

GCBA Picturebook Committee (2015-2016 Book Selection)



Committee Chairperson:

Jennifer Graff, Ph.D. - Associate Professor and Program Coordinator

Reading, Writing, Children's Literature, and Digital Literacies Program

Department of Language and Literacy Education - The University of Georgia

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

Committee Assistant:

Adam Crawley – Graduate Assistant

Reading, Writing, Children's Literature, and Digital Literacies Program

Department of Language and Literacy Education - The University of Georgia



I am excited to serve as the assistant for the GCBA committees. Prior to becoming a doctoral student, I earned a B.S.Ed. in Early Childhood Education and M.Ed. in Children's Literature and Language Arts. As an elementary teacher for twelve years in various Georgia public school districts, connecting students with a wide array of children's literature and incorporating such texts within content areas were passions. Students in my classes participated in the GCBA voting process, competed in reading competitions, discussed books via literature circles, responded to their reading through independent conferences and blogs, and interacted with texts in a variety of other ways. Some of my current research interests include historical fiction, culturally diverse children's literature, and digital responses to texts. I am an avid reader and enjoy meeting authors/illustrators at events throughout the country. I have been involved with UGA's annual Conference on Children's Literature for several years as a presenter and volunteer, and I look forward to further serving the awards and conference this year!

Committee Members:

Eric Carpenter

First Grade Teacher – Westside Atlanta Charter School



I am currently a first grade teacher at Westside Atlanta Charter School, which is oddly enough located on the westside of Atlanta. For the previous six years I taught in Dekalb County at Dresden Elementary as a second, third, fifth, and first grade teacher. I am also working towards an Ed.S. in School Library Media at UGA. A few years ago I served as a judge for the CYBILS awards in the easy reader & early chapter book category and had an absolute blast. I have also served as an editor/compiler for Fuse#8's School Library Journal Top 100 children's novels and picture books polls. When I am not reading, I enjoy talking with authors, illustrators, and other children's literature fans about great books.



Melissa Castle

Library Media Specialist – Parkwood Elementary, Warner Robbins

I am the current Library Media Specialist at Parkwood Elementary in Warner Robins. I have been an educator for seven years (six years in first grade and one year in the media center). I received my B.S. from Georgia Southern, M.Ed. from Georgia Southwestern, and Ed.S. from Valdosta State. I LOVE reading and I want to share that love and passion with as many as possible! I am thrilled to have a role on this committee that will allow me to discuss new and noteworthy books with other book lovers!

(NO PHOTO AVAILABLE)

Michelle Fitzgerald

Media Specialist – Hightower Trail Elementary, Rockdale County

I have a B.S. in Information Studies and a Masters of Library Science from Syracuse University. My first two years in Georgia and as a Media Specialist were spent in Greene County at Greene-Taliffarro County High School. This year I am enjoying my 22nd year as the Media Specialist at Hightower Trail Elementary in Rockdale County. I was so excited to be invited to serve on the Georgia Children's Picturebook Award Committee. Actually serving on the committee has been so much fun. I find myself looking at potential nominees with new eyes. My students always enjoy coming up with suggestions for books to nominate. I was so proud the first time I saw a display in Barnes and Noble of the books we had finally selected. I have five children of my own, plus several thousand at school, and I never tire of finding that perfect book to share.



Jennifer Lewis

School Librarian – Indian Knoll Elementary, Canton

I am a school librarian at Indian Knoll Elementary School in Canton, Georgia. I hold a Master's degree in Children's Literature and Language Arts and a Specialist's degree in Instructional Technology/School Library Media. After spending fourteen years as a classroom teacher, I became a school librarian four years ago. The best part of this position is sharing my passion for children's literature with the students and teachers at my school.



Lindy Moore

Head County Librarian – Dog River Public Library, Douglas County

I am currently the Head County Librarian for the Douglas County Public Libraries and am based at the Dog River Public Library. This is my 13th year at the Douglas County Public Libraries, and I have loved working with such diverse populations. I love working with children and am very thankful that my job allows me to perform storytimes and puppet shows, present at conferences, visit schools, and attend community outreach events all over West Georgia.

I received my undergraduate degree in Communications from the University of West Georgia, my Master's degree in Library and Information Sciences (focus on Children's Lit.) from Florida State University, and my Media Specialist add-on certification from the University of West Georgia. I am thrilled and honored to serve on this committee.



Dera Weaver

Library Media Specialist – Winterville Elementary, Clarke County

I am currently working as the library media specialist at Winterville Elementary School in the Clarke County School District. In the past, I've taught 8th grade Reading and English, been the Coordinator of Information Services at Athens Academy here in Athens, taught in the Department of Secondary and Middle Grades Education at Kennesaw State University, and now seven years as an elementary school librarian, with adjunct UGA teaching whenever it comes my way.