



English

FALL 2019 DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER



College of Arts
and Sciences
Department of English

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English

FALL 2019 DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

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 Kamahra Ewing
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 Michael Trask
 Frank X Walker
 Crystal Wilkinson
 Nazera Sadiq Wright
 Lisa Zunshine

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Cover Photo: MFA students in the Ekphrastic Writing class performed a dramatic response to the work of celebrated American photographer, Ralph Eugene Meatyard.

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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,

As you see in these pages, our students are thriving in the classroom and finding new opportunities to learn both on and off campus. We are proud of our graduates who have moved on to graduate school or law school, or taken job opportunities in teaching, publishing, journalism, business, PR and other fields of endeavor.

Our feature on Luke Glaser (BA '11) demonstrates the adaptability of the English degree and the resourcefulness and passion of our students. They continue to impress us in the classroom, and many received academic prizes at our annual awards day in the spring, when our own Frank X Walker gave an inspiring address. We thank our donors who make these awards possible, and whose generous giving creates opportunities for our students to learn and succeed. Please think about ways you can help us enrich the experience of our students and build for the future at UK.

We are delighted to welcome three new faculty members this year, bringing our total number of tenure track faculty to 32 professors. Yale Ph.D. Jordan Brower joins us from Harvard, where he was a Lecturer, and he will teach primarily in Film Studies. Regina Hamilton completed her Ph.D. at Rutgers and will teach courses in English and the African American and Africana Studies Program. Kamahra Ewing completed her Ph.D. at Michigan State University, and she will teach courses in Film Studies and in the African American and Africana Studies Program.

This year our Visiting Writers Series brings outstanding authors to campus, and we draw your attention to readings by Chanelle Benz on 14 November and by Randall Horton on 11 December, both at the W. T. Young Library Auditorium. All of our readings are open to the public.

The English Department is flourishing and developing in ways that will build on our tradition of success. Please visit us on campus next time you are in Lexington and send us an email (jalliso@uky.edu or kristen.pickett@uky.edu) to keep us up to date with the important events in your life and career. I invite every one of you to consider giving to the Department to help provide learning opportunities for our students who hope to follow in your footsteps.

With Best Wishes,

Jonathan Allison
Professor and Chair of English Department





Left to Right: Regina Hamilton, Jordan Brower, Kamahra Ewing

Welcoming New Faculty

Jordan Brower joins us from Harvard, where he has been Lecturer in History and Literature. A graduate of Amherst College, he completed his Ph.D. at Yale, where his dissertation won the Yale English Prize for Best Dissertation of the Year 2015–16. Jordan has completed a book manuscript, *Shadowing Hollywood: A Literary History of the Studio System*, and he is co-editor of *American Literature in the World: A Web and Print Anthology* (Columbia UP, 2017.) He has published articles in *Modern Language Quarterly*, *English Literary History*, and *James Joyce Quarterly*.

Kamahra Ewing completed her Ph.D. in African American and African Studies at Michigan State University, and she later taught at Wayne State University as Senior Lecturer in the Honors College and as a Lecturer in the Comprehensive Studies Program at the University of Michigan. Kamahra has published several articles in her chief area of research, which is the Brazilian audience perception of Nigerian (Nollywood) Cinema. She spent a year in Brazil completing research, and is fluent in Portuguese, Spanish, and Japanese.

Regina Hamilton completed her Ph.D. at Rutgers and is a graduate of Duke and Georgetown. Her research focuses on African American Literature, Caribbean and Postcolonial Literature, Black Feminist Theory, and Gender and Women's Studies. Her dissertation is titled "The Speculative as a Mode of Critique in 20th Century African American Literature" and she has scholarly articles forthcoming in edited anthologies. Regina has previously taught literature and composition at Rutgers, Valencia College (Florida) and Middlesex County College (NJ).



