

Volume 85, No. 4

Winter 2022

MISSISSIPPI LIBRARIES



A Quarterly Publication of the
Mississippi Library Association
©2022

ISSN 0194-388X

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Contents

President's Page.....	59
Library Instruction at Delta State University.....	60
<i>Michael Mounce</i>	
<i>Margaret Katembe</i>	
SLIS Notes	65
<i>Stacy Creel</i>	
MLA/SELA Joint Conference 2022 Recap	68
News Briefs.....	72
Book Reviews.....	72
<i>Mississippi Zion: The Struggle for Liberation in Attala County, 1865-1915</i>	
<i>The Preventorium: A Memoir</i>	
<i>The Witch's Tower</i>	
Volume 85 Index.....	74

On the cover: *Frozen* by Meg Wang, Assistant Professor/Electronic Resources Cataloger at Mississippi State University Libraries. The photograph was taken in Starkville, MS. My backyard after the icy storm in 2021.

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President's Page

In this last President's Column of mine, I would like to share with you an expanded version of the comments I made in the closing session at the joint Mississippi Library Association/Southeastern Library Association Conference we had in October at the MSU Riley Center in Meridian.

I would like to commend you all. As a law librarian who is hidden away in the state Supreme Court courthouse in downtown Jackson, I personally have been insulated from the craziness libraries have faced the past few years. Firstly, my library did not have to deal with the sudden and extreme pandemic closures that affected libraries all around the State. We did not have to rethink how we would provide services in those early days. We also did not have to reconfigure the layout of our library during the initial periods of reopening as many of you did. Secondly, we have not seen censorship challenges at the law library like those in the public and school world have seen and will likely continue to see in the future.

If I had to think of anything "scandalous" that has recently been added to my library collection, it would be titles related to medical marijuana or LGBT family law. Not exactly titles that cause protests, at least not yet. I just have not been faced with issues and situations that public and school librarians have had to tackle. Seeing how librarians throughout the State have faced these situations with originality and determination in the case of pandemic closures and reopening and with dignity and courage in the case



of censorship challenges, I am left with awe and appreciation of the hard work you all do. So again, I want to commend you all for all you do in the face of these challenges in ensuring a library remains open and accessible and in defending a person's right to read.

Lastly, I would like to encourage you all to get involved. One of the disappointments I had this past year as President was not being able to form a complete Executive Board. If we are to be an Association that represents all Mississippi librarians, we need all types of Mississippi librarians to step up and fill open spots. No matter what type of librarian you might be and no matter what area of the State you live in, there is a role for you within the Mississippi Library Association.

Your new President, Phillip Carter, has begun reaching out seeking committee chairs, committee members, and much more. I strongly urge you to heed his call.

Library Instruction at Delta State University

Teaching Information Literacy Skills to Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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INTRODUCTION

Delta State University (DSU) is a four-year public institution located in Cleveland, Mississippi that offers undergraduate and graduate studies in a variety of disciplines. The Roberts-LaForge Library of DSU serves and fulfills the needs of the university as well as the community of Cleveland. The arrival of the first case of the virus in Mississippi in March 2020 was the beginning of the unthinkable. At the time of writing, this paper, over 1,066,351 people have died from COVID-19 nationwide including in Mississippi (CDC 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic caused many challenges in academic institutions in the United States and around the world. Even with the spread of the virus, academic institutions continued teaching despite the challenges. The purpose of this article is to discuss library instruction at DSU during the academic years 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022. For comparison purposes, data and information about the 2018-2019 academic year, the last year before the arrival of the virus, is included.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic created challenges for instructional librarians at academic institutions throughout the United States and around the world. Many academic institutions had to change their methods of providing library instruction. The librarians at the Northeastern State University Library in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma changed the way they provide library instruction sessions in March 2020. They switched from in-person instruction to online instruction. The librarians collaborated with faculty to make library instruction sessions available to students in course shells in the learning management system Blackboard (Louderback, 2021). The librarian at the University of Toledo in Toledo, Ohio discussed their experience of teaching a virtual library instruction session during the pandemic. The librarians offered the session both synchronously and asynchronously to students in the course Pro Seminar in Anthropology and Sociology. The instruction session was taught on the university's learning management system. Also, the session was recorded so that students who could not attend the session live could watch it later (Joe, Haynes, & Wertman, 2020).

Librarians at Neumann University in Aston, Pennsylvania also made the change from in-person to online

library instruction in March 2020. From March to June 2020, librarians virtually taught the remaining five library instruction sessions of the spring 2020 semester. The sessions were taught using the institution's Blackboard system and Blackboard Collaborate was used for the live library instruction sessions. Before the fall 2020 semester began, a change was made regarding which software would be used for live sessions. The Microsoft Teams virtual conferencing tool became the tool that would be used for all instruction at Neumann University, including library instruction sessions. In the fall 2020 semester, live virtual library instruction sessions were taught to 33 classes of students enrolled in various courses. The spring 2021 semester also included some large numbers of virtual library instruction sessions that were taught live: 23 classes of students in various courses. Librarians taught live virtual library instruction sessions for 56 classes of students in the 2020-2021 academic year (Budhai & Williams, 2021).

