

GCBA Picturebook Committee (2017-2018 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 and annual conference. I'm entering my third year as a doctoral student in the Department of Language and Literacy Education. I have a B.S.Ed. in Early Childhood Education and M.Ed. in Children's Literature and Language Arts from the University of Georgia. Prior to my doctoral work, I was an elementary teacher for twelve years in various Georgia public school districts. My research interests include culturally diverse children's literature, censorship, and digital literacy.

Committee Members:



Jennifer Beaty

Fourth Grade Teacher – Dacula Elementary, Gwinnett County

First-term committee member

I am a fourth grade teacher at Dacula Elementary and was a third grade teacher at Cedar Hill Elementary prior. This is my 14th 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

Second-term committee member

I am the Head Children's Librarian and Youth Services Coordinator for the Athens Clarke County Library and Athens Regional Library System. Before serving in this position, 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. 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 the on book selection committee for the Ferst Foundation.



Tonya Grant

Media Specialist – Barksdale Elementary, Conyers

Second-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 19th 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

First-term committee member

I teach special education in the Laurens County School System at Northwest Laurens Elementary. I am excited to be entering my ninth year of teaching students with special needs. 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 co-teach, which means that I go into the general education classroom and provide supports as well as teach with the general education teacher. I was not your typical college student because I was married with children; however, through their support I have received my Bachelors in Early Childhood Education and Special Education, Masters in Special Education, and

Specialists in Special Education. The Georgia Children's Book Awards, both picture and chapter books, have been in our house for the past 9 years. I am so excited to be a part of the team and the opportunities to come!



Lindy Moore

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

I am beginning my fifteenth year at the Douglas County Public Libraries, and am currently the Head County Librarian. 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 Georgia. I received my BA in Communications from Univ. of West GA, my MSLIS from Florida State University, and my Media Specialist add-on certification from the Univ. of West GA. Serving on this committee has truly been a learning experience and I'm grateful to serve again.



Jennifer Rice

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

I am currently the media specialist at Macedonia ES in Cherokee County. This makes my 22nd year in education, seventeen years as a third grade classroom teacher and completing my fifth year in the media center. I earned my BS, MEd, and EdS in Early Childhood from GSCU. 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 lit has helped me become a teacher leader in my school. Being named the 2016 Cherokee County Library Media Specialist of the Year is 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
First-term committee member*

This past year, I was able to be a 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. Next year I will teach EIP part-time and be 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 Bachelors, Masters 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
Second-term committee member*

I am currently enrolled in the M.Ed./Ed.S. School Psychology Program at Georgia Southern University 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 in Chatham County. Prior to teaching at TIMA, I also attended Georgia Southern as an undergrad and graduated with a BSEd 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 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!