

GCBA Grades 4-8 Committee (2018-2019 Book Selection)



Committee Chairperson:

Sara Kajder, Ph.D. – Clinical Assistant Professor

English Education Program

Department of Language and Literacy Education (LLED), University of Georgia

[Click here for more information about Dr. Kajder.](#)

Committee Assistants:



Adam Crawley – Doctoral Student, Graduate Assistant

Literacies and Children's Literature Program

Department of Language and Literacy Education (LLED), University of Georgia

I am excited to serve as the GCBA committees and annual conference assistant for a fourth year! Prior to doctoral work, I was an elementary teacher for twelve years in various Georgia public school districts during which time my students participated in GCBA reading and voting in myriad ways. My research interests include culturally diverse children's literature, censorship, and digital literacy – topics on which I've written articles in peer-reviewed journals and presented at national and international conferences. I'm a member of the Children's Literature Assembly (CLA) within the National Council of Teachers of English as well as the United States Board on Books for Young People (USBYP). In spring 2017, I was awarded LLED's Hugh Agee Award for Excellence in Research Focused on the Teaching of Literature. Children's literature has long been a passion of mine, and it is an honor to work with GCBA.



Ji Hyun Hong – Doctoral Student, Graduate Assistant

Literacies and Children's Literature Program

Department of Language and Literacy Education (LLED), University of Georgia

I am starting my first year as a doctoral student in LLED. Among many reasons, elementary students in my five years of teaching at a private language institution in Korea mainly inspired me to take the plunge into children's literature. Thus, while I thoroughly enjoyed reading Victorian literature during my M.A. in Language and Literature at Yonsei University, I am eager to be challenged and gain insights into the world of children's literature through this fruitful opportunity to assist the GCBA committees and annual conference.

Committee Members:



Melanie C. Duncan

Head of Washington Memorial Library –Middle Georgia Regional Library System, Bibb County

Second-term committee member

My mother first took me to the library when I was barely six months old, and I've never left. I've worked in libraries with all age groups for 20+ years and served a three-year term on the Georgia Peach Book Award for Teen Readers. This year, I was promoted to head librarian of our regional headquarters library, a role in which I supervise the daily operations of various departments. I've reviewed books for *Library Journal* and other publications since 1993 and judged several adult book awards in recent years. When not reading (which is rare), I can usually be found discussing books online, hunting for books to read, or gaming on my X-Box.



Roy Jackson

Media Specialist – Springdale Park Elementary, Atlanta Public Schools

Second-term committee member

I have a BA in English and Philosophy, a MEd in Early Childhood Education, and an EdS in Instructional Technology with an emphasis in School Library Media. I am endorsed in over 8 content areas including reading and gifted. I have taught grades K, 1, 2, and 3 for fifteen years and was the 2012-2013 Teacher of the Year at Continental Colony Elementary School. I also have taught self-contained EIP and science lab to grades K-5. Currently, I am the library media specialist at Springdale Park Elementary and have been here the last five years. I am the current Atlanta Public Schools Library Media Specialist of the Year. In my spare time I enjoy writing, reading, playing tennis, and traveling.



Leslie Olig

Media Specialist – Euchee Creek Elementary, Columbia County

Third-term committee member

I am the media specialist for Euchee Creek Elementary School in Grovetown, GA but have worked in libraries since elementary school. At Euchee, we foster book clubs, host a Battle of the Books team, and have a TOME Student Literary Society. I previously served as a media specialist in two Richmond County Schools and coached two Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl teams. It was working with students on the teams that made me interested in serving on the committee. I taught high school English for 15 years and started a monthly book club at Greenbrier High School with community speakers who shared their love of books. I served on the steering committee for the 2015 Georgia Literary Festival held in Augusta, GA – which sparked a movement to begin an annual literary festival. The Berry Fleming Book Festival in 2017 will be an inaugural event and take place annually the fourth weekend in September on Augusta University's Summerville campus.



