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On the cover: *Echoes* by David Brown, Brand & Marketing Strategist, First Regional Library  
This art was inspired by watching raindrops on a pond at sunset. Acrylic on canvas.

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# President's Page

Not yet. On hold. Please wait. Thank you for your patience. Lately, it seems that world will take two steps forward and then it will take four steps back. Trying to think of a topic for Fall edition of Mississippi Libraries was difficult for me. So much has happened and so much is not happening, or will it even happen? How many contingency plans can one have?

STOP, START, and CONTINUE.

My parents have always been a great sounding board for me. So, when my dad died in February 2020, my retreat inward began, and I did not even realize it was happening. Grief was happening. I did not know how to deal with it. Soon after my dad died, I miscarried a baby. What else could go wrong? On March 16, 2020, while I was at a conference in Knoxville, TN, my library board of trustees and I made the difficult decision to close our libraries until further notice for the safety of our community and staff.

STOP, START, and CONTINUE.

Fast forward to June 2020, a colleague asked me to help her with a project and I said yes. It was a presentation that encompassed ways public libraries were responding to the pandemic. As I stated earlier, my parents have been the most influential people in my lives. They have taught me that it is an individual choice on how to react in any given situation. One of the life lessons my dad taught me (I think he borrowed it somewhere) was to “stop, start, and continue.” This mantra helps me figure out most any situation I find myself and maybe it may help you. Stop and think about what is really



going on. Start getting into action. And continue moving in the right direction. Sometimes right direction comes after a few missteps, but it is important to know you will get there eventually.

STOP, START, and CONTINUE.

It is September 2021. How have you changed? What have you learned? Mississippi librarians are some of the BEST people I know. I understand that there has been much loss over the course of the pandemic but there has been much success to celebrate. Collectively, we rose to the challenge of providing services to our communities. Celebrate the student you were able to assist. Celebrate the family who picked up your “Grab and Go” activities. Celebrate the engagements on your social media pages. Celebrate another day to make a difference in the lives of your coworkers and communities. A feat we should celebrate is that we are constantly figuring out ways to connect with them and give them hope. Life really is a series of stops, starts, and continues. Stop and think about all that

you have overcome in the last year. Start moving forward. Continue to do your personal best.

# Soft Skills in Library Job Advertisements and LIS Curriculum

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the top ten soft skills in 30 days of job postings for librarians, curators, archivists, and media collections specialists. It compares these skills in advertisements for Mississippi jobs and compares them to the postings of jobs from other states using data compiled by the JobsEQ software. The software pulls job advertisements from over 30,000 websites. This study then looks at Mississippi's only American Library Association Accredited MLIS program curriculum to see where these soft skills are addressed.

## INTRODUCTION

There is no shortage of studies on competencies needed for library and information science professionals - often broken down by library type or state. For example, Khan, Masrek, and Nadzar (2015) discussed what is needed to be an academic librarian, and Nielson (2013) focused on academic business librarians

specifically. Maccaferri and Harhai (2019) examined public library job advertisements and limited their study to the state of Pennsylvania.

Other studies evaluate soft skills in libraries typically by focusing on a specific skill. Khan and Begum (2015) looked at the soft skill of leadership, for instance. Soft skills are defined as "desirable qualities for certain forms of employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge: they include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive, flexible attitude." ("soft skills," 2014). Additionally, there is no shortage of studies on the job advertisements for library positions in general. According to Starr (2004), assessments of job advertisements in librarianship tend to fall along four lines - one type of library (most commonly academic), one type of job (i.e., cataloger) across a variety of library types, all types of job in a single type of library, and the least common, broad studies of all types of jobs across all types of libraries. Starr looked at 20 years of library job advertisements in two journals looking at the number of jobs, titles of the jobs, locations of the jobs, salaries, supervisory expectations, and requirements for degrees, experience, computer skills, communication skills requirements, and foreign languages. In the results, Starr noted a growth in new jobs with an emphasis on new technologies and

increased communication needs, but she also noted a decline in printed job advertisements.

The point of this research is to investigate how Mississippi online job postings compared to the other states and how the School of Library and Information Science at The University of Southern Mississippi address the listed soft skills. To accomplish this the authors look at one month of online job postings for Mississippi and the United States, focusing specifically on the soft skills employers are looking for according to the job advertisements. They then look at whether the top soft skills are addressed in the core curriculum for the Master of Library and Information Science Program through active learning assignments, theory into practice assignments, and service learning opportunities.

## SELECTED LITERATURE REVIEW

The selected literature highlights some of the previous research on competencies needed for library and information science professionals.

Nielson (2013) analyzed 45 job advertisements to assess the technology trends posted in academic business librarian openings from 2007-2012. The study showed an emphasis on a "strong technology background before they begin working in the position," with 69

percent requiring some technology skills (Nielson, 2013, p. 125). Nielson's discussion also points out the need for LIS schools to emphasize technology and technology skills in their coursework, echoing what Riley-Huff and Rholes indicated in 2011. Their study indicated a difference between job seekers and library employers on the level of technology skills expected (Riley-Huff & Rholes, 2011). A similar study by Hansen (2011) reported on an analysis of job advertisements' skills and experience required for special collections librarians.

Maccaferri and Harhai (2019) investigated what public library job advertisements looked like in the state of Pennsylvania by looking at a year's worth of job postings on a discussion list. They examined types of library employment (professional, non-professional, contract, etc.), part-time versus full-time, permanent versus temporary jobs, and educational requirements. They recommended that LIS curricula include "a strong core in traditional library knowledge, skills, and abilities as well as elective courses in public services and administration" (p. 9). Job advertisements serve to identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities required and desired in a particular profession. According to Maccaferri and Harhai (2019, p. 10),

"These types of research analyses are generally used for three purposes: 1. To identify changes in the job market and to determine current job characteristics (Detmering & Sproles, 2012) 2. For advice and directions for graduates seeking employment (Torabi, 2011) 3. For library science programs conducting curriculum

reviews. (Wise, Henninger, & Kennan, 2011)."

A recent publication looked at the literature on how well university graduates meet the skills required by employers and determined that there is a gap in what is taught, what is needed, and what students know. "Researchers (Deepa & Seth, 2013; Stewart et al., 2016; Lloyd, 2013) say that soft skills can help provide employees or prospective employees who possess them with a competitive edge over their counterparts who do not" (Pedersen & Hahn, 2020, p. 41). While many may agree that soft skills are important in the school library curricula, these types of skills may be difficult to incorporate and assess (Cobb, 2015).

What soft skills are being looked for by employers in Mississippi, and how does that compare to the country at large? How is the School of Library and Information Science at The University of Southern Mississippi preparing students to meet these soft skills requirements?

## METHODOLOGY

Like Nielson (2013), this study looks at only one aspect of the job advertisements - the soft skills. Specifically, it looks at the soft skills listed by employers in Mississippi and the soft skills listed in job advertisements in other states. This study also examines how the curriculum for The University of Southern Mississippi's School of Library and Information Science addresses the soft skills found in job postings.

In order to determine what soft skills are being listed in job advertisements in Mississippi and the country at large, two "Real Time Intelligence Reports" were run in

JobsEQ, which is software used to gather and analyze data on demographics, industries, occupations, wages, etc. The data gathered in the report were pulled from over 30,000 websites. The software attempts to remove duplicates and to draw from the requested time frame. JobsEQ was searched using the following occupations and codes: Librarians, Curators, and Archivists (25-4000), Librarians and Media Collections Specialists (25-4020). The search included job postings for the 30 day period ending March 3, 2021. The search was first run using the region of Mississippi as the delimiter and then repeated using the geographic delimiter of USA. Two reports were generated.

After identifying the soft skills for the state and the U.S., the syllabi of courses required for the MLIS were reviewed, and relevant information was compiled into an Excel spreadsheet.

## RESULTS

The first question addressed in this study is "What soft skills are listed in the job advertisements for the state of Mississippi within the 30-day time frame using the search terms described?" There were 23 job postings found with 22 different soft skills listed. Table 1 provides the list of top ten soft skills. The most common soft skill was *Communication (Verbal and written skills)*, with 39.1% of the advertisements listing this skill. The second most common soft skills, each listed in 21.7% of the job openings included the following: *Cooperative/Team Player*, *Problem Solving*, and *Self-Motivated/Ability to Work Independently/Self-Leadership*. See Table 1 for more

Table 1. Top 10 Soft Skills in Mississippi Job Openings

## Openings by Soft Skills

Skill Name	Soft Skills		Total Ads
	Median Wage		
Communication (Verbal and written skills)	n/a		9
Cooperative/Team Player	n/a		5
Problem Solving	n/a		5
Self-Motivated/Ability to Work Independently/Self Leadership	n/a		5
Adaptability/Flexibility/Tolerance of Change and Uncertainty	n/a		4
Interpersonal Relationships/Maintain Relationships	n/a		4
Customer Service	n/a		3
Analytical	n/a		2
Initiative	n/a		2
Listening	n/a		2

Table 2. Top Ten Soft Skills in US Job Openings

## Openings by Soft Skills

Skill Name	Soft Skills		Total Ads
	Median Wage		
Communication (Verbal and written skills)	\$37,841		1,807
Cooperative/Team Player	\$44,703		1,198
Self-Motivated/Ability to Work Independently/Self Leadership	\$35,880		624
Customer Service	\$34,362		615
Organization	\$37,440		585
Supervision/Management	\$47,778		506
Adaptability/Flexibility/Tolerance of Change and Uncertainty	\$38,579		495
Interpersonal Relationships/Maintain Relationships	\$33,590		489
Detail Oriented/Meticulous	\$32,080		466
Accountable/Responsible/Reliable/Dependable/Trustworthy	\$38,938		449

information.

