



## Upcoming Events

PULITZER PRIZE WINNING AUTHOR

### Gregory Pardlo

SEPT. 11, 2018  
7:00PM  
WORSHAM THEATRE - GATTON STUDENT CENTER  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH - VISITING WRITERS SERIES

BEST SELLING AUTHOR

### Silas House

OCT. 10, 2018  
7:00PM  
UKAA AUDITORIUM - W.T. YOUNG LIBRARY  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH - VISITING WRITERS SERIES





## Regular Faculty

Jonathan Allison  
 Frederick Bengtsson  
 Michael Carter  
 Jeffery Clymer  
 Rynetta Davis  
 Andrew Doolen  
 Janet C. M. Eldred  
 W. Andrew Ewell  
 Walter Foreman  
 Michael Genovese  
 Matthew Giancarlo  
 Matthew Godbey  
 DaMaris Hill  
 John Daniel Howell  
 Pearl James  
 Julia Johnson  
 Peter Kalliney  
 Joyce MacDonald  
 Andrew Milward  
 Alan Nadel  
 Gurney Norman  
 Hannah Pittard  
 Armando Prats  
 Jill Rappoport  
 Erik Reece  
 Randall Roorda  
 Marion Rust  
 Emily Shortslef  
 Michelle Sizemore  
 Michael Trask  
 Frank X Walker  
 Crystal Wilkinson  
 Nazera Sadiq Wright  
 Lisa Zunshine

## Staff

Kristen Pickett  
 Robin Rahija

## Emeriti Faculty:

Virginia Blum  
 Nikky Finney  
 Ellen Rosenman  
 Greg Stump

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### Stay Connected...

You can keep track of department events, our contact information, and alumni events via the department web page: [english.as.uky.edu](http://english.as.uky.edu)

### And Keep in Touch!

Please let us know personal and professional news in your life, or if your address or contact information changes. Send a note via email, or call:



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## Dear UK English alumni and friends,



We are starting a new tradition this fall—replacing our summer electronic newsletter with a print version. We will still send our winter electronic newsletter this December, but we also wanted to respond to our alumni requests for something you can hold and flip through. We can't begin to cover all of the exciting news, but we hope to catch you up on the department and preview some great events coming up this year.

As you will see in these pages, our students are thriving both in and out of the classroom. They take courses from full-time faculty (we don't use adjuncts in the English Department) who develop them as lifelong thinkers and writers. Students learn how literature helps us think about the long history of social issues that are still at the forefront of our news cycle. Outside the classroom, as Dr. Pearl James details in these pages, we have developed a wide network of internships at local law firms, businesses, the public library, and publishers that give our students a leg up on job opportunities after graduation. We are always looking to expand our internships, so please contact Dr. James ([pearl.james@uky.edu](mailto:pearl.james@uky.edu)) or me if you would like to get involved.

We are also thrilled to welcome two new faculty this year. Andrew Milward is the author of two story collections, *The Agriculture Hall of Fame*, winner of the Juniper Prize in Fiction, and *I Was a Revolutionary* (HarperCollins 2015). The celebrated Kentucky writer Crystal Wilkinson—author most recently of the award-winning novel *The Birds of Opulence*—has also joined our faculty. You can read more about them on p. 4.

Finally, I want to welcome you to two particularly stimulating events coming up this September. Greg Pardlo, winner of the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry and author most recently of the memoir *Air Traffic*, will be reading on campus on September 11th. Pardlo headlines our Visiting Writers Series this fall and follows our visit last fall from National Book and Pulitzer Prize winner, Viet Thanh Nguyen. Then on September 14<sup>th</sup>, novelist Mary Gaitskill will give a public lecture entitled "Why People Still Read" for the 40<sup>th</sup> annual Kentucky Women Writers Conference.

Your 150-year-old English Department is strong and developing in new directions that will help us continue to flourish for the next 150 years. I invite you to come visit us in Lexington and send us an email ([eldred@uky.edu](mailto:eldred@uky.edu) or [kristen.pickett@uky.edu](mailto:kristen.pickett@uky.edu)) to update us on key events in your life. If possible, please consider giving to the philanthropic funds that provide opportunities for our students who follow in your footsteps.