Alumnus Profile: Luke Glaser Leads Hazard Toward a Brighter Future

By Nathaniel Harling



Luke Glaser

While many people dip their toes in the water and ease themselves into a new community, Luke Glaser ('11 B.A.) prefers to dive in head-first. He came to UK from Louisville to study English. Along the way, he picked up Spanish as a second major, participated in the Gaines Fellowship program, served as an Arts & Sciences Ambassador, and became so involved with Teach for America that he had a key role in their campus campaign his senior year. Upon graduation, Glaser committed to Hazard, Ky., to complete a two-year Teach for America assignment at Hazard High School. Seven years later, he is still there. Anchored by a slate of responsibilities that makes his busy college schedule seem leisurely, Glaser has become a vital part of a community on the rise.

When Glaser first arrived in Hazard with Teach for America, there was not a single student in the high school able to pass the national AP Calculus exam. By the end of his two years, 10 students passed the exam, and Glaser was offered a full-time position. Now he teaches AP calculus, pre-calculus, entrepreneurship, and theater. It may seem surprising that an English major would become a great math teacher right away, and Glaser admits that during his first year of teaching he would often spend the night before a lesson learning the material for the first time online. Glaser's English degree, however, gave him the skills to do something more important than the math itself: the ability to make people care. "Instructing calculus to someone who is willing to learn it is not difficult," he said, "but English taught me how to come up with a thesis, build an argument, and convince my audience. The hard part of teaching calculus in Hazard, especially AP Calculus, is convincing the students and their parents that it is worth putting in the hard work to take the class. The skills I learned as an English major helped me create a whole curriculum outside of the math itself based around why AP Calculus is worthwhile and what opportunities it can unlock for students."

Having stayed well past the initial two years he planned to spend in Hazard, Glaser was ready to expand his public role in the community and decided to run for City Commissioner. Already involved in leadership positions in two local organizations, Glaser was welcomed by the citizens of his new home with open arms and elected as the first ever Hazard City Commissioner born outside of Perry County. In his first few months in office, he has persuaded the city and county to pool resources to hire a downtown development coordinator; created a civic fellowship that is one of the most comprehensive city government internships in the state; and started a program to invite members of the community to commissioner meetings to increase public interaction with city government. Thinking of how his English degree has aided his work, Glaser recalls something Dr. Marion Rust told him in class: "the mission and gift of an English major is to create connections where none previously existed." Glaser has taken this to heart, saying, "That is my strength. Whenever I find myself in a group of people who are coming at a problem from different perspectives, I have the ability to take person A and person B and find the commonality in their arguments so that we can get something done together."

Glaser's talents, passion, and work ethic have had a vital impact on the Hazard community, both in planning the future of the city through government and in educating the young minds that will be instrumental in seeing those plans through. Glaser is quick to deny that his work is a sacrifice. "A lot of people back home will talk about me living here and doing this work as if I were making a big sacrifice," he said. "I've never seen it that way because I truly enjoy being in this community." While he may work hard to make Hazard a better place, he derives great joy from being there and is inspired by his fellow residents to work with them towards the collective good of his new home. "There are a lot of really smart people who could have done anything they wanted to, but they stayed here because they love their community and want to make it better. Part of what has driven me to stay has been seeing that commitment and wanting to be a part of that story."

Thompson Law Office Internship for Yohanan Andargachew (B.A. '20)

Senior English major Yohanan Andargachew did an internship with Thompson Law Office in Lexington during his junior year and has since continued to work there part time. He plans to apply to law school this fall. Yohanan is one of roughly fifty students who have done internships and earned English course credit over the past couple of years. This program puts students in a variety of workplaces, including law firms, the University Press of Kentucky, media outlets, the Carnegie Center, and more. We hope it will continue to grow and help our students explore career options for English majors.

If your workplace is interested in working with interns from the Department of English, please contact Michelle Sizemore at Michelle.Sizemore@uky.edu.