The second question addressed in this study is “What soft skills are listed in the job advertisements in the U.S. within the 30-day time frame using the search terms described?” The software found 3,224 job advertisements with 92 different soft skills listed. The top 10 are listed in Table 2. *Communication (Verbal and written skills)* once again topped the findings with 56.0% of job postings listing this soft skill. The next most frequent skill for the postings in the U.S. included *Cooperative/Team Player* (37.2%). *Self-Motivated/Ability to Work Independently/Self Leadership* (19.4%), and *Customer Service* (19.1%). More details can be found in Table 2.

The third question addressed in this study is “How do the top ten

soft skills from Mississippi compare to the top ten soft skills from across the U.S.?” Mississippi job advertisements have six soft skills that overlap with the U.S. advertisements’ soft skills. In both sets of job openings, the top two most common soft skills are the same - *Communication (Verbal and written skills)* and *Cooperative/Team Player*. However, in both of the top two instances, the U.S. listings show a greater percentage of job advertisements having the two soft skills listed than in Mississippi job advertisements. Additionally, the four unique soft skills in the U.S. job postings are represented in a greater percentage of job advertisements than three of the unique soft skills found in the Mississippi job postings. The exception being that *Problem Solving* - one

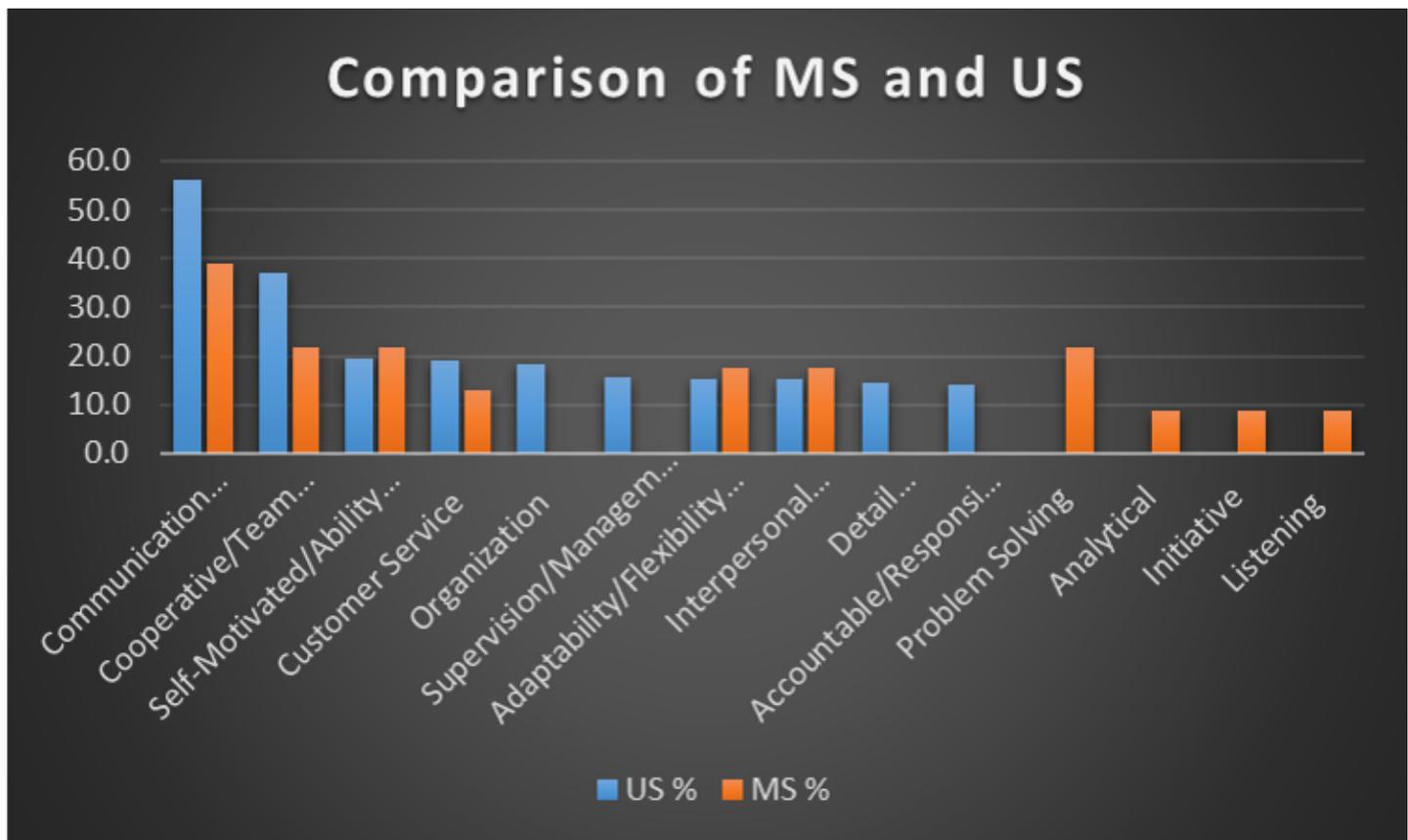
of Mississippi's unique top ten soft skills - is represented in 21.7% of the Mississippi job advertisements. Table 3 shows the percentage of each soft skill by data set and overall, while Figure 1 shows a comparison between Mississippi and the U.S.

The fourth question addressed in this study is “How does the state's only ALA Accredited School of Library and Information Science address these soft skills?” When looking at the core curriculum for the Master in Library and Information Science program, all soft skills except *Initiative* are addressed either through active learning activities or theoretical presentation of information and response. For example, in LIS 501: Reference and Information Sources, students participate in group reference practice sessions to actively answer reference questions in a role-play situation. These sessions require *Communication (verbal) skills* as they practice the reference interview process by questioning and walking through their search process. They must be clear and precise. They also require students to actively use listening skills as students acting as library customers ask their questions and provide information (*Listening*). Before the session, students attend a lecture on active listening and communication in the reference interview process. These sessions also require students to work as a team, which enhances their *Cooperative/Team Player* soft skills. They are expected to help if someone “gets stuck” and to provide feedback to one another. They are practicing *Customer Service*, another soft skill, with their role-playing of reference librarian and customer. They also use their *Analytical* soft

Table 3. Percentages of Top 10 Soft Skills

TOP 10 SOFT SKILLS	U.S. %	MS %	Overall %
Communication (Verbal and written skills)	56.0	39.1	55.9
Cooperative/Team Player	37.2	21.7	37.0
Self-Motivated/Ability to Work Independently/Self Leadership	19.4	21.7	19.4
Customer Service	19.1	13.0	19.0
Organization	18.1	0.0	18.0
Supervision/Management	15.7	0.0	15.6
Adaptability/Flexibility/Tolerance of Change and Uncertainty	15.4	17.4	15.4
Interpersonal Relationships/Maintain Relationships	15.2	17.4	15.2
Detail Oriented/Meticulous	14.5	0.0	14.4
Accountable/Responsible/Reliable/Dependable/Trustworthy	13.9	0.0	13.8
Problem Solving	0.0	21.7	0.2
Analytical	0.0	8.7	0.1
Initiative	0.0	8.7	0.1
Listening	0.0	8.7	0.1

Figure 1. Comparison of MS and U.S. Job Advertisement Soft Skills



skills to evaluate reference sources and questions in the quest to find the answers.

Peer assessment and feedback are part of the active learning of management skills in LIS 501. *Supervision/Management* skills are discussed theoretically in LIS 605: Library Management, in which students have readings, lectures, and discussions on human resources issues, evaluation, interviewing and hiring, scheduling, library structure, and more. They put these things into practice with *Problem Solving* case studies done in groups. They create job posts, evaluations, and practicing skills like the Feedback Sandwich in small groups. While this does not replace real-life experience, it does give them a taste and an idea of things to expect. LIS 605:

Library Management also provides theoretical information through lectures and readings about the soft skills *Adaptability/Flexibility/Tolerance of Change and Uncertainty*. Students attend a lecture, complete required readings, discuss these topics and then create a public service announcement video detailing a library policy change directed either to the community, the library board, the staff, or the media, which allows them to receive critique on the soft skill *Communication (verbal)*.

