiesburg

BOARD OF GOVERNOR EMERITA

Nancy Guice, Laurel

Sandra Shellnut, Pass Christian

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Blake Alsup

Tupelo

Ted Atkinson

West Point

Marion Barnwell

Jackson

George Bassi

Laurel

David Beckley

Holly Springs

Talamieka Brice

Ridgeland

Lawrence Deas

Jackson

Wayne Drinkwater

Oxford

Robert Ivy

Columbus

Donzell Lee

Tougaloo

Jean Nicholson Medley

Jackson

JoAnne Prichard Morris

Jackson

Scott Naugle

Pass Christian

Sarah Newton

Hattiesburg

Bridget Pieschel

Columbus

R. Kim Rushing

Cleveland

Alphonso Sanders

Cleveland

Traci Stover

Hattiesburg

James G. Thomas, Jr.

Oxford

Mary McKenzie Thompson

Clarksdale

Mark Wiggs

Jackson

Alejandro Wooten

Hattiesburg

The 45th annual MIAL awards banquet weekend was held on June 7th and 8th in Jackson, Mississippi. A full weekend of activities included an art exhibit and reception hosted by Fischer Galleries in Ridgeland, Mississippi, honoring photographer Kate Medley, recipient of the 2024 award in Photography, and artist Jennifer Drinkwater, recipient of the 2024 Visual Arts Award, along with several previous award winners. On Saturday afternoon Lemuria Bookstore hosted readings and book signings for award recipients with published work. The Awards Gala was held at the Mississippi Museum of Art. President Laura Howell welcomed guests to the event and introduced Mistress of Ceremonies, Ellen Daniels, Executive Director of the Mississippi Book Festival.



Mistress of Ceremonies, Ellen Daniels



Curtis Wilkie, center, with MIAL President Laura Howell and MIAL Vice President Julian Rankin.

Curtis Wilkie, distinguished journalist, author, and professor was honored with the **Noel Polk Lifetime Achievement Award**. Adam Ganucheau, Editor in Chief, *Mississippi Today*, introduced Wilkie.

The Special Achievement Award went to Stephen Coleman, photographer and journalism professor at the University of Southern Mississippi. Introduced by Alejandro Wooten, Executive Director, Hattiesburg Arts Council, Coleman has spent hundreds of hours giving back to his community and countless hours helping amateur photographers improve their skills.



Stephen Coleman



2024 Award Winners

(Pictured above, top row, left to right)

- **Curtis Wilkie**, distinguished journalist, author and professor, received the Noel Polk Lifetime Achievement Award.
- **A. H. Jerriod Avant** received the Poetry Award for his first book, *Muscadine*. Avant, a native of Longtown, Mississippi, earned a BA degree from Jackson State, MFA degrees from Spalding and New York Universities, and his PhD from the University of Rhode Island.
- **Tim and Susan Lee**, also known as BARK, received their second MIAL Music Composition Award for *Loud*. Graduates of Millsaps College, the Lees reside in Water Valley, Mississippi.
- **Charles Reagan Wilson**, professor emeritus of history and southern studies at the University of Mississippi, was recipient of the Nonfiction Award for *The Southern Way of Life: Meanings of Culture and Civilization in the American South*.
- **Jesmyn Ward**, the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Tulane University, received the Fiction Award for her fourth novel, *Let Us Descend*. Ward earned a BA and MA from Stanford University and an MFA from the University of Michigan.
- **Jennifer Drinkwater**, an artist and an associate professor of art and visual culture at Iowa State University, received the Visual Arts Award. She is also the creator of The What's Good Project, which celebrates the meaningful stories from where we live through community conversations and painting. Drinkwater is a native of the Mississippi Delta.

(Pictured above, bottom row, left to right)

- **Kate Medley** received the MIAL Photography Award for *Thank You Please Come Again*. A North Carolina-based visual journalist documenting the American South, Medley teaches a class on visual approaches to documenting place at Duke University while also working as an independent photojournalist covering national news.
- **Steve Rouse** received his seventh Music Composition (Classical) award for *Flute Sonata*. A native of Moss Point, Rouse received his BA from the University of Southern Mississippi, his doctorate from the University of Michigan, and spent his career at the University of Louisville.
- **Lee Durkee**, a native of Hattiesburg, was the recipient of the Life Writing Award for his memoir, *Stalking Shakespeare: A Memoir of Madness, Murder, and My Search for the Poet Beneath the Paint*.
- **Angie Thomas** is a native of Jackson and earned a BFA in creative writing from Belhaven University. *Nic Blake and the Remarkables: The Manifestor Prophecy* is Thomas's third MIAL Award in Youth Literature.
- **Stephen Coleman**, award-winning photographer as well as journalism professor at the University of Southern Mississippi, received the Special Achievement Award for his countless hours of volunteerism and giving back to his community through several arts organizations.