Photo by Anna Poteet

Student Awards 2018–2019

Thanks to the generosity of many alumni and friends, the department is able to reward excellence among its students by supporting their future scholarship in a variety of ways. Donating to a departmental award is one of the easiest ways for alumni and friends to make a significant impact on our students' success. Congratulations to the following recipients!



Awards Day speaker Frank X Walker



Joyce MacDonald presents awards to Brittany Sulzener and Rachel Carr.

Student Awards

John Spalding Gatton Provost Scholarship in Arts and Sciences:

- **Abigail Heibert**

Established in 2005 by Daniel W. Varga, M.D. ('80 B.S. Biology and English) and Kimberly Alumbaugh, M.D. in honor of John Spalding Gatton ('82 Ph.D. English), who greatly influenced undergraduate and graduate students during his studies at UK. Dr. Gatton is currently Professor Emeritus of English at Bellarmine University in Louisville.

Julester Shradly Post Memorial Scholarship:

- **Christopher Browning** • **Juliana Palomino**

Established in 2008 by Mr. A. Stuart Bennett ('78 B.A. English, '82 J.D.), in memory of his grandmother, Mrs. Julester Shradly Post.

Barbara Sutton Cowles Scholarship for an Outstanding Senior:

- **Andrew Thibaudeau**

Established in 2005 by Dr. Joe Cowles and Mrs. Barbara Cowles, in honor of Mrs. Cowles (B.A. '64 English, '66 M.A. Education). Dr. and Mrs. Cowles are now both retired from Virginia Tech.

Patricia and William Stacy Endowed Fellowship in Undergraduate English Education:

- **Nathaniel Cortas**

Established in 2008 by Mrs. Patricia ('69 B.A. English) and Mr. William Stacy.

Patricia and William Stacy Endowed Fellowship in Graduate English Education:

- **Rachel Carr** • **Brittany Sulzener**

Established in 2008 by Mrs. Patricia ('69 B.A. English) and Mr. William Stacy.

Bill Bridges Scholarship for an Outstanding First-Generation College Graduate Majoring in English:

- **Jordan Roper**

Established in 2002 by Ms. An T. Le, in honor of Mr. Bill Bridges, who was a mentor to Ms. Le.

Michael Adelstein Award for Prospective High School Teachers of English:

- **Madelaine Decker** • **Kellsie Kennedy**

Established in 1997 by Professor Michael Adelstein, who taught English at the University of Kentucky for nearly 30 years.

Ben Wathen Black Memorial Graduate Scholarship in British Literature:

- **Leslie Malland**

Established in 2005 in memory of Dr. Ben Black by Mrs. Agnes Black (Dr. Black's widow) and John Faraci, a former student of Dr. Black's. Dr. Black taught English at the University of Kentucky for almost 30 years.

Robert L. Doty English Graduate Support Fund:

- **Gokce Tekeli**

Established in 2010 by Professor Robert Doty ('66 M.A. and '73 Ph.D. English). He is Professor Emeritus at Campbellsville University.

Betty Combs Owen Recruitment Scholarship:

- **Erika Simpson**

Established in 2014 by Mr. Larry Owen in memory of his wife. Mrs. Owen ('57 B.A. English and Education) served as Senior Policy Advisor to North Carolina Governor James B. Hunt Jr. and Chief of Staff for the National Task Force on Education.

Dantzler-Dantzler Award for Academic Achievement by a Senior:

- **Mikayla Carter** • **Margaret Coppala**

Established in 1963 in honor of Professor Lehre Livingston Dantzler and his wife Mary E. Dantzler.

Continued on page 8 »

Nikky Finney Graduate Fellowship:

- makalani bandele

Established in 2015 by Gregory and Joan Swanberg in honor of Nikky Finney, an Emerita Professor of English at the University of Kentucky. Their son Michael T. Swanberg (B.A. '12, M.F.A. '15 Wisconsin), studied with Professor Finney as an undergraduate student at UK. Professor Finney was a beloved professor of English at UK for over 20 years, and is now the John H. Bennett, Jr. Chair in Southern Letters and Literature at the University of South Carolina.