With Best Wishes,

**Janet C. M. Eldred**

Professor and Associate Chairperson

# Welcoming New Faculty



Photo by Stacy Kranitz

**Andrew Milward** is a 2008 graduate of the University of Iowa's Writers' Workshop. He has published two short story collections, *The Agriculture Hall of Fame*, which won the Juniper Prize, and *I was a Revolutionary*, which was published by HarperCollins in 2015. Andrew taught previously at Auburn University and the University of Southern Mississippi's Center for Writers. He has served as the fiction editor for the *Southern Humanities Review*, prior to that he was the Senior Fiction Editor at the *Mississippi Review*. Andrew also received a highly competitive National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Grant in spring 2018.



Photo by Savannah Barnette

**Crystal Wilkinson** holds an M.F.A. from Spalding University and is a renowned Kentucky author. She is a fiction writer, poet, and memoirist whose most recent novel, *The Birds of Opulence*, was published in 2016 and won the Ernest Gaines Award for Literary Excellence, the Judy Gaines Young Award, and the Weatherford Award in Fiction. Crystal is also the author of two short story collections—*Water Street*, for which she was long listed for the Orange Prize, and *Blackberries, Blackberries*, which won the Chaffin Award for Appalachian Literature. She has been the Appalachian Writer in Residence at Berea College, and in 2016 Crystal was named "Southerner of the Year" by *Southern Living* magazine.

# Seeking to Expand Undergraduate Internships

By Pearl James

For the past four years, increasing numbers of students have been able to work as interns in a variety of fields and locations while earning English course credit. This spring semester, we had twelve interns. The most popular internship sites are the University Press of Kentucky, where students learn the ropes of the publishing industry, and various law firms in Lexington, where students help write briefs, do research, and get experience in the practice of law. We are always looking for new internship sponsors in local firms or organizations who would be able and willing to mentor an undergrad for roughly 10 hours a week over the course of a fall or spring semester. Internships provide crucial opportunities for students to use their research and writing skills in real-world settings, and to develop their resumes in anticipation of joining the 21st century work force. If you are interested in establishing an internship, please email me at [pearl.james@uky.edu](mailto:pearl.james@uky.edu) to discuss the opportunity.

# Undergraduate Research Showcase and Awards Day



(Left to right): Nate Cortas, Ross Gustin, Madison Justice, Andrew Thibaudeau, Gabe Tomlin, Brianna Winn



(Left to right): Kyle Alvey, Jonathan Allison

Two of our favorite events happened last April—our 3rd annual Undergraduate Research Showcase and our 37th annual Awards Day. At the Showcase, students present their best scholarly and creative writing done in their classes that year. Awards Day provides the grand finale to the academic year. Thanks to the generosity of the department's many friends and donors, we are able to offer a wide array of prizes and scholarships to our best undergraduate and graduate students. Awards Day is the perfect occasion for honoring our spectacular students while giving faculty an opportunity to meet their friends and families. Thank you to everyone who supports our students!

# Success on the Job Market for Our Graduate Students

Our graduate students were very successful in their search for jobs this past year. Some highlights:

**Catherine Brereton** is Department Manager in the UK Department of Anthropology and received a 2018 AI Smith Individual Artist Fellowship in creative nonfiction from the Kentucky Arts Council.

**Andrew Casto** has taken a position as an Instructor at Asbury University.

**Matt Bryant Cheney** became the Director of the Bonner Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement and Assistant Professor of English at Carson-Newman University.

**Eir-Anne Edgar** will be an Associate Professor of Literature in English at Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim Norway.

**Jessica Evans** is an Instructor of English in the Humanities and Social Sciences at Columbia State Community College.

**Austyn Gaffney** received a 2018 Emerging Artist Award in creative nonfiction from the Kentucky Arts Council.

**Chad Gilpin** is Program Manager in the UK Office of Graduate Student Professional Development.

**Parker Hobson** received a 2018 Emerging Artist Award in poetry from the Kentucky Arts Council.

**Owen Horton** will be a Lecturer at the University of Miami.

**Alexander Menrisky** is an incoming Lecturer at the University of Massachusetts—Dartmouth.

**Robin Rahija** is a Department Manager Associate in the UK Department of English.

**Hannah Ruehl** became Educational Technology Coordinator for Student Affairs in the College of Public Health at the University of Kentucky.