Susan Shands Jones, Quida Drinkwater, & Jan Taylor



Mark Wiggs, Banquet Chairman, Eva & Steve Rouse



John & Sarah Frances Hardy and Rebecca Wigg



Venue at Mississippi Museum of Art



2024 Award Recipients holding awards designed by Jen Torres



President Laura Howell and MIAL Publicity Chairman Bridget Pieschel



Greeting guests Kate Medley, Grady Jolly and Nina Moss



Guests gathered at Fischer Galleries in Ridgeland on Friday evening and enjoyed the exhibit by Kate Medley and Jennifer Drinkwater



A. H. Jerriod Avant reads at Lemuria

2024–2025 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>

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Renewal New Membership

Please make payments to MIAL and return to:

CHECK the appropriate membership category:

- Student \$15
- Supporter \$35
- Contributing \$75
- Sustaining* \$150
- Institutional* \$150
- Patron* \$500
- Benefactor* \$1000+

Jan Taylor, Treasurer
 P. O. Box 2346
 Jackson, MS 39225-2346



Contributions to MIAL are recognized by the IRS as tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

*Levels recognized in newsletter, awards banquet program booklet, and website.

2024-2025 DONORS AND FRIENDS

PATRONS, BENEFACTORS & AWARD SPONSORS

Ann and Dale Abadie, Oxford
 Jenny Long and Damian Augsburgers, Bend, Oregon
 Marion and Claiborne Barnwell, Jackson
 Beard & Riser Architects, Oxford
 John and Laura Bradley, Oxford
 MIAL Charitable Fund of the Community
 Foundation of Greater Jackson
 Robin and Jonathan Dietrick, Clinton
 Ouida and Wayne Drinkwater, Oxford
 Elizabeth and Thomas Goodman, Carrollton
 Jennifer Polk and Michael Heidelberg, Ridgeland
 Holly and Robert Ivy, Columbus
 Holly and Alan Lange, Ridgeland
 Ella and Aubrey Lucas, Hattiesburg
 Jean and Tim Medley, Jackson
 Family of Keith Dockery McLean
 McCarty Pottery & Gardens, Merigold
The Mississippi Quarterly, Mississippi State
 Catalina and Scott Polk, Orlando, Florida
 Margaret Anne and Jimmy Robbins, Pontotoc
 Albert & Robinson Architects, Hattiesburg
 Nan and Mike Sanders, Cleveland
 George Shawhan, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
 Southside Art Gallery, Inc., Oxford
 Sandra and Tom Shellnut, Pass Christian
 Carol Tatum, Cleveland
 William Lewis Thames, Laurel
 Mary Thompson, Clarksdale
 Gingia and Swan Yerger, Jackson

INSTITUTIONS & BUSINESSES

Alcorn State University, Lorman
 Belhaven University, Jackson
 Coahoma Community College, Clarksdale
 Delta State University, Cleveland
 Fischer Galleries, Ridgeland
 GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi, Cleveland
 Hinds Community College, Raymond
 Lauren Rogers Museum of Art, Laurel
 Lemuria Bookstore, Jackson
 The MAX, Meridian
 Meridian Museum of Art, Meridian
 Mississippi Arts Commission, Jackson
 Mississippi Humanities Council, Jackson
 Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson
 Mississippi State University, Starkville
 Mississippi Valley State University, Itta Bena
 Mississippi University for Women, Columbus
 Pass Christian Books/Cat Island Coffeeshouse, Pass Christian
 Rust College, Holly Springs
 Square Books, Oxford
 Tougaloo College, Tougaloo
 University of Mississippi, Oxford

University of Mississippi Friends of the Library, Oxford
 University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg
 University Press of Mississippi, Jackson
 Walter Anderson Museum of Art, Ocean Springs

SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Jim and Cynthia Abbott, Oxford
 Jere Allen, Oxford
 Frank and Ivy Alley, Jackson
 Ted Atkinson, West Point
 DeeDee and George Bassi, Laurel
 Dr. and Mrs. David Beckley, Holly Springs
 David Bowen, Jackson
 Virginia and Minor Ferris Buchanan, Jackson
 Ellen Daniels, Jackson
 Doyce and Bill Deas, Tupelo
 Stacy and Lawrence Deas, Jackson
 Martha Ferris and Kos Kostmayer, Garrison, New York
 Mary Haley and Henry Flaunt, Jr., Greenwood
 Nancy Foley, Clarksdale
 Thomas Brent Funderburk, Starkville
 Carolyn Laudig Gaines, Cleveland
 Mary Garrard, Bal Harbour, Florida
 Sarah Frances and John Hardy, Oxford
 Claudia and Robert Hauberg, Jackson
 Ava Leavell Hayman, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
 Gene Holcomb, Memphis, Tennessee
 Laura and Frank Howell, Leland
 Mary Hartwell and Beckett Howorth, Oxford
 Lisa and Richard Howorth, Oxford
 Linda Williams Jackson, Southaven
 John and Caroline Langston, Jackson
 Carlyle and Thad Lee, Oxford
 Jeanne Luckett, Jackson
 Mary Beth Lasseter and Ned Mitchell, Oxford
 Becky and Doug Montague, Hattiesburg
 Debbie and Charles Morris, Ridgeland
 Harriet & Jake McFadden, Germantown
 Margaret McMullan and Patrick O'Connor, Pass Christian
 Marcy Fischer Nessel and Gilbert Rose, Flora
 Phoebe and Robert Pearigen, Jackson
 Lisa and William Percy, Greenville
 Lucy and Robert Phillips, Starkville
 Bridget and Steve Pieschel, Columbus
 Becky and Don Potts, Jackson
 Peggy Preshaw, Ridgeland
 Dorothy Roberts and Halle Ricketts, Pass Christian
 Lyn Roberts, Oxford
 Eva and Steve Rouse, Louisville, Kentucky
 Mollie and Kim Rushing, Cleveland
 Sara and Daniel Smith, Pascagoula
 Susan and Rob Spiller, Greenwood
 Ward and Jim Sumner, Jackson
 Jan and Zach Taylor, Jackson
 Yvonne Tomek, Cleveland
 Carla and Randall Wall, Jackson
 Rebecca and Mark Wiggs, Jackson
 Frances and Jim Zook, Oxford

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 **2024**. Members may nominate more than one individual in any category, and MIAL members may self-nominate. Please make additional copies of this form if needed. **Nominations should include a complete address and e-mail** (if applicable). Cookbooks, edited works, and self-published books will not be accepted for nomination. Similarly, images on personal websites and social media platforms are not eligible for nomination of the Visual Arts and Photography awards. All nominations are subject to board approval.

Only MIAL members may nominate. Not a member? Please consider joining.
Membership form on page 4 or join online: <https://www.ms-arts-letters.org>

Award Categories:

FICTION (novel, short story collection, etc.)

LIFE WRITING (biography, autobiography, memoir, and travel writing)

NONFICTION (research-based books, including academic studies, popular history, and journalism)

POETRY Eligible are up to 15 poems published individually or in a collection (some poems in the collection may have been published earlier).

YOUTH LITERATURE (writing or illustration) Eligible are fiction or nonfiction works including picture books, chapter books, middle grade, and young adult.

MUSIC COMPOSITION—CLASSICAL (song, opera, composition, instrumental music, etc.) Submit evidence of initial performance or publication. Submit a digital or hard copy of the score. Evidence of initial performance or publication may also be submitted in digital or hard copy format.

MUSIC COMPOSITION—CONTEMPORARY (blues, country music, jazz, rock, etc.) Submit the commercial recording. At least five original compositions must be presented.

PHOTOGRAPHY (film or digital; in color, black and white or both; a published book, a public exhibition, or other public presentation) Eligible are thematic bodies of work, or up to 15 individual images. Submit nomination by emailing a PDF of images of nominated work or mailing a thumb drive containing images of the nomination. Printed photographs will also be accepted.