Many of the soft skills required are addressed in one of the newer required courses - added in 2012 - LIS 500: Library and Information Science, a one-credit-hour orientation course. This course serves as an orientation to the program and the profession and addresses topics like

how to be a successful student. As a result, the course helps students develop their soft skills in the following areas: *Self-Motivated, Ability to Work Independently, Self Leadership, Organization and Accountable, Responsible, Reliable, Dependable, and Trustworthy*. While the information in this class is theoretical in nature, students must actively apply it throughout the program in order to be successful. Additionally, this course focuses on ethics of the profession along with LIS 501: Reference, LIS 605: Library Management, and other electives, particularly LIS 540: Information Ethics.

*Communication (written)* soft skills are addressed throughout the core courses with individual written assignments in the form of papers, assignments, and discussion

postings. For example, in LIS 500: Library and Information Science, students prepare a short paper on a specific type of librarianship of interest, including professional competencies, national and regional/state professional organizations, and scholarly/refereed journals. In LIS 636: Foundations of LIS students do research and write short papers about the Library Bill of Rights and censorship versus intellectual freedom.

Students are exposed to *Analytical* soft skills in multiple courses where they critically evaluate research and conduct research, which is required in the following higher-level core courses. In LIS 651: Fundamentals of Information Science, students design and conduct a bibliometric study. In LIS 668: LIS Research Methods, the— develop a research proposal for the capstone project, which they complete in LIS 695: Master's Research Project.

The one soft skill not addressed in the core courses is *Initiative*. It is, however, addressed in two elective courses that also act as service learning courses. In LIS 641: Public Libraries, students must take the initiative to instigate and establish a relationship with a community partner. After discussing their needs, the students design a project to serve the organization. In LIS 545: Information Needs of Underserved Populations, students do a similar project with an underserved population to define unmet information needs and fill one of those needs. As with LIS 641, students are required to initiate the relationships and projects. In one core class - LIS 511: Collection Development and Management, there is the potential

for students to actively engage in initiative through a weeding project, but since the parameters are vague and may include a personal collection, it was not included.

Overall, of the 14 top ten soft skills listed, the LIS curriculum addresses 92.9 %. *Initiative* is the only soft skill not being addressed in a core course.

## DISCUSSION

The MLIS degree at The University of Southern Mississippi requires 40 credit hours. Twenty-five are core course hours, and 15 are elective hours. The majority of the online classes require live sessions each week in Zoom virtual classrooms, where students may see, hear, and interact with professors and work collaboratively on group projects and presentations. As an online program, the student population is geographically diverse, with 108 of the 257 graduate students (42%) in Mississippi, while 58% are in 40 other states and Canada. The school's programs - LIS Bachelor of Science, MLIS, Archival Certificate, Youth Services Certificate - have experienced substantial growth since 2015. There has been an 89% increase in overall enrollment, and a 95% increase in graduate enrollment. The MLIS was number one the university's Top Ten Master's Degrees Awarded in 2020. Having students from various states, it is important that the program prepare students with the soft skills sought by employers both in the state and out. Six of the top ten soft skills were in both data sets and are well-covered in the program's core courses. This is especially true of the top two soft skills in the top ten, which are

the same for Mississippi and the U.S. - *Communication (Verbal and written skills)* and *Cooperative/Team Player*. These top two soft skills are addressed in multiple core courses with active engagement activities, independent papers, and/or theoretical activities. With *Communication (written)* skills being addressed in 100 percent of the core courses, *Communication (verbal)* skills being addressed in 22.2% of the core classes, and *Cooperative/Team Player* in 44.4% of core classes (Table 4). Table 5 details the four soft skills that were different in each data set.

In the Mississippi jobs, *Supervision/Management* is not identified as a top 10 soft skill. When looking at the job titles in the advertisements in this data set, none of them appear to be postings for upper-level jobs: Librarian, Librarian - BMS, Library Technology Associate, Librarian/Media Specialist, Assistant Professor/Catalog Librarian, Cataloging Librarian, Data Services Librarian/Assistant/Associate Professor, and Instructional Media Librarian. However, in the U.S. data set, while only 37 job advertisements appear to be upper level or supervisory - Librarian III and Library Assistant II, the *Supervision/Management* soft skill appears in over 500 of the advertisements and is in the top 10. This may mean that in other states, even entry-level librarians are going to be responsible for some type of supervision or management role.

Almost 22% of the job advertisements in Mississippi emphasize *Problem Solving* versus not being found in the top ten soft skills for the U.S. Interestingly, problem-solving is a skill that is taught as part of management in the curricula

Table 4. Core Courses and Top Ranked Soft Skills

COURSE	Communication (Verbal skills)	Communication (Written skills)	Cooperative/ Team Player
500. Library and Information Science Orientation		1	
501. Reference and Information Sources	1	1	1
505. Cataloging and Classification		1	1
511. Collection Development and Management		1	1
605. Library Management		1	1
636. Foundations of Librarianship	1	1	
651. Fundamentals of Information Science		1	
668. Research Methods in Library and Information Science		1	
695. Master's Research Project		1	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>

Table 5. Percentages of Top 10 Soft Skills Not Found in Both Data Sets

TOP 10 SOFT SKILLS	U.S. %	MS %	Overall %
Organization	18.1	0.0	18.0
Supervision/Management	15.7	0.0	15.6
Detail Oriented/Meticulous	14.5	0.0	14.4
Accountable/Responsible/Reliable/Dependable/Trustworthy	13.9	0.0	13.8
Problem Solving	0.0	21.7	0.2
Analytical	0.0	8.7	0.1
Initiative	0.0	8.7	0.1
Listening	0.0	8.7	0.1

for the state's library science program. None of the top ten soft skills in Table 2 are found in a majority percentage of either the state, U.S., or total of the listing. While *Problem Solving* may be indicated as a top ten soft skill, it is only in five of the 23 (21.7%) job advertisements within 30 days. In order to place any

significance on soft skills, a larger time frame for both data sets needs to be considered along with job level.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines initiative (noun) as "That which initiates, begins, or originates; the first step in some process or enterprise; hence the act, or action, of

initiating or taking the first step or lead; beginning, commencement, origination" and to take initiative as "to take the lead, make the first step, originate some action." Further investigation into how Mississippi employers see this soft skill as important in their libraries can help direct the curricula to incorporate this soft skill into more active learning activities. Students without professional library experience are encouraged to take a practicum in which they may focus and sharpen these soft skills.

Sixty percent of Mississippi's top ten soft skills are reflected in the top ten soft skills of the U.S. According to the curriculum review, the School of Library and Information Science addresses these skills through core courses and activities that provide active learning engagement and theoretical learning. From 2015-2020,

approximately 97% of graduates from The University of Southern Mississippi School of Library and Information Science obtained positions relevant to their degree within 12 months of graduation.

## CONCLUSION

This initial research into the soft skills in Mississippi and U.S. job advertisements indicates that there are many commonalities, but there is room for further research into the differences in the postings and other posting attributes. JobsEQ can provide information on skill requirement by job-level, desired skills versus required skills, hard skills, and more. Libraries may also be interested in assessing their employees to determine are the soft skills found in the job listings actually the ones used by employees and how are they being used. Are they missing additional soft skills in the job postings? Currently, the review of the curriculum and job placement rate indicates that students in the Master's

of Library and Information Science program are being adequately prepared in the desirable soft skills. This research can help inform curriculum in other library and information science programs to better prepare students for the job market.

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To join MLA, or to renew your membership:

<http://mislib.org/membership>

2021 MLA Executive Board Minutes:

<http://mislib.org/Meeting-Minutes-2021>



# MISSISSIPPI LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

VIRTUAL  
CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 12-14, 2021

## General Session Keynote Speakers

### Keynote 1 - Greg Lambert

Greg is the Chief Knowledge Services Officer at the law firm of Jackson Walker in Houston, Texas, where he oversees operations for the Library, Research, RFPs, and Conflicts & Intake departments.

He served as President for the American Association of Law Libraries in 2017-2018, and is known as an advocate for law librarians and legal information professionals.

Greg is a founding blogger for 3 Geeks and a Law Blog, and writes extensively on the topics of law librarianship, competitive intelligence, knowledge management, and the roles that can be played on the administrative side of large law firms. He also co-hosts The Geek In Review Podcast with Marlene Gebauer.