**Krystin Santos** is a full-time Instructor in English at Louisiana State University.

**Ashlie Stevens** is a Food & Culture reporter for National Public Radio in Louisville.

**Leah Toth** will become an Assistant Professor of English at St. Norbert College.

**Katie Waddell** will be an Assistant Professor of English at Florida Southwestern State College.

# Congratulations to our 2018 Graduates

## Ph.D. in English

Amy Birk	Owen Horton	Guy Spriggs
Andrew Casto	Alexander Menrisky	Katherine Waddell
Jessica Evans	Delmar Reffett	Rebecca Wiltberger
Kyle Eveleth	Hannah Ruehl	

## M.F.A. in Creative Writing

Austin Baurichter	Jordan Hubrich	Max LeNeave
Austyn Gaffney	Katharine Tighe-Pigott	Neleigh Olson
Dorian Hairston	Evan Kabrick-Arneson	Krystin Santos
Parker Hobson	Rachel Kersey	Sophie Weiner

## M.A. in English

Brianna Anderson	Leslie Davis	Daria Goncharova
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## B.A. in English

Kyle Robert Alvey	Samantha Nicole Hill	Andrew S. Palmer
Kristian Douglas Brooks	Samantha Ruth Lange	Jessica S. Powers
Laura Anne Brower	John Paul Larson	Haylie Dawn Rider
James R. Brungs	Hallie Anne Laswell	Shelby Paige Shuplinkov
Mary Grace Cecil	Haley Grace Latta	Randall Joseph Smith
Sydney Elyse Consalvi	Juliana Marissa Rachel Lavey	William J. Swanson IV
James W. Craft	Anissia Indira Liberto	Logan Holmes Taylor
Sterling Tillman Crawford	Odele Liff	Stacie Leigh Taylor
Erie Sage Fisher	Audrey Camille Lovell	Amanda Nicoe Thompson
Jalen Myles Garrard	Elise Noelle McConnell	Gabriel Allen Tomlin
Nellie Suszannah Greer	Madison Bailey McHargue	Kelly Eleanor True
Kimberly L. Groves	Julia JoAnn Mikulec	Karly A. Walker
Ross C. Gustin	Caroline S Miller	Jacquelyn N. Wells
Anna-Stacia Danielle Haley	Corwin Duncan Mollett	Kara Marie West
Taylor Sutherland Hamilton	Lauren Elizabeth Morehead	Michael Chase Yaden
Talmadge Ian Hays	Andrew Myers	

# Sigma Tau Delta English Honors Society



Sigma Tau Delta, the English Honors Society, has been very active in recent years since its revival in 2010. According to outgoing chapter president Kyle Alvey, “This year we had several events where the UK public was able to interact with literature in a new way, be it through our Blind Date with a Book Sale, the Banned Books Week celebration, or the Dr. Seuss Birthday Celebration event.”

Sigma Tau Delta inducted a dozen new members in April at its third annual induction ceremony, at which Dr. Janet Eldred gave the keynote address. Six of our members also attended the STD conference in Cincinnati where they presented papers and poetry and attended readings by contemporary authors. In this coming academic year, STD will again act as peer mentors to incoming English majors. This is a great way to introduce new students to other majors and to the department. Finally, the chapter’s officers for 2018–19 are already working to plan events for Banned Books Week and are in collaboration with the Late Night Film Festival that will reopen in the new Student Center this fall. It promises to be another terrific year for Sigma Tau Delta!

## Doctoral Student Receives Jill M. Rappis Fellowship

Through the generosity of English alumna Jill Rappis, our graduate students are now able to travel to libraries and archives to complete the research that is so crucial to producing new scholarship. Last summer, Ph.D. student Deirdre Mikolacjik won a department-wide competition for the Rappis Fellowship and was able to use the funding to support an extended stay working with the New York Public Library archives. Deirdre’s dissertation examines nineteenth-century British and American literature and masculinity against a backdrop of economic change. According to Deirdre, the time spent in the NYPL archives was invaluable to her research: “Over the past few months, I have heavily reframed my project to consider how Victorian novels depict economics and gender interacting to form communities. The research I was able to complete at the NYPL because of the Rappis Fellowship has been integral in this shift.”