VISUAL ARTS (painting, sculpture, drawing, print, graphic arts, etc.) Eligible are thematic bodies of work, or up to 15 individual images. Submit nomination by emailing a PDF of images of nominated work or mailing a thumb drive containing images of the nomination.

Deadline: Nominations must be postmarked on or before **January 15, 2025**. Published books will be supplied, so it is not necessary to send books with your nomination. Please send the nomination form with supporting material, if needed, to the appropriate category chair listed below.

POETRY

Mary Thompson
221 Clark Street
Clarksdale, MS 38614
marymckthompson@gmail.com

MUSIC COMPOSITION

(Contemporary)
Alphonso Sanders
4106 Highway 8
Cleveland, MS 38732
asandersmusic@yahoo.com

MUSIC COMPOSITION

(Classical)
Traci Stover
104 Mamie Street
Hattiesburg, MS
tracistover@gmail.com

YOUTH LITERATURE

Ale Wooten
1122 North Main Street
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
hattiesburgartscouncil@gmail.com

NONFICTION

Ted Atkinson
1000 East Broad Street
West Point, MS 39773
Tba34@msstate.edu

PHOTOGRAPHY

R. Kim Rushing
406 South 5th Avenue
Cleveland, MS 38732
kimrushing@bellsouth.net

VISUAL ARTS

George Bassi
Lauren Rogers Museum of Art
565 North Fifth Avenue
P. O. Box 1108
Laurel, MS 39441
gbassi@LRMA.org

FICTION

Jimmy Thomas
310 Dogwood Dr.
Oxford, MS 38655
jgthomas@olemiss.edu

LIFE WRITING

Talamieka Brice
214 Bridgeford Blvd
Ridgeland, MS 39157
talamieka@yahoo.com

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

AWARD CATEGORY: _____ MEDIUM:_____

TITLE OF WORK: _____

FIRST SHOWN/PUBLISHED/PERFORMED: _____

NAME OF NOMINEE: _____

NOMINEE'S ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: HOME/CELL _____ WORK _____

E-MAIL _____

EDUCATIONAL HISTORY: _____

PLEASE EXPLAIN THE NOMINEE'S MISSISSIPPI CONNECTION: _____

NAME OF MIAL MEMBER MAKING NOMINATION:

NOMINATOR'S ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ E-MAIL _____

.....

MARK YOUR 2025 CALENDAR

The 46th ANNUAL MIAL AWARDS BANQUET

JUNE 14, 2025

COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI

.....



Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters
 P. O. Box 2346
 Jackson, Mississippi 39225-2346

NONPROFIT
 ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 PERMIT # 290
 TUPELO, MS
 38801



IN MEMORIAM

Ann Abadie, Oxford, 2020 Noel Polk Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, former President, and longtime member of MIAL Board of Governors, died July 30, 2024.

Swan Yerger, Fairhope, Alabama, former MIAL President and longtime member of MIAL Board of Governors, died August 1, 2024.



We will miss these two outstanding individuals, devoted board members, but especially, our dear friends.

Announcing the Aubrey K. & Ella G. Lucas MIAL Endowment Fund

The MIAL Board of Governors is pleased to announce our newly named endowment fund, the Aubrey K. & Ella G. Lucas MIAL Endowment Fund. Because of their devotion to MIAL, their steadfast support both with their time and their financial support, MIAL is where we are today, 46 years later. Thank you, Dr. and Mrs. Lucas, for your many years of devotion. Donations to the Lucas MIAL Endowment Fund in 2023-2024:

- Ted Atkinson, West Point
- Donna Banks, Madison
- DeeDee and George Bassi, Laurel
- Beard & Riser, Architects, Oxford
- Martha & Robert A. Dale, Jr., Tupelo in honor of Margaret Anne Robbins
- Mary D. Garrard, Bal Harbour, Florida
- Ava Haymon, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- Holly and Robert Ivy, Columbus
- Eva and Steve Rouse, Louisville, Kentucky
- Margaret & James Robbins, Jr., Pontotoc
- Sandra & Tom Shellnut, Pass Christian
- Ann Simmons, Columbia
- Gingia & Swan Yerger, Fairhope, Alabama

Donations to the endowment fund will help ensure the continued recognition of the talent within our state. Mail your contributions to MIAL • P. O. Box 2346 • Jackson, MS 39225 marked Lucas Endowment Fund. Thank you for your support.