### Keynote 2 - Deen Freelon

Deen Freelon is an associate professor at the UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media at the University of North Carolina and a principal researcher at the Center for Information, Technology, and Public Life (CITAP). His theoretical interests address how ordinary citizens use social media and other digital communication technologies for political purposes, paying particular attention to how identity characteristics (e.g. race, gender, ideology) influence these uses. Methodologically, he is interested in how computational research techniques can be used to answer some of the most fundamental questions of communication science. Freelon has worked at the forefront of political communication and computational social science for over a decade, coauthoring some of the first communication studies to apply computational methods to social media data. Computer programming lies at the heart of his research practice, which generates novel tools (and sometimes methods) to answer questions existing approaches cannot



address. He developed his first research tool, ReCal, as part of his master's thesis, and it has since been used by tens of thousands of researchers worldwide. His scholarship has been financially supported by grantmakers including the U.S. Institute of Peace, the Spencer Foundation, the Knight Foundation, and the Hewlett Foundation; and published in top-tier journals including *Nature*, *Science*, and the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. Freelon earned his Ph.D. from the University of Washington in 2012 and formerly taught at American University in Washington, D.C.

## Section/Rountable Speakers

### ACRL

#### Better Together: Communicating Creatively for better Collaboration

To establish more collaborative interactions between faculty and librarians, communication is key. To be successful, it important for the librarian to know what he or she wants to communicate to faculty and how to best communicate with different personalities and attitudes. In this interactive program, the MLA-ACRL section will pose multiple scenarios that may occur when trying to communicate with faculty to participants. Participants will then be put into to small groups via breakout rooms where they will discuss and problem solve the given scenario. Finally, participants will come back to the main room to share their answers with the group.

**Moderator: Courtney Hicks**, Instructional Librarian, Northwest Mississippi Community College

### GAMING AND GRAPHIC NOVEL ROUNDTABLE

Many librarians find themselves with lots of unanswered questions about manga readership, manga collection development, manga programming, and more. These questions will be answered by experts in this Manga in Libraries session.

Public and school librarians from across the country will discuss building a library culture, hosting manga and anime programming, and popular manga and anime series.

#### Speakers:

**Renee Scott** is a Young Adult Librarian for the New York Public Library. In addition to being a librarian, she runs a blog called "The Library Lady of NYC Reviews," which provides monthly reviews of books, music, and anything pop culture geared towards a young adult audience. When not working in the library, Renee is an advocate for mental health awareness, as well as an avid anime/manga fan and cosplayer.



**Julie Stivers** is the librarian at Mount Vernon Middle, an alternative public school in Raleigh, NC. As a 2018 ALA Emerging Leader, she helped develop *AASL's Defending Intellectual Freedom: LGBTQ+ Materials in School Libraries*. She was named a 2019 *Library Journal* Mover and Shaker and is the Author/Editor of *Include* (ALA, 2021). Her research and practical interests include culturally sustaining pedagogy, building inclusive library



spaces, and exploring the power of manga and anime with her students. She tweets at @BespokeLib.

**Jillian Rudes** is the school librarian at a 6th-12th grade, public school in Queens, New York. She is the President of the New York City School Librarians' Association. She serves as the Co-Chair of the 2021 American Association of School Librarians' National Conference Committee. She was awarded the American Association of School Librarians' Collaborative School Library Award in 2020. She hosts the Japanese Culture & Manga showcase collection for New York City and is the founder of *Manga in Libraries*, an international webinar series.



**Nakenya Lewis-Yarbrough** works in the Castle of Books at Belleville Area District Library, in Belleville, MI, as a youth services librarian. She runs a youth comic book club and a teen anime/manga club. She believes that everyone deserves to see reflections of themselves in books. She earned a MLIS from the School of Library and Information Science at Wayne State University. You can find her on <https://www.facebook.com/>



[theampeduplibrarian](#), @NakenyaY on Twitter, and @theampeduplibrarian on Instagram.

**Rafael Ortiz**, Teen Librarian at Queens Borough Public Library, New York City.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE ROUND

### TABLE:

#### No Time Like the Present: Increasing Library Accessibility for Disabled Communities

Many of our communities have been hit hard by COVID-19, and none more so than our disabled communities. Libraries have proven themselves to be remarkably adaptive in the face of the challenges and restrictions brought on by the pandemic, and new avenues with which to deliver materials, programs, and services have not only been shown to be viable for our communities as a whole, but have managed to help us reach many of our community members - particularly those with disabilities - that seemed unreachable before. As we ease back into "normal" operations, we should not stop utilizing the newfound ways of reaching our patrons that were vital during shutdowns. This presentation will discuss how to increase accessibility for our library patrons and how to continue providing the services offered during the pandemic even after we reopen our doors for good.

#### Speakers:

**Kayla Martin-Gant** is the Continuing Education Coordinator at the Mississippi Library Commission with a BA in English Literature from Belhaven University and a MLIS from the University of Southern Mississippi.



She has been working in public libraries for almost 8 years and has a passion for inclusive and intersectional collection development, teen services, and disability advocacy. Along with being a librarian, she is also: a writer, a nap enthusiast, a sentient cardigan, and a lover of all things spooky and weird.

**Mac Buntin** is a Senior Library Consultant at the Mississippi Library Commission. Mac's primary work duties include: all things statistical as the State Data Coordinator, participation and presentation of various continuing education programs, and rendering advice to public librarians and their administrative trustees. Mac's MLS was awarded from the University of Alabama. Roll Tide!



**Kristen Hillman**, a librarian, gardener, and all-around weirdo, hails from the small town of Florence, MS by way of North Carolina. She earned her BA Ed in Secondary English Education from the University of Mississippi and her MLIS from the University of Southern Mississippi. Kristen has been everything from a high school English and Theater teacher, to a children's librarian in Pearl, MS, to a library consultant for the Mississippi Library Commission. She is currently branch manager at the Ridgeland Public Library in Ridgeland, MS. When she gets the chance to read for fun, you can find her reading graphic novels, anything about the wives of King Henry VIII, and books about astrology.



## SPECIAL LIBRARIES SECTION

### Truth, Trust, and Authority: Libraries Navigating the COVID Infodemic

**Bradley J. Wiles** is a librarian, archivist, and researcher based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He has over a decade of experience in academic, public, special collections, and corporate library and archives settings. He is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's School of Information Studies focusing on Information Policy. His research interests include information ethics and public policy, social and political dimensions of archives and information, organizational management, the sustainability of cultural institutions, and library and archives history. Wiles has been active in library and archives professional organizations at the state, regional, and national level, and currently serves on ALA's Committee on Legislation and SAA's Issues and Advocacy Section Steering Committee.



The COVID-19 pandemic is a public health crisis without precedent in the last century. The novelty and rapid spread of the virus brought a new urgency to the availability and distribution of reliable information to help curb its fatal potential and manage the transition back to some sense of normalcy. High speed internet, digital technologies, and social media provide a broad based global network for communication and managing the pandemic, but like many other public discussions in the web era, the messaging and reception have been politically contentious and subject to conspiracy

theory driven narratives that contribute to popular confusion, uncertainty, anger, and fear. Libraries are positioned to help provide clarity and direction during this ongoing 'infodemic,' but face unique challenges in delivering services to a public that is increasingly skeptical of authority, ideologically polarized, and in the midst of an epistemic crisis amplified by the web. This presentation discusses some distinctive information aspects of the conspiracy mindset that has emerged and evolved through the pandemic and what this portends for libraries ability to function both as reliable cognitive authorities and as trusted social institutions. Based on continuing research into ethical implications of the pandemic for the LIS scholarly and disciplinary field, this interactive discussion invites perspectives from attendees that might

allow librarians to rethink some underlying assumptions about our role in the communities we serve during an ethically fraught era.

### TECHNICAL SERVICES ROUNDTABLE

#### Technical Services on Hold: Serving Patrons During the Pandemic

This session will consist of brief presentations from library workers in technical services on one of three possible topics: innovative ways they continued to serve their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, how their workflows changed due to the pandemic, or general tips and tricks they have learned that are related to some aspect of technical services (cataloging, serials, or acquisitions). The Technical Services Round Table annual business meeting will be conducted by the TSRT

Chair after the presentations.

#### Speakers:

**Michelle Cronquist** has been Special Collections Cataloger for Wilson Special Collections Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill since 2009, and has been co-chair of the African American Subject Funnel Project since March 2021.

**Staci Ross** is the Cataloging/Metadata Librarian at the University of Pittsburgh. She has served as co-chair of the African American Subject Funnel Project since March 2021.

#### Moderator:

**Cathy Austin** is the Acquisitions Librarian at Mississippi State University, and is currently serving as the Vice Chair of the MLA Technical Services Roundtable.