Jill M. Rappis Endowed Fund in Arts & Sciences:

- Cate Gooch • Rachel Carr

Established in 2009 by Jill M. Rappis, this fund supports graduate student travel for library and archival research.

O. J. & Ruby Wilson Scholarship for an Outstanding Senior:

- Alyssa Mertka

William J. Sowder Award for Best Graduate Student Critical Paper:

- Jess Van Gilder

Ellershaw Award for an Outstanding Ph.D. Candidate:

- Claire Lenviel

Dantzler Award for Fiction:

- Haley Powell

Established in honor of Professor Lehre Livingston Dantzler, who served in the English Department from 1912 to 1947.

Farquhar Award for Poetry:

- Taylon Baker

Established in 1953 by the University of Kentucky, in honor of Professor Edward F. Farquhar, who served in the English department for over four decades.

Our UK English Alumna of the Year was Jan Isenhour, a major figure in community and literacy education in Fayette County, and a great ambassador for the English Department. Jan graduated in English from UK in 1972, completing her Master's in 1975. She previously taught in the Writing Program at UK, and has been a friend and supporter of the English Department in many ways over the years. She was Assistant Director of The Carnegie Center for Literacy throughout the 1990s and Executive Director from 1998 to 2012, and she was a featured presenter for many years on KET's The GED Connection, broadcast to over 80 million households. She has served on many boards, including the Kentucky Women Writers Conference, the Kentucky Writers Hall of Fame Committee, and the William Wells Brown family resource center.



Jan Isenhour (holding her English Alumna of the Year Award) with friend Susan Harper (B.A. History '72) and daughter Celia Dyer (M.A. Education '05)

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 2019

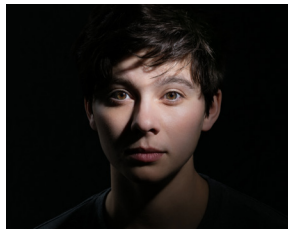


Photo by Beowulf Sheehan 2019

TUESDAY, SEPT. 17, 7:00 PM, W.T. YOUNG AUDITORIUM:

Kayleb Rae Candrilli is the author of *What Runs Over*, winner of the Pamet River Prize, and *All the Gay Saints*, winner of the Saturnalia Book Prize and forthcoming in 2020. Their work is published or forthcoming in *POETRY*, *TriQuarterly*, *Puerto del Sol*, and other journals. Candrilli has served as nonfiction editor of the *Black Warrior Review*, feature editor for *NANO Fiction*, and Assistant Poetry Editor for *BOAAT PRESS*. They live in Philadelphia with their partner.

FROM OUR PARTNERS



FRIDAY, SEPT. 20, 7:30 PM, PAM MILLER DOWNTOWN ARTS CENTER:

Meander, Spiral, Explode: Truth & Form in Narrative, with Jane Alison

The dramatic arc, in which a situation arises, grows tense, reaches a peak, subsides—is this the only way to structure a narrative? So many other patterns run through nature, tracing other deep motions in life. Why not draw on them, too? Join University of Virginia Professor of Creative Writing and author of four novels and a memoir for this new look at form in storytelling. **Presented by the Kentucky Women Writers Conference.**



WEDNESDAY, OCT. 2, 7:00 PM, SINGLETARY CENTER FOR THE ARTS:

New York Times best-selling author **Tayari Jones** is the author four novels, most recently *An American Marriage*, an Oprah's Book Club Selection that appeared on Barack Obama's summer reading list and end of the year roundup. The novel was awarded the Women's Prize for Fiction (formerly known as the Orange Prize), the Aspen Words Prize, and an NAACP Image Award. With over 500,000 copies in print domestically, it has been published in fifteen countries. Jones, a member of the Fellowship of Southern Writers, is a recipient of the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award, a United States Artist Fellowship, an NEA Fellowship, and a Radcliffe Institute Bunting Fellowship. Her third novel, *Silver Sparrow* was added to the NEA Big Read Library of Classics in 2016. She is a Professor of Creative Writing at Emory University. **Presented by the Gaines Center for the Humanities.**

Photo by Nina Subin 2017

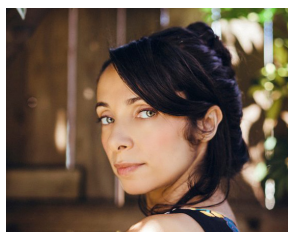


Photo by Kim Newmoney 2019

THURSDAY, NOV. 14, 7:00 PM, W.T. YOUNG AUDITORIUM:

Chanelle Benz has published short stories in *Guernica*, *Granta.com*, *Electric Literature*, and is the recipient of an O. Henry Prize. Her story collection, *The Man Who Shot Out My Eye Is Dead*, was named a Best Book of 2017 by *The San Francisco Chronicle* and one of *Electric Literature's* 15 Best Short Story Collections of 2017. It won the Sergio Troncoso Award for Best First Fiction and the Philosophical Society of Texas Book Award for fiction. Her novel, *The Gone Dead*, was published by Ecco Press in 2019. She lives in Memphis where she teaches at Rhodes College.



Photo by Paula Martali 2019

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 11, 7:00 PM, W.T. YOUNG AUDITORIUM:

Randall Horton's past honors include the Bea Gonzalez Poetry Award, a National Endowment of the Arts Fellowship in Literature, and most recently, a GLCA New Writers Award for Creative Nonfiction for *Hook: A Memoir*. He is Associate Professor of English at the University of New Haven. Originally from Birmingham, Alabama, he now resides in Harlem, New York.

Visiting Writers Series

Spring 2020



Photo by Blue Flower Arts 2019

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 22, 7:00 PM, W.T. YOUNG AUDITORIUM:

Marcelo Hernandez Castillo is a poet, essayist, translator, and immigration advocate. Born in Zacatecas, Mexico, he was the first undocumented student to graduate from the Helen Zell Writers Program at the University of Michigan. He is the author of *Cenzontle*, winner of the A. Poulin, Jr. Prize, the Great Lakes Colleges Association New Writer Award, and the Golden Poppy Award from the Northern California Independent Booksellers Association.

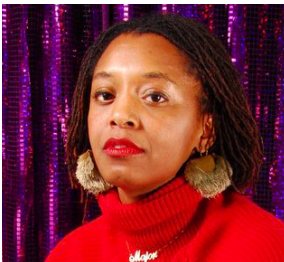


Photo by Brick Kyle 2019

THURSDAY, FEB. 6, 7:00 PM, W.T. YOUNG AUDITORIUM:

Shayla Lawson is the author of three books of poetry—*A Speed Education in Human Being*, the chapbook *PANTONE*, and *I Think I'm Ready to See Frank Ocean*—and the forthcoming essay collection *THIS IS MAJOR*. Her work has appeared in print and online at *Tin House*, *GRAMMA*, *ESPN*, *Salon*, and other journals.



Photo by Copper Canyon Press 2019

Keith S. Wilson's first book, *Fieldnotes on Ordinary Love*, was published by Copper Canyon, and his work has appeared in *Poetry*, *Elle*, *Kenyon Review*, *Boston Review* and other journals. He has been anthologized in *Best New Poets*, and he has received a Best of the Net Award, an Illinois Arts Council Agency Literary Award, and the Rumi Prize.

Presented in collaboration with the Gaines Center for the Humanities.