The COVID -19 virus also affected many academic institutions and their libraries outside the United States. At the Shanghai China campus of New York University (NYU Shanghai), the start of the spring 2020 term was delayed a few times. Eventually, the decision was made to

move all instruction online. Instructional librarians had to find ways to teach library instruction sessions online to NYU Shanghai students. After much planning, the librarians decided they would teach library instruction sessions online both synchronously and asynchronously. Zoom technology was utilized for live library instruction sessions and Loom was used for the pre-recorded library instruction videos (Manion, 2021).

In the country of Kazakhstan, the pandemic caused Nazarbayev University and its library to go into lockdown mode in March 2020. The library responded by moving its reference and instructional services online. In the fall 2020 semester, subject librarians provided virtual library instruction through workshops. They provided three types of library instruction workshops: orientation sessions for new students, one-shot library instruction sessions that taught students how to use the catalog and/or databases, and information literacy sessions that taught students all information literacy skills, such as searching, evaluating sources, and using resources. Some of the virtual workshops were taught synchronously and others were taught asynchronously. Also, all the workshops were recorded, and made available for students to watch later (Yap & Manabat, 2021).

LIBRARY INSTRUCTION BEFORE COVID-19

The reference department of the DSU Library has four reference and instructional services librarians who are responsible for teaching library instruction sessions and assisting students with research needs. The library instruction sessions are provided as requested by the faculty and through outreach activities. Library instruction sessions have included both general and subject-specific sessions. In general sessions, students are taught how to use the catalog and/or databases effectively. In subject-specific sessions, librarians demonstrate to students how to find resources on specific topics in the catalog and/or databases. Librarians have provided library instruction to students in many courses in several subject disciplines, such as biology, nursing, and education. Teaching information literacy skills to students is vital to help them learn how to navigate library resources and not only find scholarly journal articles but also how to authenticate and use them effectively. During the academic year, 2018-2019, which was completed before the arrival of COVID-19, the librarians provided a total of 49 library instruction sessions for a total of 875 students (Table 1).

THE YEAR COVID-19 ARRIVED

The arrival of COVID-19 in Mississippi in March 2020 and its continued spread into Bolivar County prompted the university to make contingency plans to safeguard the university community from contracting the virus. DSU students were on spring break when the virus arrived in the local area. Then the university administration delayed the return of students to campus by extending spring break by another week. While students were on an extended break, it was announced that all DSU instruction, including library instruction, would have to move online. The teaching of in-person library instruction sessions came to a halt. No library instruction sessions were taught in the months of March, April, May, or June of 2020. In early April 2020, the DSU Library and most of the DSU campus closed as the number of COVID-19 cases increased in Bolivar county and among DSU students and employees. The DSU Library was closed throughout most of April and during the entire month of May 2020.

At the beginning of the summer 1 session in June 2020, the library reopened but only for DSU library employees. Community members or students could not come into the library as a safety precaution. The

Table 1: Library Instruction Sessions 2018 – 2019

Time Period	Number of Students	Number of Sessions
July – December 2018	556	32
January – June 2019	319	17
2018 – 2019 Totals	875	49

new technology provided by DSU to use for teaching virtually was Zoom. The DSU librarians had no prior experience in using Zoom, and they had to learn how to use the technology. In June, the librarians learned how to use Zoom and all its features such as screen sharing, recording, turning the camera on or off, etc. To help with the transition, the DSU Office of Information Technology issued laptops that would support the use of Zoom and its features, including the need to have a camera to conduct the Zoom sessions. The data in Table 2 was collected during the academic year, 2019-2020.

A comparison of the data collected for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years shows that there was a 32.6% drop in the sessions offered and a 30.4% decrease in the number of students who attended library sessions. It should be noted that all of the library instruction sessions in the fall 2019 semester and in the first two months of 2020 were in-person, since that was before the university moved all teaching to a virtual mode.

THE VIRTUAL LIBRARY INSTRUCTION YEAR

Fall 2020 arrived and COVID-19 cases kept skyrocketing and not many facts were known about the virus other than it was highly transmissible and contagious. The DSU Library's library instruction sessions were now taught virtually with limited capacity for face-to-face. The library instruction classroom capacity was also reduced by 2/3 its regular capacity and could only accommodate eight students at a time. In response to this change, some faculty members requested library instruction sessions to be taught through Zoom and others requested prerecorded library instruction videos for them to embed into Canvas for students to access throughout the semester. One librarian created a library instruction YouTube video for Nursing students entering their first year in Nursing School and another librarian created a PowerPoint library instruction video with narrations for students in a social work class. The library instruction sessions that were offered via Zoom were also recorded and

the links were shared with the faculty members to make them available for their students to access them. Table 3 below indicates the data that was collected for the fall of 2020 and spring of 2021.