## Mississippi Author Awards

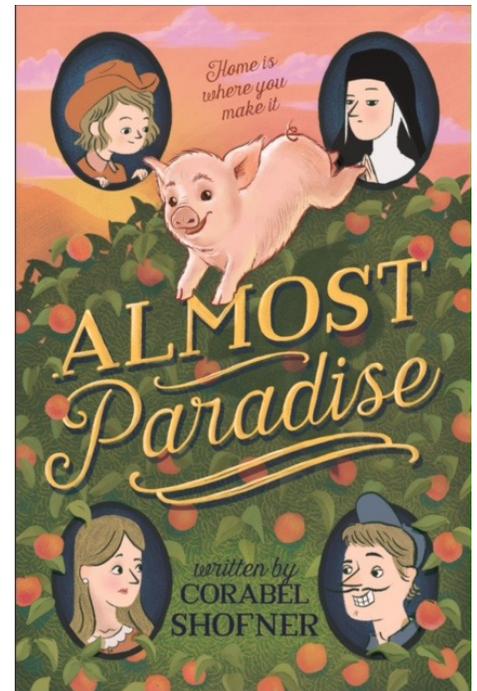
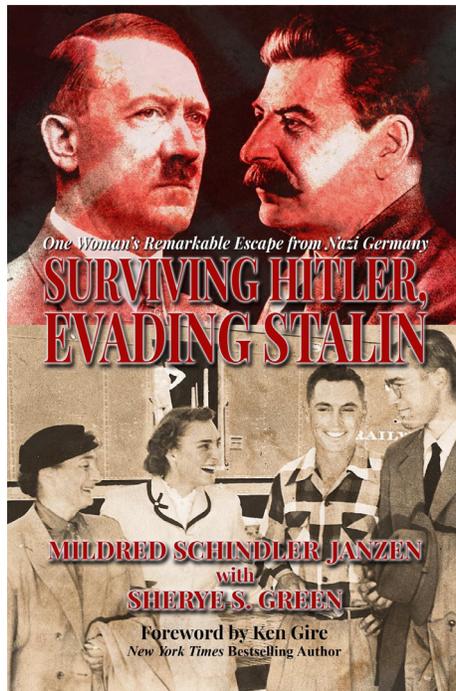
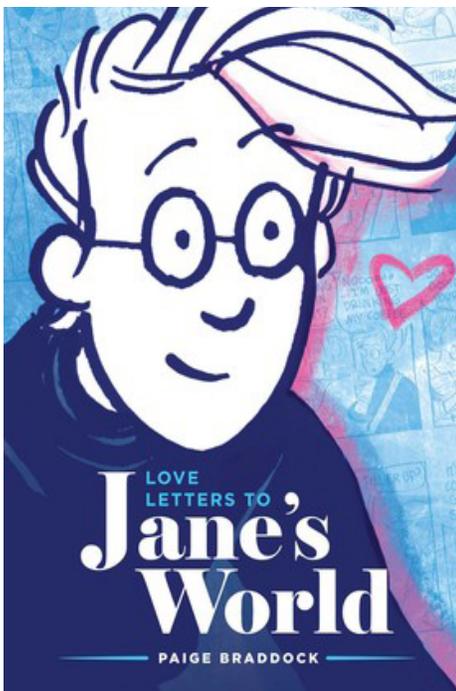
The Mississippi Library Association is pleased to announce the winners in the categories of Fiction, Nonfiction, and Children's Literature for the 2021 Mississippi Author Awards. The Mississippi Authors Awards seek to recognize and encourage Mississippi authors and promote interest in local authors' books, whether the books are about Mississippi or another subject. MLA will honor the winners at the 2021 MLA Virtual Conference (<http://mislib.org/page-1860579>) on Wednesday, October 13 from 6-7:30 p.m.



**Paige Braddock: 2021 MLA Winner for Fiction – *Love Letters to Jane's World***

*Love Letters to Jane's World* is the first graphic novel to be honored by the Mississippi Author Awards.

Paige Braddock is an Eisner-nominated artist and writer and the Chief Creative Officer at Charles M. Schulz Creative Associates. She has illustrated several Peanuts children's books; her other graphic novels for children include *Peanut, Butter and Crackers* and the *Stinky Cecil* series. She lives with her wife Evelyn and their two dogs and a cat in Sebastopol, California.



See more about *Love Letters to Jane's World* at <https://paige-braddockcomics.wordpress.com/janes-world>



**Mildred Schindler Janzen and Sherye Green: 2021 MLA Winners for Non-Fiction – *Surviving Hitler, Evading Stalin: One Woman's Remarkable Escape from Nazi Germany***

Mildred Schindler grew up on a peaceful family farm in the German countryside. WWII came knocking at her family's door in February 1945, setting in motion a chain of events that would forever change all their lives. *Surviving Hitler, Evading Stalin* recounts this teenager's incredible escape from occupied Nazi Germany to America. Once there, Mildred made the decision to look beyond her personal pain, choosing instead to forge a life filled with joy, compassion, perseverance, and love. As a wife, mother, and grandmother, and now an active senior, she has

decided to tell her story...all of it!

Sherye S. Green is an author, singer, and speaker. She has long been intrigued by the power of words to influence and shape thought and action. A former Miss Mississippi, Sherye has enjoyed two careers – one in business, the other in education. She is the award-winning author of an inspirational novel, *Abandon Not My Soul*, and a devotional collection, *Tending the Garden of My Heart: Reflections on Cultivating a Life of Faith*. Sherye and her husband make their home in Mississippi.

See more about *Surviving Hitler, Evading Stalin: One Woman's Remarkable Escape from Nazi Germany* at <https://www.sheryesimmonsgreen.com/survivinghitlerevadingstalin>



**Corabel Shofner: 2021 MLA Winner for Juvenile – *Almost Paradise***

Corabel Shofner is a wife, mother, attorney, and author. She graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Columbia University with a degree in English literature and was on Law Review at Vanderbilt University School of Law.

BUT before all that, she was a terrible, terrible student who dropped out of high school - so really don't let anyone tell you that you are not smart, they don't know anything about anything. And never, never give up.

Her debut novel, *Almost Paradise*, was published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR) in July 2017 and has been featured in *School Library Journal* (Daring Middle Grade Debuts) and the International Literacy Association (Favorite Debut Novels of 2017), among many others.

See more about *Almost Paradise* at <http://corabelshofner.com>

# SLIS Notes

## J. Edmand Pace

*Instructor, School of Library and  
Information Science (SLIS)  
The University of Southern Mississippi*

Board games have been with us for thousands of years. Senet, recognized as the oldest known board game, was played in Egypt as early as 3500 BC. Variants of the classic board game Checkers were played in Mesopotamia as early as 3000 BC. Board games rose to prominence in the United States during the late 1800s, as mass production allowed for increased manufacturing capabilities and lower costs. *Monopoly*, published by Parker Brothers in 1935, would go on to become one of the most popular games of all time and help cement board games as an entertainment fixture for adults and children alike.

Board Games have experienced a resurgence in recent years, and libraries across the globe have responded by adding board games into the collection and by increasing board game-related programming. The resources listed below can help any library identify the best strategies for adding board games to the collection.

## BOARD GAMES IN LIBRARIES

ALA Games and Gaming Round Table <https://www.ala.org/rt/gamert>

Best Tabletop Games for the Library <https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=best-tabletop-games-for-the-library>

Don't Just Roll the Dice: Simple Solutions for Circulating Table-

top Game Collections Effectively in Your Library <https://journals.ala.org/index.php/lrts/article/view/6642/8897>

Program Model: Circulating Board Game Collection <https://programminglibrarian.org/programs/circulating-board-game-collection>

Twenty Essential Board Games for a Public Collection <https://to-playishuman.com/2019/01/30/twenty-essential-board-games-for-a-public-collection/>

## CREATING BOARD GAMES

10 Best DIY Board Games for Kids <https://geekgeargalore.com/boardgames/best-diy-board-games-for-kids/>

17+ Free Printable Board Games Your Kids Will Love <https://hessunacademy.com/printable-board-games/>

Board Game Design Lab <https://boardgamedesignlab.com/>

Design A Board Game [http://www.spen.org.uk/mymedia/files/resource\\_pdfs/Youth%20Scotland%20-%20Board%20Game%20Toolkit.pdf](http://www.spen.org.uk/mymedia/files/resource_pdfs/Youth%20Scotland%20-%20Board%20Game%20Toolkit.pdf)

GameStructor <https://www.game-structor.com/>

## GENERAL RESOURCES

53 Board Games to Teach Your Kids About Money <https://freedomspout.com/money-board-games/>

Board Game Geek <https://boardgamegeek.com/>

Board Gaming with Education <https://www.boardgaming-witheducation.com/>

Classroom Board Games <https://www.teachstarter.com/us/resource-type/board-games-us/>

Free Printable Board Games and Templates <https://games4esl.com/printables/board-game-templates/>

Game Board Arena <https://en.boardgamearena.com/>

Meeple Source <https://www.meeplesource.com/index.php>

The Museum of Board Games <https://www.facebook.com/themuseumofboardgames/>

Top Ten Historical Board Games <https://blog.britishmuseum.org/top-10-historical-board-games/>

## MEDIA AND YOUTUBE CHANNELS

Board Game Museum <https://www.youtube.com/c/BoardGameMuseum/featured>

Geek & Sundry <https://www.youtube.com/c/GeekandSundry/featured>

How It Plays [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKlCd-blorinZZ6FTr\\_XqMgg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKlCd-blorinZZ6FTr_XqMgg)