Photo by Colby Caldwell 2019

FRIDAY, MAR. 12, 7:00 PM, GATTON STUDENT CENTER:

Madeline ffitch is the author of the novel *Stay and Fight* (FSG 2019) and the story collection *Valparaiso, Round the Horn* (2014). She was a founding member of the punk theater company The Missoula Oblongata and has been awarded residencies at Yaddo and at the MacDowell Colony. She writes and organizes in Appalachian Ohio. **Presented in collaboration with the UK Appalachian Center.**



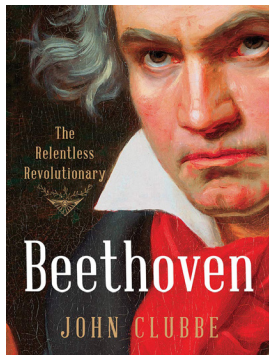
Photo by Cuirt International Festival of Literature 2019

THURSDAY, APR. 9, 7:00 PM, MEMORIAL HALL:

Li-Young Lee is the author of five books of poetry, including his newest collection, *The Undressing*. His earlier collections are *Behind My Eyes*; *Book of My Nights*; *Rose*, winner of the Delmore Schwartz Memorial Award; *The City in Which I Love You*, the 1990 Lamont Poetry Selection; and a memoir entitled *The Winged Seed: A Remembrance*, which received an American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation. Lee's honors include fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, The Lannan Foundation, and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, as well as grants from the Illinois Arts Council, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

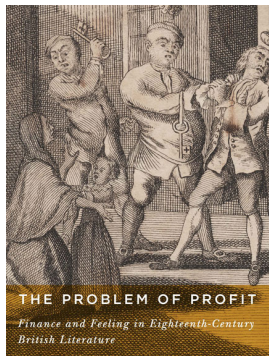
New Books by Faculty

John Clubbe



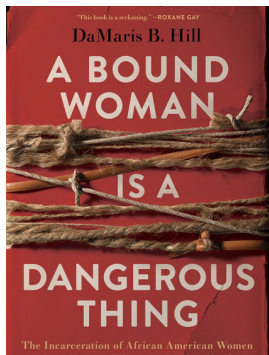
Some of our readers will remember Emeritus Professor John Clubbe, Professor of English at UK from 1975 to 1999, who taught courses on Romanticism (especially Byron) and the Victorians, and a very popular course on the works of Wendell Berry. His latest publication is *Beethoven: The Relentless Revolutionary* (W. W. Norton, 2019), which throws light on Beethoven “as a lifelong revolutionary through his compositions, portraits, and writings, and by setting him alongside major figures of the time—among them Napoleon, Schiller, Goethe, Byron, Chateaubriand, and Goya.” John lives in Santa Fe with his partner, Joan Blythe, Associate Professor of English at UK for many years, best known for her courses on Milton.

Michael Genovese



Michael Genovese’s new book, *The Problem of Profit: Finance and Feeling in Eighteenth-Century British Literature* (University of Virginia Press, 2019), explores the tensions between capitalism, ambition, and the public good through relationships between the economy and the life of individuals, as represented in imaginative literature, diaries, sermons, tracts, treatises, and other historical documents. Catherine Ingrassia of Virginia Commonwealth University describes the book as “an important new perspective full of nuanced readings and well-presented insights.”

DaMaris Hill



DaMaris Hill published a narrative-in-verse, *A Bound Woman Is a Dangerous Thing* (Bloomsbury, January 2019), of which *Booklist* said in a starred review: “with a lyricism that sings, swings, and stings, poet and writer Hill reflects on black women who resisted violent racism and misogyny, ranging from the notable and notorious (Fannie Lou Hamer, Eartha Kitt, Ida B. Wells, Joanne Little) to lesser-known, no-less-heroic women.” Now in its 5th printing, *A Bound Woman* has over 10,000 copies in print, and DaMaris is a sought-after speaker who has been hosted by nearly 50 organizations in the United States and abroad so far in 2019.