(Left to right): Jill Rappis and Deirdre Mikolacjik

# Visiting Writers Series

The Visiting Writers Series brings established and emerging writers to the University and to Lexington each year for lively exchange with our students, faculty, and community members. It contributes to the excellent quality of life in Lexington, making it a more thoughtful, engaging, and vibrant city. The VWS is largely supported by philanthropy and welcomes donations.

## Fall 2018



Photo by Rachel Eliza Griffiths

**TUES., SEPT. 11:**

**Gregory Pardlo's** collection *Digest* (Four Way Books) won the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. His other honors include fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York Foundation for the Arts; his first collection, *Totem*, was selected by Brenda Hillman for the APR/Honickman Prize in 2007. *Air Traffic*, a memoir in essays, was published by Knopf in April. Pardlo's reading is at 7:00 p.m. on September 11th in the Worsham Theatre in the Bill Gatton Student Center.



**FRI., SEPT. 14:**

**Mary Gaitskill** is the keynote speaker at this fall's Kentucky Women Writer's Conference. She is the author of several novels and short story collections. Gaitskill has been nominated for the National Book Award, the National Critic's Circle Award, and the Pen/Faulkner Award. Her work has appeared in the *New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *Esquire*, and *Best American Short Stories*. In 2002 she was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. Her public lecture entitled "Why People Still Read" is at 7:30 p.m. at the Lyric Theatre in downtown Lexington.

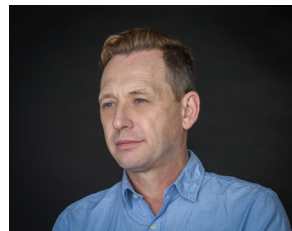


Photo by Tasha Thomas

**WED., OCT. 10:**

**Silas House** is the author of five novels, including *A Parchment of Leaves*. He is a frequent contributor to the *New York Times* and a former commentator for NPR's *All Things Considered*. House is a member of the Fellowship of Southern Writers and is the winner of the E. B. White Award, the Nautilus Award, the Appalachian Book of the Year, the Hobson Medal for Literature, and other honors. His most recent novel, *Southernmost*, is one of the most talked about books of the year. House's reading is at 7:00 p.m. on October 10th in the UKAA Auditorium in the W.T. Young Library.



**WED., NOV. 14:**

**Maurice Manning**, the author of four collections of poetry, was awarded the 2009 Hanes Poetry Award from the Fellowship of Southern Writers. His first book, *Lawrence Booth's Book of Visions*, was selected by W. S. Merwin for the Yale Series of Younger Poets. Manning, a former writing fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts, teaches at Indiana University and Warren Wilson College. Manning's reading is at 7:00 p.m. on November 14th on the social staircase in the Gatton Student Center.

## Spring 2019

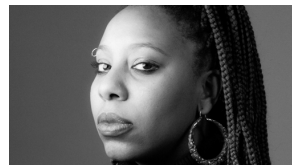


Photo by Rachel Eliza Griffiths

**Morgan Parker** is the author of *There Are More Beautiful Things Than Beyoncé* (Tin House Books 2017) and *Other People's Comfort Keeps Me Up at Night* (Switchback Books 2015), which was selected by Eileen Myles for the 2013 Gatewood Prize and a finalist for the Poetry Society of America's Norma Farber First Book Award. She is the recipient of a 2017 National Endowment of the Arts Literature Fellowship, winner of a 2016 Pushcart Prize, and a Cave Canem graduate fellow.



**Brittany Perham** is the author of *Double Portrait* (W.W. Norton, 2017), which received the Barnard Women Poets Prize; *The Curiosities* (Free Verse Editions, 2012); and, with Kim Addonizio, the collaborative chapbook *The Night Could Go in Either Direction* (SHP, 2016). She is a Jones Lecturer in the Creative Writing Program at Stanford University, where she was a Wallace Stegner Fellow. She is also winner of UK's inaugural M.F.A. Creative Writing Residency at the Mill House.

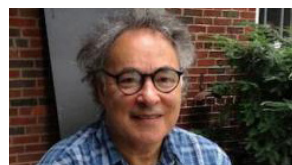


Photo by Jonathan Wilson

**Howard Norman** is a three-time winner of National Endowment for the Arts fellowships and a winner of the Lannan Award for fiction. His 1987 novel, *The Northern Lights*, was nominated for a National Book Award, as was his 1994 novel *The Bird Artist*. He is also author of the novels *The Museum Guard*, *The Haunting of L*, and *Devotion*. His books have been translated into twelve languages. Norman teaches in the M.F.A. program at the University of Maryland.