Play On Tabletop <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJ4-WFTrDNWvcM7dEC6E-2mw>

Tabletop Minions <https://www.youtube.com/user/tabletopminions>

Three Minute Board Games

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFkpP6mxunx-D4unmS3\\_64aQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFkpP6mxunx-D4unmS3_64aQ)

Watch It Played <https://www.youtube.com/user/WatchItPlayed>

### BOARD GAME PODCASTS

Board Game Barrage <https://boardgamebarrage.com/>

Board Game Blitz <http://www.boardgameblitz.com/>

Board Gamers Anonymous <https://boardgamersanonymous.com/>

Game Brain Podcast <http://game-brainpod.com/>

On Board Games <https://on-boardgames.libsyn.com/>

Rolling Dice & Taking Names <https://rolldicetakenames.com/>

Shut Up & Sit Down <https://www.shutupandsitdown.com/>

The Dice Tower <https://www.dice-tower.com/>

The Family Gamers Podcast <https://www.thefamilygamers.com/>

The Secret Cabal <https://thesecret-cabal.com/>

### BOARD GAMES IN MISSISSIPPI

Caster's Den Game Shop / Luka <https://castersden.business.site/>

Down To Game / Starkville <https://www.facebook.com/D2G.Starkville/>

Elder Dragon Gaming / Petal <https://www.facebook.com/ElderDragonGames>

Jak's / Biloxi / <https://www.facebook.com/jaksbiloxi/>

Penta Smite Gaming / Pearl <https://www.facebook.com/pentasmitegaming/>

Top Tier Board Games / Hattiesburg <https://toptiergaming.com/>

Van's Comics, Cards and Games / Ridgeland <https://vansccg.com/>

### FOR FURTHER READING

*It's All a Game: The History of Board Games from Monopoly to Settlers of Catan* by Tristan

Donovan

*Strictly Fantasy: The Cultural Roots of Tabletop Role-Playing Games* by Gerald Natchway

*The Board Game Book* by Owen Duffy

*The Ultimate Micro-RPG Book: 40 Fast, Easy and Fun Tabletop Games* by James D'Amato

*Your Move: What Board Games Teach Us About Life* by Jonathan Kay & Joan Moriarty

Feedback and suggestions are welcome – send to [slis@usm.edu](mailto:slis@usm.edu) or call 601-266-4228. Visit <https://www.usm.edu/slis> for additional information about the ALA-accredited MLIS degree program, Graduate Certificate in Archives and Special Collections, and Graduate Certificate in Youth Services and Literature. Since the GRE testing centers are closed, Southern Miss Graduate School has approved a GRE waiver for applicants for spring 2022. SLIS also offers a Bachelor of Science degree in LIS as well as a LIS minor. All classes are online and meet once each week during the evening hours.

## News Briefs

### Hali Black

First Year Experience Librarian  
University of Southern Mississippi

### “ONE BOOK ONE PASS” SELECTS NATASHA TRETHERWEY’S MEMORIAL DRIVE: A DAUGHTER’S MEMOIR AS 2021 BOOK SELECTION

Pass Christian Public Library is pleased to announce their 2021 One

Book One Pass selection is *Memorial Drive: A Daughter’s Memoir* by Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and author Natasha Trethewey. Over the next several weeks, the community will be encouraged to read the book and engage in book discussions, panel discussions, and other programs that will culminate in the Author Presentation by Natasha

Trethewey on Tuesday, October 12th at 6:30 pm at the Randolph Center in Pass Christian (315 Clark Avenue).

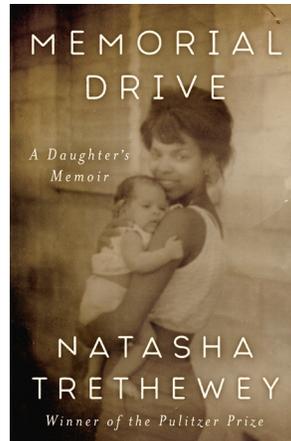
*Memorial Drive: A Daughter’s Memoir* is a chillingly personal and exquisitely wrought memoir of a daughter reckoning with the brutal murder of her mother at the hands of her former stepfather, and the

moving, intimate story of a poet coming into her own in the wake of a tragedy. Natasha Trethewey, who was born in Gulfport, Mississippi, is a Pulitzer Prize-winner who served two terms as the 19th Poet Laureate of the United States (2012-2014), while also serving as the Poet Laureate of the State of Mississippi (2012-2016). In addition to the New York Times bestseller *Memorial Drive: A Daughter's Memoir* (2020); she is the author of *Beyond Katrina: A Meditation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast* (2010), a book of nonfiction ; and five collections of poetry including *Native Guard* (2006), for which she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. She is the recipient of many awards, fellowships and honors, including the Rebekah Johnson Bobbitt National Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Poetry from the Library of Congress. Ms. Trethewey teaches at Northwestern University where she is the Board of Trustees Professor of English in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences.

Copies of *Memorial Drive: A Daughter's Memoir* are available for check out at the Pass Christian Library or for purchase at Pass Christian Books. The author event with Natasha Trethewey is free and open to the public.

Please call the library (228-452-4596) or email [passchristian-library@gmail.com](mailto:passchristian-library@gmail.com) if you have any questions or need further information or visit <https://www.facebook.com/One-Book-One-Pass-1039070059489155/> for more information!

Submitted by:  
Wendy Allard  
Head Librarian  
Pass Christian Public Library



### SOUTHERN MISS LIBRARIES RECEIVE GRANTS

Three librarians at the University of Southern Mississippi Libraries were awarded a \$33,000 grant from the Jimmy A. Payne Foundation in June 2021 to establish a three-month postgraduate fellowship for recent graduates of the University of Southern Mississippi's Master of Library and Information Science program. The fellowship, poised to be the only one of its kind in the region, will provide newly degreed librarians with real-world experience as a professional librarian.

The fellowship will provide experience working in an academic library's research services unit. Fellows will work alongside faculty librarians to develop skills in providing specialized information literacy instruction, research consultations, and related services to undergraduate and graduate students and faculty in programs across the university, as well as assisting members of the surrounding local community. Fellows will advance their analytical and critical thinking skills while building skills in customer service, communication, and collegiality. Fellows will develop "behind the scenes" knowledge with exposure to

computer technology that is commonly used in academic libraries. The fellowship will be offered in spring for December graduates and in summer for May graduates.

The grant application was submitted by Michele Frasier-Robinson (Associate Professor/Education and Human Sciences Librarian), Jamie Stanfield (Assistant Professor/Business and Health Librarian and Online Learning Coordinator), and Tisha Zelner (Associate Professor/Head of Public Services).

The Jimmy A. Payne Foundation has also graciously awarded Digital Collections \$50,000 to upgrade and purchase new digitization stations. This funding will purchase flatbed scanners, transparency lids, high-end computers, along with monitors and memory. This would allow the digital lab to rotate out the older equipment and increase our production quality as well as give students experience with the current hardware they are likely to encounter in the field. Digital Collections is grateful to the Jimmy A. Payne Foundation for their support and looking forward to what we can accomplish in the future.

Submitted by:  
Tisha Zelner  
Head of Public Services  
University of Southern Mississippi

Elizabeth La Beaud  
Digital Lab Manager  
University of Southern Mississippi

### SOUTH MISSISSIPPI REGIONAL LIBRARY RECEIVES GRANT

The South Mississippi Regional Library system is pleased to be a recipient of a Save the Children Community Engagement grant (<https://>

[www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/us-programs](http://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/us-programs)) in the amount of \$20,000.

Founded in 1919, Save the Children works in over 100 countries to give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn, and protection from harm. They currently serve almost 900 children in Marion County. The grant funds were awarded for community-wide initiatives that support Kindergarten Readiness and 3rd-Grade Proficiency in Reading and Math. "We have been partners with Save the Children for several years now. We were overjoyed to discover this new opportunity to serve our community," states Library Director, Ryda Worthy.

The grant enabled the Library to offer Summer Library programs to children ages 5 and older in Marion and Jefferson Davis counties, including: live and virtual events, free books, take home activity kits, and prizes for reading and participation. In addition to this grant, the Library also received a Gift-in-Kind donation from Save the Children of toys and books, valued at over \$15,000. Jackie Miller, Library Supervisor in Jefferson Davis County, states, "We have had the best Summer Library Program in years and a lot of the reason is due to their [Save the Children] help. Their help came at a time when the children in our community needed it most. Because of COVID, [our local] schools only did virtual learning for a year, and I know the children have fallen behind. I believe this year's SLP has helped to make up some of the lost time reading."

The other focus of the grant was a Kindergarten Readiness program.

As part of this program, the Columbia-Marion County Public Library distributed 300 Kindergarten Readiness kits to families with children entering Kindergarten in the next two school years. Online coaching and additional free resources were available for the families to aid them in preparing their child for Kindergarten.