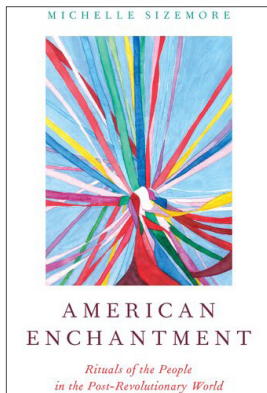
Gurney Norman



Gurney Norman’s most recent publication is a book of short stories, *Allegiance* (Old Cove Press, 2019). We rejoin the life of Norman’s fictional character Wilgus Collier, known to readers of the *Kinfolks* stories, as he struggles to understand his working-class Appalachian childhood and deal with midlife alcoholism and depression. From childhood in Finley County, to Psychodrama and Sandplay sessions with his neo-Jungian therapist Helen, to healing rituals on a strip-mine with his buddies, Wilgus sorts out life at age fifty-three while working as a newspaperman for his hometown newspaper, *The Finley County Record*. Gurney has taught Creative Writing at UK for over 40 years and was inducted into the Kentucky Writers Hall of Fame in 2019.

Continued on page 12 »

Michelle Sizemore



Michelle Sizemore's first book is *American Enchantment: Rituals of the People in the Post-Revolutionary World* (Oxford University Press, 2018). Dana Nelson of Vanderbilt University described it as "an elegant, mature, and impressive book, one that insists we take seriously how political practice and theory in the early nation was galvanized both by new republicanism and new evangelicalism. And it's going to make a big impact on the field." Sizemore was awarded the prestigious American Antiquarian Society Legacy Fellowship for 2019–2020 and was recently appointed our new Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Faculty Highlights

Michael Carter travelled to Transylvania to photograph castles and gather folklore on Vlad the Impaler and other legendary figures for his popular course on vampires.

Jeffory Clymer completed an impressive six-year term as English Department Chair. He has turned his attention to the issue of access to Humanities education for working adults and has developed the University's first online graduate certificate and M.A. degree in the Liberal Arts.

Peter Kalliney completed a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in 2018–19, and he has been appointed to the Editorial Board of *PMLA*. Last spring, he taught in Shanghai, China.

Hannah Pittard was the recipient of the 2019 Ellen Rosenman Distinguished Faculty Award in the English Department. Hannah's fourth novel, *Visible Empire*, was named a *New York Times* "New & Noteworthy" book, as well as an Amazon Best Book of Summer last year.

Jill Rappoport completed a three-year term as Director of Graduate Studies. In 2019, she won the College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Student Mentoring Award, the biennial William S. Ward Prize for distinguished achievement by a faculty member, especially service, and the EGSO Faculty Award chosen by the English Graduate Student organization.

Michael Trask has completed a book, *The Culture of Consciousness*, which will be published by Cornell University Press in 2020. Michael is our new Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of English.

Frank X Walker was our special guest speaker at English Awards Day in spring 2019. Frank published a new book of poems, *Last Will, Last Testament*, and presented an exhibition of his paintings at the Carnegie Center for Literacy and Learning.

Crystal Wilkinson has been awarded the 2020 Mary Frances Hobson Prize for Distinguished Achievement in Arts and Letters and was a finalist for the John Dos Passos Prize for Literature, 2019. Her work has been recently published in *Agni* and *Story* among other publications.

Nazera Wright received a grant for the NEH Summer Institute at Cornell University on Writing and Democracy in Western New York. During the past two years she has lectured at many venues, including Vanderbilt, CUNY, Hunter College, the Library Company of Philadelphia, the American Antiquarian Society, Princeton University Library and the Houghton Library, Harvard.