# 800 Acorns Project

By Erik Reece

In October of 2017, a collective of UK faculty, students and alumni gathered on a former strip mine in the Daniel Boone National Forest to plant 800 acorns. The project was conceived as both an art installation and an act of ecological restoration. The oaks we planted will begin to heal a landscape despoiled by human arrogance. They will absorb rainfall, hold soil in place, provide crucial habitat and sequester carbon dioxide. They will also invite other plant species into their shade. And like the larger land art movement in America, 800 Acorns aims to create space where visitors can contemplate the symbiotic relationship between art and the natural world. To that end, poems by American and British writers were carved into wooden plaques and staggered among the oaks.

800 Acorns celebrated the octocentennial of The Charter of the Forests. In 1217, King Henry III sealed The Charter of the Forest as a companion document to the Magna Carta. The Charter of the Forests established the rights of commoners to hunt, pasture and collect essential resources from the King's Royal Forest without fear of punitive reprisal. As such, the Charter of the Forest represents one of the first legal documents in the English-speaking world to recognize access to public lands—and the protection of public lands—as a basic human right.

On October 27, 2018, we will celebrate the one-year anniversary of 800 Acorns with a pop-up art show at Lexington's Parachute Factory (at the corner of Loudon and Limestone). There will be photography, painting, poetry broadsides, music, a short reading and a documentary film.

Please join us for this festive event. Remember the words of W. H. Auden: "A culture is no better than its woods."



(Left to right): Chris Barton, Jonathan Allison, Daniel Martin Moore, Erik Reece, Frank X Walker, Eric Scott Sutherland. Photo by Morris Grubbs.

## 800 Acorns Project Anniversary Celebration

**Parachute Factory**  
**6:00 p.m. October 27, 2018**



# Faculty Spotlight

## Hannah Pittard



Creative Writing Director Hannah Pittard's new novel, *Visible Empire*, was published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt this summer. Described by reviewers as “assured, polished, readable,” the novel examines the aftermath of a real-life tragedy: the crash of Air France 007. On a summer day in 1962, the Boeing 707 crashed in Paris shortly after takeoff. The crash killed more than 100 of Atlanta's most prominent citizens. In one fell swoop, many of the city's elite were wiped out. Left behind were spouses, children and friends faced with renegotiating their lives.

Against a background of grief, Pittard takes readers on the journey of those who must rebuild their city and their lives. Depicted are fictional characters who have just inherited vast sums of money, and some who realize their families didn't really have money after all. The book, which takes place over the course of a sweltering summer, intertwines themes of history, race, class, grief and love.

Pittard is no stranger to writing about profound loss. She has published three novels: 2011's *The Fates Will Find Their Way*, which received a rave review in *The Washington Post*. Her second novel, *Reunion* (in 2014), was an Editor's Choice by the *Chicago Tribune*. In 2016, she released *Listen to Me*, which was a *New York Times* Editors' Choice. She won an AI Smith Fellowship grant from the Kentucky Arts Council in summer 2018.

In *Visible Empire*, Pittard explores the competition between self and society, which she believes is a complex and timely topic. “In the past I've kept my focus narrow, looking at an individual's relationship to loss, maybe at a family's. I felt I was ready—and frankly I felt compelled, given the state of the world, to try with this novel to tackle large-scale loss,” Pittard explained.

# Faculty Spotlight

## Nazera Sadiq Wright



Dr. Nazera Sadiq Wright won the 2018 Children's Literature Association's Honor Book Award for her first book, *Black Girlhood in the Nineteenth Century* (University of Illinois Press, 2016). During this past academic year, Dr. Wright was in residence at the Library Company of Philadelphia as a National Endowment for the Humanities Postdoctoral Fellow and an Andrew W. Mellon Program in African American History Postdoctoral Fellow. She conducted archival research at the Library Company of Philadelphia, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and the Special Collections of the Free Library of Philadelphia, which holds the unprocessed records of Philadelphia's Mercantile Library. This research will contribute to the completion of her second book, titled *Literary Legacies: Early African American Women Writers and their Libraries*. This new book traces the influence of libraries and historical repositories on the literary careers and enduring legacies of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century African American women writers.