The South Mississippi Regional Library, serving Marion and Jefferson Davis counties, with libraries located in Columbia, Bassfield, and Prentiss, provides resources and information for the educational and recreational needs of its customers. Founded in 1912, the Library has been offering a Summer Library Program for over 65 years. The system is supported by the cities of Columbia, Prentiss, Bassfield, and the Marion and Jefferson Davis Counties.

*Submitted by:  
Ryda Worthy  
Library Director  
South Mississippi Regional Library*



### **MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES RECEIVE ENDOWED FACULTY CHAIR**

Former Rhode Island Chief Justice Frank J. Williams and his wife, Virginia, have established an endowed faculty chair dedicated to the study of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War at Mississippi State University.

The Rhode Island couple gifted their collection of Abraham Lincoln and Civil War memorabilia, valued at nearly \$3 million, to the university in 2017. Considered the nation's largest privately owned holding of Lincoln research and display material, the Frank J. and Virginia

Williams Collection of Lincolniana has positioned MSU among the nation's leading centers for study of the Civil War.

Building on their previous support of the land-grant institution, the Williams' most recent gift will further MSU's ability to pioneer meaningful engagements and enhanced understandings regarding the social and political implications of the Civil War era. It also secures the first endowed faculty position to be housed within MSU Libraries.

"The enduring support of Frank and Virginia Williams for Mississippi State University and the MSU Libraries is remarkable," said Tommy Anderson, interim Dean of Libraries. "With this latest gift, Judge Williams and Virginia have ensured a legacy of incredible scholarship that will be felt at MSU for many years to come."

The Frank and Virginia Williams Chair for Abraham Lincoln and Civil War Studies position will be two-fold, with responsibilities in both the MSU Libraries and the College of Arts and Sciences' African American Studies program. Although the duties in the two areas differ in function, they share a collective purpose for teaching and inspiring current and future generations on the importance of history in contemporary society.

At Mitchell Memorial Library, the chair holder will manage the Williams Collection of Lincolniana and assist with the ongoing development of the Frank and Virginia Williams Lecture Series on Abraham Lincoln and Civil War Studies. In addition to facilitating smooth department operations including reference and description, collection development,

acquisitions and accession, digitization, and storage and curatorial responsibilities related to the exhibits and engagements, the chair will serve as a liaison between the university and the public to promote and aid with accessibility to the valuable resources.

The chair also will share a teaching load within the African American Studies program and develop courses within their academic area of specialty utilizing the Williams Collection. The program's interdisciplinary methodology currently helps students explore the history and culture of African descended people to develop skills and sensitivities that will assist them with effective function and navigation in today's global world. By incorporating studies from the Civil War era within the program, the chair can help students grow their understanding of significant historical events and perceptions that remain relevant.

"Endowed chairs such as this are instrumental in both recruiting and retaining the most talented scholars. The African American Studies program, the U.S. Grant Presidential Library, and indeed the entire university community will benefit from the teaching and scholarship this endowment will help to facilitate," said Don Shaffer, MSU director of African American Studies. "As our nation continues to grapple with a history of slavery, race and the Civil War, this endowed chair will provide scholars in the years to come with the tools and resources needed to explore the full complexity of our collective story."

Earnings from the endowment will be used to supplement the salary of the position, develop the

Williams Lecture Series, process the existing collection, and provide for new acquisitions, as well as fund relevant travel and research grants to advance programming.

"Faculty are the backbone of an educational institution, and this endowed chair is the perfect conduit to further appreciate this resource and educate more young people," said Justice Williams. "I hope this chair and the collections assist in the continued healing of a divided country. As the collection grows and continues to be used as a resource both in and outside of the university, the chair holder will also be a paragon and leader for progress, understanding and healing among all future graduates of MSU - regardless of their career path - because Lincoln was a man for all people in all seasons."

The Williams Collection is housed in Mitchell Memorial Library and more than 100 items from the collection are showcased in a nearly 1,200-square-foot space designated as the gallery for the Frank and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana. The library is also home to the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library, the Ulysses S. Grant Association, and the Congressional and Political Research Center.

For more information on the collection or ways to support MSU Libraries, contact Trish Cunetto, director of development, at 662-325-6762 or [tcunetto@foundation.ms-state.edu](mailto:tcunetto@foundation.ms-state.edu).

MSU is one of only six U.S. universities to house a presidential library. For more, visit <https://www.usgrantlibrary.org/>.



*Former Rhode Island Chief Justice Frank J. Williams and his wife, Virginia, are pictured at Mississippi State's Mitchell Memorial Library, home of the Frank and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana.*

*Photo by Beth Wynn*

*Submitted by:*

*Stephen Cunetto*

*Associate Dean of Libraries*

*Mississippi State University Libraries*



### **LIBRARY RECEIVES WEYERHAEUSER DONATION**

The Frank L. Leggett Public Library is pleased to be a recipient of a Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund donation (<https://www.weyerhaeuser.com/company/values/citizenship/giving-fund/>).

Weyerhaeuser, an American timberland company which owns over 12,000,000 acres of timberlands in the U.S., made its first charitable donation in 1903 and has provided more than \$239 million in grants through its formal giving program, established in 1948. Foundation giving is limited to areas where they have a significant presence, including communities where they have operations and/or where they own or manage forestlands in the United States and Canada. Weyerhaeuser's Mississippi operating locations are in Bruce, Columbus, McComb, and Philadelphia, but they manage timber forestlands in Jefferson Davis County.

Like many libraries during the pandemic, the Frank L. Leggett Public Library implemented safety protocols when re-opening to the public and utilized every resource to ensure a safe and healthy environment. CARES Act funds were used to provide shields and sanitizing products, but very old carpeting still presented a health hazard to patrons. Weyerhaeuser Funds, along with matching community donations and library funds, have been used to replace the carpeting with laminate flooring that can easily be cleaned and sanitized.

The first library in Bassfield, MS, opened in 1973 and operated for 15 hours a week. The building currently housing the Library was constructed in 1976 and was renamed the Frank L. Leggett Public Library in honor of the service of long-time local physician (and library benefactor) Dr. Frank L. Leggett. Today, the Library is operated five days a week by two full-time staff and

receives almost 10,000 public visits per year. In addition to a variety of materials for check-out (books, DVDs, audio-books, and e-books), the Library has six public access computers with free Internet and free Wi-Fi Internet. The Library offers an array of options for printing and document transferal needs and conducts programming year-round for children and families.

*Submitted by:  
Ryda Worthy  
Library Director  
South Mississippi Regional Library*



*Pictures of the Frank L. Leggett Public Library.*

## People in the News

### **Hali Black**

*First Year Experience Librarian  
University of Southern Mississippi*

The Jackson-George Regional Library System has several new hires.

**Lauria Barton** has been appointed as manager of the Vancleave Public Library, located at 12604 Highway 57. Lauria Barton takes the position after having served as Youth Services Assistant which she began in 2020. She earned her bachelor's



degree from William Carey University in 1990 and is currently working on her Master's in Library Science from the University of Southern Mississippi. Lauria has seven years teaching experience, including lead teacher at Grace Christian School in Pascagoula.

**Lynn Rainey** has been selected to serve as branch manager of the Ina Thompson Moss Point Library, located at 4119 Bellview Street. Ms. Rainey, a Tuscaloosa, Alabama



native, attended the University of Alabama for both her bachelor's degree and her MLIS. She has worked in a number of very different libraries from the medical library at UA to cataloging at the Jefferson County Library Cooperative. Her was previously at Mobile Public Library, where she served as Teen Services, Programing, and Collection Librarian for the past five years. "I am very passionate about library services and being involved in the community both in the library and other community spaces. I look forward to

what I can bring to the Ida Thompson Moss Point Branch patrons and how to elevate both the library and the community we serve,” said Lynn.

**George Broadus** has been appointed as the the new branch manager of the East Central Public Library. The rural branch is located in the community of Hurley, about 25 miles north of Pascagoula, MS. Mr. Broadus took over the management duties of the East Central Public Library left vacant by a promotion given to former manager Ann Smith Rushing. Mr. Broadus started working for the Jackson-George Regional Library system in 2019 as a library page and was soon promoted to clerk. In 2020, he was promoted to First Assistant. He attended MS Gulf Coast Community College and later received a bachelor’s degree



from The University of Southern Mississippi in 2015. Currently, George is a graduate student in the School of Library and Information Science at Southern Miss.

**Laura Thompson** has been selected to serve as the manager of the Singing River Genealogy and Local History Library in Pascagoula. As manager, Laura will guide the library into the modern era of digitization and organization in an effort to offer increased access to all resources pertaining to the history of the community and service area. Laura earned her bachelor’s degree in English with a minor in Psychology from the University of South Alabama in 2018. Soon after, she applied for and was accepted in the MLIS program at the University of Southern Mississippi.