Lynn Staples

*Third Grade Teacher – Wauka Mountain Multiple Intelligences Academy, Hall County
First-term committee member*

I am an elementary teacher at Wauka Mountain Multiple Intelligences Academy in Hall County and have been teaching for thirteen years. Growing up, I did not have a love for reading due to my inability to comprehend what I read. It wasn't until I went back to school to begin my second career that I fell in love with reading. While working on my education degree, I took a children's literature class and learned strategies to help me comprehend what I read. From that point on, I have been trying to make up for lost time in reading. I love children's literature, and I have a passion to help students who struggle academically find a way to be successful in their educational journey. I love watching students who say they don't like reading connect with a book. It's like a quest for me to help connect students with the right book! I am married to an amazing man who supports my passion for children's literature, and we have two incredible daughters.



Julie Stokes

*Literacy Coordinator Gr. 6-8 – Dalton Middle School, Dalton Public Schools
Third-term committee member*

I am the Literacy Coordinator at Dalton Middle School, and I actually get paid to work with teachers in connecting students to books and authors! What a blessing! We have over 1,800 students, and I am always reading and looking for new titles to hook our students. I LOVE books, and I LOVE sharing new books with students and teachers and igniting a fire that can never be extinguished.



Anja Tigges

*Media Specialist – DeKalb Early College Academy (DECA), DeKalb County Schools
First-term committee member – Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl Liaison*

Currently I am in my fourth year at DECA and in my twelfth year as a public school media specialist. Before that, I taught German for eleven years in DeKalb County. I have coached school reading bowl teams in the past and am in my third year as a member of DeKalb County's Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl Steering Committee. The excitement of opening a box of books to process for the school library never gets old! I enjoy connecting students with books and look forward to working on the Georgia Children's Book Award Committee.

[Photo not available]

Julie Trejo

*Fifth Grade Teacher – Berry College Elementary and Middle School, Mt. Berry
First-term committee member*

As a fifth grade teacher at a private school, I have incorporated picture books and chapter books into every subject area. My students read twenty-five books per school year independently in addition to our book club titles and class read-alouds. I am thrilled when a student asks in their reading letter journal, “I liked this book, what are some others you think I might like?” Once, when I was covering a topic in history I said, “And I have a book to share with you about this time period.” I overheard a student murmur, "I knew she was going to say that." I have read and recommended books to my husband, my two children (although not as often, now that they are teenagers), my niece and nephew, and neighbors. I am honored to be able to do the same for the children of Georgia.



LaRita Wiggins

*Principal – Henry County Middle School, Henry County
Second-term committee member*

I currently serve as the Principal at Henry County Middle School, and I have over 17 years of experience as an educator. Prior to my current administrator role, I had the privilege of working as the Assistant Principal at Austin Road Middle School in Henry County for 7 years. Before becoming an administrator, I was a middle school language arts and reading teacher for gifted scholars. I earned a B.A. degree from the University of Georgia, an MBA from Brenau University, and a Specialist in Educational Leadership from Walden University. I was honored by the Georgia Department of Education in 2013 for my leadership on effective practice with CCRPI. Most recently, I was honored with the 2016 Jaguar Pride Award for continued dedication to the scholars of Austin Road Middle School. I have presented multiple professional learning workshops, such as “Technology Tools for the Common Core Language Arts Classroom” at the 2013 GaETC Conference and at several other conferences and metro-Atlanta area schools. I’m a wife and the mother of three children: Shelby, Mariah and Sean. Reading with my children is my favorite activity, and I believe in leaving a Literacy Legacy!



Todd A. Williamson

*Branch Manager – Milton Public Library, Atlanta Fulton Library System
First-term committee member*

I am currently a senior librarian with the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System serving as the Branch Manager at the Milton Library in Milton, Georgia. I hold a Master’s Degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Kentucky and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Pittsburgh. Previous work experience includes work as the librarian at The Davis Academy in Atlanta and as the Collection Development Librarian for the Children

and Young Adult Departments at the Williamsburg Regional Library. I have served on the Virginia Library Association's Jefferson Cup committee (2007). The Jefferson Cup was established in 1982 to honor a distinguished biography, historical fiction or American history book for young people, and I helped establish the Beacon of Freedom Award (2003-2008) working with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. I'm excited to serve on this committee and share books with the children of Georgia.