*Literary Legacies* will add to our understanding of literary and material history, African American authorship, and the professional possibilities for African American women. Excluded from many educational spaces and institutions in the nineteenth century, African American readers used libraries to pursue ideals of liberal education and to contest the widespread belief in their racial inferiority. Dr. Wright studies how research libraries functioned as gateways to African American women's literary authority and how black women navigated these institutions that often rendered them invisible.

Wright's new research examines how the histories of black women writers are often “buried” in literary forms less likely to be studied, such as autograph albums, or “buried” in archives due to underfunding, outdated finding aids, or minimally processed or non-digitized collections. *Literary Legacies* tells a story of history-making, legacy-making, and African American women asserting freedom in private and institutional spaces before and after the Civil War.

# Faculty Highlights

**Rynetta Davis** won the 2018 Outstanding Professor Award from the University of Kentucky Fraternities and Sororities.

**Janet Eldred** received a 2018 AI Smith Individual Artist Fellowship in poetry from the Kentucky Arts Council.

**Mike Genovese's** book, *The Problem of Profit: Finance and Feeling in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, was accepted for publication by the University of Virginia Press.

**DaMaris Hill's** forthcoming book, *A Bound Woman Is a Dangerous Thing: The Incarceration of African American Women from Harriet Tubman to*

*Sandra Bland*, a history in verse, has been listed as a Top 10 history book for the Fall by *Publishers Weekly*. She was also awarded a grant from the Kentucky Foundation for Women to teach girls in Lexington 21st Century literary practices that resemble digital poetry.

**Dan Howell's** new chapbook of poems, *Whatever Light Used to Be*, was published this summer.

**Pearl James** received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to attend a summer research institute in New York.

**Peter Kalliney** will spend the 2018–19 academic year on a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship.

**Joyce MacDonald** has been elected to a three-year term as a trustee of the Shakespeare Association of America. In August, she was the keynote speaker at a symposium at Shakespeare's Globe in London. Her book, *Shakespearean Adaptation, Race, and Memory in the New World*, is forthcoming from Palgrave Macmillan.

**Alan Nadel** published *Demographic Angst: Cultural Narratives and American Films of the 1950s* and *The Theatre of August Wilson* and has been appointed to the editorial board of the journal *African American Review*.

**Gurney Norman** has been named Scholar-in-Residence at the University of Kentucky Appalachian Studies Center. His new book of short stories, *Allegiance*, is forthcoming this fall.

**Hannah Pittard** received a 2018 AI Smith Individual Artist Fellowship in fiction from the Kentucky Arts Council.

**Jill Rappoport** was awarded a SEC Faculty Travel Grant in spring 2018 to do collaborative research at Vanderbilt University.

**Marion Rust** became editor of *Early American Literature*, the official journal of the Society of Early Americanists and of the Modern Language Association Forum on Early American Literature

**Emily Shortslef** held a Renaissance Society of America research fellowship at the Huntington Library during the spring.

**Frank X Walker** was awarded the College of Arts & Sciences' Distinguished Service and Engagement Award for 2018.

## Book Benches Pay Homage to Department Authors



English Department faculty Gurney Norman, Frank X Walker, and Crystal Wilkinson (left to right) were prominently featured as part of a sculptural celebration of Kentucky's literary heritage this summer. Over thirty fiberglass benches depicting colorful artistic renderings of books by Kentucky authors were placed around the city in June and are on display through October. The project is a collaboration between Arts Connect, LexArts, and the Carnegie Center for Literacy and Learning. Further details and a bench map can be found at [www.bookbencheslex.org](http://www.bookbencheslex.org). The auction of benches will be on November 17th at the Livery.

## Giving Opportunities

The Department of English fosters intellectual creativity and prepares students to be critical decision-makers and life-long leaders. Integrating award-winning teaching with deep research into the past and present issues that most animate our world, our often-honored faculty in Literature, Creative Writing, and Film work side-by-side with students as they develop into articulate and empathetic citizens of an increasingly complex world.