She is expected to graduate with a Masters in Archives Certification in late 2021. Laura previously worked at USA’s Marx Library and rekindled her love of libraries. In 2019, she began working at Biloxi Central Library as a clerk. While there, she aided the library by indexing collections in the local history department. Laura stated, “I look forward to working here at JGRLS. I am delighted to assist in creating a great digital collection and helping patrons discover their history!”

For more information about the genealogy library, branch libraries or library services, visit [www.jgrls.org](http://www.jgrls.org). Find the Singing River Genealogy-Local History Library on Facebook @SingingRiverLibrary and @JacksonGeorgeLibrary for the library system.

## Book Reviews

**Tori L. Hopper**

*Children’s & Teen Services  
& Programming Coordinator  
Columbus-Lowndes Public Library System*

**Garner, Anita Faye**

*The Glory Road*

Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 2021. 244 pp. \$29.95 (Hardcover).

Anita Faye Garner tells the enthralling story of growing up with a traveling evangelical performing family, The Jones Family Singers. This is a history of Southern gospel meets country music meets rockabilly, and of Southern culture meeting the rest of the country. Most of

all, this is a story of family love in all its incarnations, the good as well as the bad.

This memoir begins in the 1950s when Garner was a young girl singing with her family in a peak of the Southern revivals. Garner is able to tell this family history honoring her parent’s faith with their adherence to the strict principals of a Pentecostal pastor while at the same time explaining their terrifying substitution of prayers for modern medicine. Both Garner and her brother grew up to reject their parents’ severe religious practices but remain respectful of their parents’ faith.

Garner also weaves in her

mother’s influence and involvement with gospel, country, and rockabilly music, and chronicles how the Jones Family Singers transformed into Garner’s mother Fern singing and socializing with some of the top names in country and gospel music at the time.

Surprisingly, her parents retired from the revival circuit to settle in Palm Springs as successful real estate agents, but Fern Jones’s music goes on. Jones’s song was included in the 2005 Johnny Cash biopic *Walk the Line*, and as recently as 2019, Rosanne Cash and Ry Cooder were still performing Sister Fern’s song “I Was There When It Happened” to

live audiences on tour.

Garner's book falls in the categories of Southern memoir and history of country and gospel music. I recommend this book for all Southern non-fiction collections, both public and academic, and particularly for Mississippi libraries that collect the history of Southern country and gospel music.

*Judith Hilkert*  
 Technical Services Coordinator  
 Hinds Community College



### **Henderson, Aileen Kilgore**

*The World Through the Dime Store Door*

Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2020. 135 pp. \$24.95 (Hardcover).

Published at the age of 99, this third memoir of Aileen Kilgore Henderson's is equal parts retrospective and coming of age story. Beginning with her birth and in the small Alabama mining town of Cedar Cove, we are shown the harsh realities of life in the southern United States in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s through the eyes of an independent young girl as she enters womanhood. Henderson's experiences are colored by two major world events happening at the time, the Great Depression and World War II.

The author was one of five children and moved with her sister Mary Alice to the city limits of Tuscaloosa after graduating high school. Much of this work is filled with Henderson's stories during this time, during which she worked for the S.H. Kress "Dime" Store and gained many life lessons in love and friendship. The reader sees Henderson transform

as she decides to enter the Women's Army Corps and, eventually, becomes an airplane engine mechanic.

Though the events in the story took place nearly a century ago, they are just as relevant today. Body image and sexism are two of the timely topics the author discusses in this memoir. Henderson provides a unique point of view, seeing the world change vastly from when she grew up to one that responds much differently to these issues today. She celebrates the simplicity of her early years while also acknowledging negative societal attitudes that were common during that time.

Most of the story takes place in Alabama, but the events in the story could have just as easily happened in any other small American city during the Great Depression. The brevity of the text makes it easily digestible, and I would consider the book appropriate for anyone in middle school or above. Though it comes to no life-changing conclusions, this work is remarkably introspective in its simplicity. It would be a useful addition to any public or academic library looking to add to their collection of personal accounts of the United States in the 1930s and '40s.

*Jeffrey Martin*  
 Library Manager  
 Itawamba County-Pratt Memorial Library



### **Richardson, Thomas**

*How to Read*

Columbus, Mississippi: Friendly City Books, 2021. 71 pp.  
 ISBN: 9780578871400. \$16.95 (Paperback).

Do you remember who taught you how to read? In his acknowledgements, Richardson begins his five-part collection of poems about reading by stating that "[n]one of us learns to read wholly on our own" (i). Although most of us learn how to read at a young age, Richardson helps us to discover different ways of reading through his innovative poems, such as his erasure or black-out poem "Public Hanging" based upon an Associated Press article. He also uses the haiku as a form of live-tweets complete with hashtags in poems such as "The Haikuist Live-Tweets a School Lunch Break" and "The Haikuist Live-Tweets a Road Trip Diaper Change." In "Heat He Hollow Gee Huff Raising (Etymology of Phrasing)," only careful reading aloud allows the reader to understand the poem, and I admit I wasn't entirely able to decipher it upon several readings!

Richardson also captures so many little moments in life in just a few stanzas. In his poem "A Bedtime Story," a father tells his son "It was after the baby animal book/I promised I'd never die" (68). In "Lines Composed Upon Hitting Reply All to a Faculty – Wide Email," I recognized the feeling "I knew in a click I could never return.../There would be others, I thought:/the weatherman ignorant of a hot mic" (64).

While writing humorously about mundane life, Richardson also writes poignantly about difficult subjects, such as "In January 2021, An American Dies of Covid-19 Every 33 Seconds." Richardson also shines a light on Mississippi throughout this collection, from the aforementioned "Public Hanging" to a live-tweet haiku about the Sugar Bowl.

Some of the poems in this collection have been published previously, and some of these can be found on his website at: <https://thomas-brichardson.com/poetry>. This collection of poetry is recommended for libraries that collect Mississippi authors or that have a robust poetry collection.

Maya Berry  
Digital Librarian  
Northwest Mississippi Community College



### Stephens, Deanne Love

*The Mississippi Gulf Coast Seafood Industry: A People's History*  
University Press of Mississippi, 2021. 166 pp. illus. \$28.00 (Hardcover).

University of Southern Mississippi history professor Deanne Love Stephens has produced the first complete documentary history of the people who were responsible for the bountiful seafood harvest from the “Seafood Capital the World,” the Mississippi Gulf Coast waters and shores. The seafood industry was built by the people who came from near and far to work on the boats and in the processing factories: African Americans, Bohemians, Croatians, Cajuns, and Vietnamese. The cast of hundreds includes well-known old Biloxi family names such as Desporte, Eleuterius, Dukate, Skrmetta, Gollott, and Gorenflo, plus the newcomers Tran and Nyguyen.

Called the “Fertile Fisheries Crescent” by Dr. Gordon Gunter, the Northern Gulf of Mexico has provided food and work for the pre-colonial native-Americans, the Biloxi and Pascagoula indigenous

people, who used seafood as trade items. The French explorers also recognized the value of the abundant coastal resources. The coastal marsh lands, estuaries, and seagrass beds are highly productive nurseries for commercial and recreational fish, shrimp, and oysters. While the area is prone to hurricanes and other meteorological events and this work documents these impacts, it is an amazingly resilient environment and with people who continue to recover from storms, and flooding.

Other established coastal villages, Pass Christian and Bay St. Louis, harbored fishing vessels and were home to locals who worked the Gulf and Mississippi Sound for oysters, crabs, and shrimp, but Biloxi was the epicenter of the industry. While growth was slow, with tradesmen limited to regional sales and distribution following the Civil War when ice technology allowed for safe hauling of seafood via rail, it became possible to move seafood to distant urban markets. By 1876, ice was being produced on the Coast and in 1888, ice for packing was available in Biloxi to support the new seafood factories located there. This was responsible for rapid growth of the industry.

The book's foundation is the family stories taken largely from oral histories and interviews. While men worked the seines, tongs, and dredges on the boats and schooners, women and children shucked oysters and peeled shrimp in factories where on mornings when there was product, the factory used a distinctive whistle that alerted the workers where to report for work that day. Hot and wet during the summer and cold and wet in the winter with flies

year-round, workers stood shoulder to shoulder in maggot infested peelings earning about one cent for every pound of shrimp packed or pound of oysters shucked. The seafood industry was often a family affair with all hands needed to contribute. Stephens details the social and economic conditions from the early years to modern times.

Stephens is a well-respected Mississippi author having published the book *Plague Among the Magnolias: the 1878 Yellow Fever Epidemic in Mississippi* (University Alabama Press, 2015) and many scholarly history articles about health issues and diseases in the deep south and specifically Mississippi. This work is well documented and illustrated, thoroughly researched, and recommended for public, high school, and college libraries.

Joyce M. Shaw  
Head and Professor, Gunter Library  
University of Southern Mississippi Gulf  
Coast Research Laboratory