

GCBA Picturebook Committee (2018-2019 Book Selection)



Committee Chairperson:

Jennifer Graff, Ph.D. - Associate Professor

Literacies and Children's Literature Program

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

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

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 (USBBY). 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:

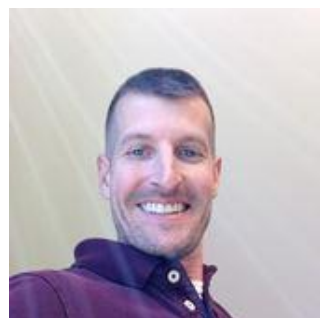


Jennifer Beaty

Fourth Grade Teacher – Dacula Elementary, Gwinnett County

Second-term committee member

I am currently a fourth grade teacher at Dacula Elementary in Gwinnett County. This is my 16th year teaching and I absolutely love sharing literacy with children and getting them excited about learning. I am originally from Florida, where I received my Bachelor's in Elementary Education. I moved to Georgia in 2002 and began teaching first grade in DeKalb County. I received my Master's in Children's Literature from UGA in 2009. I love to bring my students' family funds of knowledge into my classroom through the use of family dialogue journals (I coauthored a book about it!) and through carefully selected read-alouds which mirror their cultures and expand their thinking. My coursework for my Master's, which included the Red Clay Writing Project, broadened my love for and knowledge of how to incorporate literacy in a meaningful way into everything I do in the classroom. I am beyond excited to serve on such an awesome committee! Yay books!



Evan Bush

Head Children's Librarian and Youth Services Coordinator – Athens Clarke County Library and Regional Library System, Athens

Third-term committee member

I am currently the Head Children's Librarian and Youth Services Coordinator for the Athens Clarke County Library and Athens Regional Library System. Prior to this, I was the Assistant Director of Children's Services for the Piedmont Regional Library System in Banks, Barrow and Jackson counties. I worked at ACCL for seven years while obtaining my BSED in early childhood education from UGA. I then taught pre-k through second grade as both a classroom teacher and reading specialist for five years at Oglethorpe Avenue Elementary. Upon obtaining my MLIS from the University of Alabama, I managed a children's department in Derry, NH for three years before returning home to Georgia. I have spent the better part of my career connecting children and their families to the power and wonder of children's literature and am thrilled to be serving on this committee. I am a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators, and I also serve on the book selection committee for the Ferst Foundation.

**Tonya Grant**

*Media Specialist – Barksdale Elementary, Conyers
Third-term committee member*

I am currently a media specialist at Barksdale Elementary School in Rockdale County. I have worked in both public and private schools in Georgia. This is my 20th year as an educator. I was an elementary classroom teacher for fifteen years (KDG, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and Title I Reading) before becoming a media specialist. I received my M.Ed. from Brenau University. Later, I earned my Ed.S in 2012 in Learning, Design, & Technology in the School of Library Media from the University of Georgia. I am also a published author and member of the Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators. My work has appeared in both children and adult magazines. I believe that my passion for reading comes across in everything that I do. I LOVE books.

**Kelly Loftin**

*Special Education Teacher – Northwest Laurens Elementary, Laurens County
Second-term committee member*

I am a teacher with the special education department in the Laurens County School System at Northwest Laurens Elementary. I am excited to be entering my tenth year of teaching students with special needs. I LOVE IT! It has been more rewarding than I could have ever dreamed of. Most of my career has been in the second and third grade academic areas. I have co-taught for years. The upcoming year will have many challenges and rewards as I go back to being a resource teacher to lessen the gap for students with special needs. I was not your typical college student because I was married with children; however, through their support I have received my Bachelor's in Early Childhood Education and Special Education, Master's in Special Education, and Specialist's in Special Education. The Georgia Children's Book Awards, both picture and chapter books, have been a part of our household for more than a decade. I am so excited to begin my second year on the Georgia Children's Book Award Committee.

**Jennifer Rice**

*Media Specialist – Macedonia Elementary, Cherokee County
Second-term committee member*

I am currently the media specialist at Macedonia ES in Cherokee County. This makes my 23rd year in education, seventeen years as a third grade classroom teacher and completing my sixth year in the media center. I earned my BS, MEd, and EdS in Early Childhood from Georgia College & State University (GCSU). I completed my library media add-on from GCSU as well. I've taught in Bibb County (Macon), Clark County, NV (Las Vegas), and Cherokee County (Canton). I believe that my classroom experience and love of children's literature has helped me become a teacher leader in my school. Being named 2016 Cherokee County Library Media Specialist of the Year was a true honor as well as being selected as a member of the GCBA Picturebook Committee! I look forward to reading lots of great books and sharing this experience!



Ashley Saint

*EIP Teacher and Media Specialist – Furlow Charter School, Americus, GA
Second-term committee member*

I've been part of a great expedition. My small town of Americus, Georgia opened a new charter school, Furlow Charter School. I began this journey teaching second grade. I now teach EIP part-time and am the Media Specialist in the morning. I am so excited about going back to my roots! I was born and currently live in Americus, Georgia. I am married and we have two sweet daughters. I taught in a primary school for six years before becoming a Media Specialist my seventh year. I had to return to the classroom in order to help start our charter school. I earned my Bachelor's, Master's and Specialist Degrees from Georgia Southwestern State University in Early Childhood Education. In 2013, I returned to college and earned an add-on degree in Media and Technology from Georgia College and State University. I always knew I wanted to be more involved with children's reading skills and help promote a love for reading. Nothing smells better than a new book, and I cannot wait to dive into great children's literature!



Courtney Smith

*Graduate Student/Graduate Assistant – Georgia Southern University
Third-term committee member*

I am currently enrolled in the M.Ed./Ed.S. School Psychology Program at Georgia Southern University (GSU) where I also serve as a graduate assistant for a department on campus. Prior to returning to GSU for graduate studies, I taught Kindergarten for three years at Tybee Island Maritime Academy (TIMA) in Chatham County. Prior to teaching at TIMA, I also attended GSU as an undergrad and graduated with a B.S.Ed. in Early Childhood Education in May 2013. I have long loved children's literature and enjoy discovering, studying, and sharing it. While at GSU, I obtained my ESOL endorsement and completed my honors research and thesis exploring multicultural children's literature with English Language Learners. During the summer of 2013, my coworkers and I authored maritime-related children's books to support our charter's maritime focus. Having the experience of writing a book to share with my future students was so rewarding! I enjoy serving on this committee as it affords me the continued opportunity to discover high quality children's literature to share with students across our state!