Your gift to the English Development Fund or the Visiting Writers Series Fund will provide critical resources to respond to student needs, attract world-class faculty, and support innovative opportunities for growth. Your contribution is an investment in the future of the department and the next generation of students. You can also make your gift in honor of or memory of a friend, relative, or faculty member.

A gift to the English Department can be made online at [www.as.uky.edu/givetoas](http://www.as.uky.edu/givetoas). Please use the search box in the upper right corner of the screen and type the name of the fund. Gifts can also be mailed to:

By mail, please sent to:  
**University of Kentucky Gift Receiving**  
210 Malabu Drive, Suite 200  
Lexington, KY 40502

For questions please contact Laura Sutton ([lsutton@uky.edu](mailto:lsutton@uky.edu)) or (859) 257-3551.

## Full Circle: The Swanbergs' Mill House Residency for Creative Writers

By Julie Wrinn



UK Alumni Joan and Greg Swanberg's the Mill House at Glendower, outside Charlottesville, Virginia, was built more than 225 years ago. A secluded, pastoral location, it's ideal for escaping the bustle of daily life, a place to reflect and create. The Swanbergs' generous gift of a summertime stay at the Virginia cottage retreat recently enabled the English department to create two new residency programs for aspiring authors—one two-week residency open to internal submissions from current UK students pursuing a M.F.A. in creative writing and a second two-week residency for external submissions from "emerging voices and debut writers."

As the Mill House Residency launches this summer, we take a look back at how the Swanbergs' marriage, careers, and children intersected with the University of Kentucky. It is a story of searching, persisting, and finishing strong, not only for Greg and Joan, but also for their grown sons.

Greg and Joan Swanberg met as undergraduates at UK, and it was love at first sight. Both took time away from school before graduating, Joan with an English degree and Greg with a Bachelor's of General Studies. Once Greg graduated and embarked on a career in government contracting, they moved nearly every two years, including overseas, and in every new locale Joan was able to find work in education. "I got such a good foundation at UK," said Joan. "It was a benefit to me as a woman to have a college degree when many others didn't, and it opened doors every time we moved. I was always able to find something that interested me because I had that degree."

The Swanbergs' two younger sons also graduated from UK after taking time away from school just as their parents had. "I really empathize with students who find it difficult to pin down what they want to do," said Joan. "I knew that I wanted to go to college, but I didn't have a good idea of a career path." For James Swanberg (B.S. 2009), their middle son, all it took was one semester of construction work to realize that he needed to return to college. That semester he joined a crew who renovated and expanded the Swanbergs' Mill House in Scottsville, Virginia, which they recently offered as a summer residency for UK graduate students in creative writing. That initiative was both inspired by, and partly conceived by, their youngest son, Michael.

"Michael loved the English program and poetry and didn't love anything else," said Joan. "He had a really tough time trying to figure out what he wanted to do. When he dropped out, we were worried that he would not return to school." After a two-year hiatus, Michael did return to UK and to the English Department, where he was drawn to the legendary English professors and poets Jane Gentry Vance and Nikky Finney. The Swanbergs are deeply appreciative of Profs. Vance and Finney for their mentorship of Michael. "They really nurtured him and his talent," explained Joan. "They encouraged him to just plug on, and not let little things stop him, and see the big picture. We were so grateful for that." After earning his English degree at UK in 2012, Michael received a full-ride scholarship to study creative writing at the University of Wisconsin and recently completed his M.F.A. there.

Michael Swanberg's achievement was the tipping point for Greg and Joan: "It really made us feel that it was time to give back ourselves," explained Joan. In 2014 the Swanbergs help fund the establishment of the Nikky Finney Graduate Fellowship, open to any student enrolled in UK's Master's of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program, with priority given to students from Kentucky who are from underrepresented backgrounds. "We know firsthand how difficult it can be to pay for school," explained Greg. "Had we not had help from scholarships and other aid programs, I just cannot imagine where we would be today. I feel obligated to pay that forward. Once we got our children through school, we knew we wanted to help others." The Swanbergs have made it a priority to help UK achieve its ambitious goals of nurturing success for all students, especially those who may need a little extra time to finish strong.

**A longer version of this article is on the department's website at [english.as.uky.edu/full-circle](http://english.as.uky.edu/full-circle).**

# Alumni Spotlight:

## Chris Green: A Life of Literature, Horses, and Law



(Left to right) Professor Jeff Clymer with Chris Green on English Awards Day, April 2018.