Kentucky Women Writers Conference Celebrates Its 40th Anniversary



Ifa Bayeza

The Kentucky Women Writers Conference was begun in 1979 by several UK English faculty and has since become the longest running event of its kind in the county. On Sept. 19–22, readers and writers gathered for workshops, panel discussions, and readings featuring over a dozen nationally renowned authors, including Dorianne Laux, Lydia Millet, Antonya Nelson, and our own faculty member DaMaris Hill (for more about her new book see p. 11). Highlights included the Wild Women of Poetry Slam, in which six poets from around the country vie for the \$500 Faith A. Smith Poetry Prize, established by Frank X Walker in honor of his mother; and the Sonia Sanchez Series featuring playwright Ifa Bayeza.

In Memoriam: Thomas Orville Blues (1937–2019)

We are sad to announce the death of former faculty member Tom Blues, Associate Professor of English at University of Kentucky, and LFUC Council member. Tom was born in Detroit and attended the University of Michigan and the University of Iowa. He died on May 23, 2019, at aged 82. Tom served in the Department of English for over 30 years, from 1965 to 1998, where he taught American Literature and served as Writing Program Director. Many people remember his kindness, his dedication, his laughter and his dry sense of humor. He was author of *Mark Twain and the Community* (University Press of Kentucky, 1970) and articles on Twain, Frank Norris, Philip Roth and Joseph Heller. After retirement, Tom served very ably for five years as council member on the Lexington Fayette Urban-County Council. All who knew him would agree with former Mayor of Lexington, Jim Gray, who said “Tom had a wonderful wit and sense of humor, and a moral core that was strong and confident.”



Thomas Blues

John Cirigliano's Donated Book Bench Installed at the Arboretum

In 2018, Arts Connect, LexArts and the Carnegie Center for Literacy and Learning sponsored and auctioned thirty fiberglass "Book Benches" as tributes to Kentucky authors. We wish to thank UK donor John Cirigliano (President, Clearbrook Associates and Advisory Board Member of the UK Gaines Center) who purchased one of these benches in honor of the M.F.A. program. The bench, made by the Berea artist Laura Poulette, offered an interpretation of Harlan Hubbard's memoir, *Shanty Boat: A River Way of Life*, a favorite book of the artist and of Mr. Cirigliano. At the Arboretum Children's Garden Book Bench Dedication Ceremony, Mark Kornbluh, Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, thanked Mr. Cirigliano for this wonderful gift and for his ongoing generous support of English, and the M.F.A. program in particular.



John Cirigliano with artist Laura Poulette at the dedication ceremony.

Steve and Cindi Sullivan Establish a New Writers Retreat for Students



MFA students Hagan Smith and Zeke Perkins at the Sullivan Writers Retreat

Louisville residents Steve Sullivan (M.S. '83 in Geology, B.S. '79 in Geology) and wife Cindi Sullivan (B.S. '81 in Horticulture) have been deeply involved with their alma mater in many ways over the years. As chair of the Dean's Development Council, Steve is a leading volunteer in the College of Arts & Sciences' philanthropic initiatives and was inducted into its Hall of Fame in 2019. The couple have been attending the English Department's Visiting Writers Series and were inspired to create a writers retreat for our students. The Sullivans' Lakeside Writers Retreat takes place at their cabin in Celina, Tennessee. "Both of us have been very fortunate in our careers and life," said Mr. Sullivan, "and we have the desire to pay it forward." For many creative writers, an off-campus learning environment is a rewarding and eye-opening experience, and the Sullivans' workspace is one that is scenic, comfortable, and free of distractions. Together with Greg and Joan Swanberg's Mill House Residency in Virginia, the Sullivans' Retreat is a meaningful new addition to the English Department's portfolio of writing residencies and will be instrumental in both graduate recruitment and student success. "We've really enjoyed our connection with the English Department, the M.F.A. Program, and the College," said Sullivan. "The retreat just seemed like the right thing to do."

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 research into the issues that most animate our world, our 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 in memory of a friend, relative, or faculty member.

A gift to the English Department can be made online at 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:

University of Kentucky Gift Receiving
210 Malabu Drive, Suite 200
Lexington, KY 40502

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