

GCBA Picturebook Committee (2016-2017 Book Selection)



Committee Chairperson:

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

Literacies and Children's Literature Program

Department of Language and Literacy Education - The University of Georgia

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



Committee Assistant:

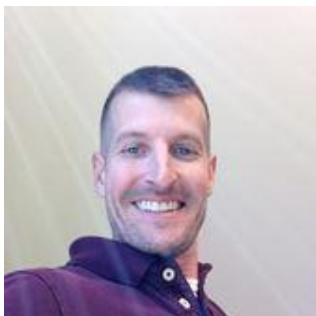
Adam Crawley – Graduate Assistant

Literacies and Children's Literature 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 at the University of Georgia. 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. Some of my current research interests include historical fiction, culturally diverse children's literature, and digital literacy. I have been involved with UGA's annual Conference on Children's Literature for several years as a presenter and volunteer, and I enjoy continued involvement serving in this position.

Committee Members:



Evan Bush

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

First-term committee member

I am currently the Head Children's Librarian and Youth Services Coordinator for the Athens Clarke County Library (ACCL) and Athens Regional Library System. Up until just recently, 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, then taught pre-k through second grade as both a classroom teacher and reading specialist for five years at Oglethorpe Avenue Elementary in Athens. 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 also serve on the book selection committee for the Ferst Foundation.



Eric Carpenter

*School Librarian – Fred A. Toomer Elementary School, Atlanta
Third-term committee member*

I am currently the school librarian at Fred A. Toomer Elementary School in Atlanta. Prior to becoming a school librarian, I taught 1st and 2nd grade for eight years. I am currently serving as a committee member for ALSC's Andrew Carnegie Award for Children's Video. Several 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
Second-term committee member*

I am the current Library Media Specialist at Parkwood Elementary in Warner Robins. I have been an educator for eight years (six years in 1st grade and two years 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!



Michelle Fitzgerald

Media Specialist – Hightower Trail Elementary, Rockdale County

Third-term committee member

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 23rd 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'll be sad next year when my time on the committee is over. When I find a new book, I check to see if it's recent enough. Then I find myself debating, "Does this book stand out?" "Why?" "Is this an author/illustrator I would like to meet?" I have five children of my own, plus several thousand at school, and I never tire of finding that perfect book to share.



Tonya Grant

Media Specialist – Barksdale Elementary, Conyers

First-term committee member

I am currently a media specialist at Barksdale Elementary School in Conyers. I have worked in both public and private schools in Georgia. This is my 18th 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.



Jennifer Lewis

School Librarian – Indian Knoll Elementary, Canton

Third-term committee member

I am currently the media specialist at Indian Knoll Elementary School in Canton. This is my 19th year as an educator. I spent 14 years as a classroom teacher (2nd, 4th, and 5th grades) and made the switch to the media center five years ago. I LOVE IT and believe I have the best job in public education. I received my undergrad degree from UGA, my Master's degree in Children's Literature and Language Arts from UGA, and my Ed.S. in Instructional Technology/School Library Media from UGA. Being on the Georgia Children's Picturebook Award committee for the past two years has been one of the most professionally rewarding things I have done. I am thrilled to be a part of this committee again this year and look forward to discussing books with other people who love books.



Beverly Lord

*Third Grade Teacher – Glenn Hills Elementary School, Richmond County
First-term committee member*

I am currently entering my second year teaching third grade at Glenn Hills Elementary School in Richmond County. Prior to that, I had the pleasure of teaching first grade for ten years. I have a Bachelor of Science in Education from Augusta State University, and I have a reading endorsement. I am passionate about the inclusion of children's literature in all areas of learning in my classroom. Exposing students to the joy of books is a special love of mine. I look forward to my service on the committee sharing my passion for books with others who enjoy good children's literature.



Lindy Moore

*Head County Librarian – Dog River Public Library, Douglas County
Second-term committee member*

I am currently the Head County Librarian for the Douglas County Public Libraries and am based at the Dog River Public Library Branch. This is my 14th year at the Douglas County Public Libraries. 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 the West Georgia area. I received my B.A. in Communications from the University of West Georgia, my MSLIS from Florida State University, and my Media Specialist add-on certification from the University of West Georgia. My previous experience on this committee has allowed me to look at children's books in a whole new light, and I'm so thankful for the opportunity to serve again.



Courtney Smith

*Kindergarten Teacher – Tybee Island Maritime Academy, Chatham County
First-term committee member*

I am currently entering my third year teaching Kindergarten at Tybee Island Maritime Academy (TIMA) in Chatham County. Prior to teaching at TIMA, I attended Georgia Southern University 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 Georgia Southern, 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 cannot wait to share children's literature with students across the state in this new role.