By Julie Wrinn

Chris Green ('93 B.A.) majored in English for the usual reason: he loved to read. His path to that degree, however, and to his success as a partner in the internationally prominent New York law firm Boies Schiller Flexner, was unusually long and circuitous.

Thanks to his SAT scores, Green was admitted to Princeton, but he lasted only three semesters. "It was an intensely challenging academic environment, and my study skills weren't on par with my classmates." He worked hard but couldn't manage his homesickness: "If you're mature, you're able to keep homesickness in perspective and overcome it. I was the opposite of mature."

Green, who grew up working with thoroughbreds, persuaded his parents he wanted to take a leave of absence and return to Lexington as a pre-veterinary

student. He enrolled in the UK College of Animal Science and continued taking English courses along with his pre-vet courses. "When I took organic chemistry, it finished me as a pre-vet candidate," explained Green. "At the time, I didn't have the discipline to do that kind of work."

After three semesters at UK of mostly English courses, Green withdrew again and went to work with horses full-time. "Horses are what I loved, and I still love horses. At that point in my life, I really wanted to work in the thoroughbred business, because my family had for generations, and I felt that it was my destiny." Green would spend the next fifteen years trying to fulfill that destiny—buying, selling, breeding, raising, and training horses.

It was January 1992, Green was 37, and he had been away from college for 16 years before he returned to UK to

complete a degree in English. In spring of 1993, at age 39, he finally graduated with a B.A. in English. During the school year Green had also been working for a Lexington attorney doing title exams. "I had met a lot of lawyers over the years, and I always thought what they did was very interesting."

Green applied to and ended up being the last student accepted from the wait list at the University of Virginia's Law School. After several years practicing law in New York, Green joined Boies Schiller Flexner, one of the nation's highest profile legal firms. Over the last twenty years, Green has litigated in a dizzying array of content areas, from insurance, natural resources, and the Clean Air Act, to the NFL, stock car racing, and movie theaters, to hedge funds and telecommunications. "We are trial lawyers, so we have to be generalists," explained Green.

In this regard, Green's training as an English major has served him well. "What we're expert in is the process of getting our arms around the substantive law, around the facts, creating a narrative that is a good story for purposes of winning, and working with the witnesses and the mechanics of the hearings to bring it to an end point that's good for the client, whether it be a decision after a trial or a settlement before a trial."

In 2006, Chris was presented the Partner in Justice Award by Legal Services of the Hudson Valley for excellence in and commitment to the provision of pro bono legal services to indigent residents of New York's Hudson Valley. And in 2008 he received the Thurgood Marshall Award for Capital Representation from The Committee on Capital Punishment of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, in recognition of the contribution of time and legal expertise in the representation of inmates under a sentence of death.

At the English Department's awards ceremony on April 28, Green was taken by Professor Pearl James's talk on the Robert Frost poem, "The Road Not Taken." "I admire Robert Frost's poetry as much or more than Yeats's," said Green. "Professor James said the poem can be read to be about making decisions and retrospectively putting those decisions in context. When I look back on my life, there are many things that I would have done differently, but one of them that I can't imagine having done differently was concentrating on English literature, reading books and poetry, because it's just so integral to who I am."

I work a lot with young lawyers. Those who read and think about reading and are facile with reading and writing are generally superior to those who come from almost another educational background. Writing is so important to practicing law—the ability to write clearly and persuasively. Understanding the complexity of the issues you're dealing

with and how to simplify them and create a narrative is so important to litigation that certainly a valuable asset is to have a good background in English."

In recognition of his success in law and lifelong devotion to English, Chris Green was named the UK English Department's 2018 Alumni of the Year. "I was very humbled to receive the award. I told Jeff Clymer when he asked me if I would accept it, that I was sure there were many people who were eminently more qualified to receive it than me. But I said if he would promise to invite as few of those people as possible to the ceremony, I'd be glad to sneak in there and snatch it and sneak back out again. To be in the same room with students and teachers who are brilliant writers and thinkers about all the issues that come up in language and literature and receive an award with and from them was very humbling. And I really mean that."

**A longer version of this article is on the department's website at <https://www.as.uky.edu/chris-green-life-literature-horses-and-law>.**