The 2020-2021 academic year was the peak of the virus spread and most of the library instruction sessions were taught virtually. From the data in Table 3; a total of 23 sessions were taught during this academic year. Out of the total, 18 sessions were offered virtually, an equivalent of 78.2%. The other five sessions were in-person. Almost all of the virtual sessions were taught live via Zoom (16 out of 18). The other two virtual sessions were the pre-recorded library instruction videos that librarians created for two particular classes.

Looking at the data for the 2019-2020 and 2020 -2021 academic years, the authors noted that there was a 30.3% decrease in the number of sessions offered and a 41.2% decrease in the number of students for whom sessions were provided.

Table 2: Library Instruction Sessions 2019 – 2020

Time Period	Number of Students	Number of Sessions
July – December 2019	480	26
January – June 2020	129	7
2019 – 2020 Totals	609	33

Table 3: Library Instruction Sessions 2020 – 2021

Time Period	Number of Students	Number of Sessions
July – December 2020	257	13
January – June 2021	101	10
2020 – 2021 Totals	358	23

INCREASE IN LIBRARY INSTRUCTION SESSIONS

Shortly before the 2021-2022 academic year began, all the COVID-19 protocols that had been implemented in the library were discontinued and the library instruction room capacity was restored to its full capacity of 24 seats. In the 2021 – 2022 academic year, there was upward progress and an indication of a comeback at the DSU Library. There was an increase in both the number of library instruction sessions taught and the number of students for whom the sessions were provided. A total of 33 sessions were offered and a total of 538 students attended the library instruction sessions. Comparing the 2020-21 academic year data in Table 3, there was about a 30% increase in the number of library instruction sessions and about a 33% increase in the number of students taught from one year to the next.

In regard to the teaching mode, 29 of the 33 library instruction sessions (87.8%) in the 2021-22 academic year were taught in-person in the library. The three sessions that were taught virtually in 2021-22 were taught live via Zoom. Table 4 includes the number of library instruction sessions taught and the number of DSU students receiving instruction in 2021-22.

DISCUSSION

As previously mentioned, there was a significant decrease in library instruction sessions at DSU from the academic year before COVID-19, 2018–19, to the academic year in which COVID-19 entered Mississippi, 2019–20. Starting in March 2020 and continuing through the fall of 2021 was the peak of the spread of COVID-19 and going through a stressful period without a clear sense of direction. The librarians and others from DSU followed the recommendations and guidelines from the State of Mississippi Department of Health, Mississippi Institution of Higher Learning, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Based on the authors' assessments, the decrease in the number of library instruction sessions taught was attributed to a number of reasons. First was the arrival of the COVID-19 virus in Mississippi and eventually into Bolivar county and the spread of the virus afterward. The second reason for the decrease in library instruction sessions was the closure of the DSU Library building and everyone working remotely, to contain the spread of the virus among the employees should one get infected. The third reason was the unavailability of virtual library instruction during the university and the library closure. After the university was opened back up for library employees in

June 2020, however, the librarians began learning how to use Zoom and other technologies so that virtual library instruction would become available.

The 2020–21 academic year was the year in which the instructional librarians provided most of their library instruction sessions virtually. The librarians had hoped that the number of library instruction sessions provided would increase or at least be about the same as the previous year. However, there were less library instruction sessions during the virtual instruction year (2020-21) than during the 2019-20 year. The authors are perplexed over this decrease in library instruction sessions and are unsure why this decrease occurred. However, there are two possible factors that could have contributed to the decrease. The authors believe that the first factor has to do with faculty preferences in regard to modes of library instruction. Perhaps some DSU faculty members preferred in-person library instruction sessions over virtual sessions. However, providing in-person library instruction was a challenge during the 2020-21 academic year. In-person instruction in the library was almost impossible during that year because of the social distancing requirement of six feet between each person in the library and the maximum capacity limit of eight people at a time in the library's instruction

Table 4: Library Instruction Sessions 2021 – 2022

Time Period	Number of Students	Number of Sessions
July – December 2021	440	24
January – June 2022	98	9
2021 – 2022 Totals	538	33

classroom during that year. The social distancing requirement and the maximum capacity limit were imposed because of COVID-19 and the need to reduce the possibilities of transmissions. Some faculty members may have decided to not request any library instruction sessions at all during that year as a result. The second factor, the authors believe, has to do with DSU's student enrollment. The student enrollment of DSU dropped significantly from the fall 2019 semester to the fall 2020 semester. The fall 2019 student enrollment number was 3,761 students (Rankins, 2019). The student enrollment number for the fall 2020 semester was 2,999, which was 20.2% fewer students than in the previous fall semester (Rankins, 2020). The COVID-19 virus was likely the reason for the drop in DSU's student enrollment.

On a positive note, the increase in the number of library instruction sessions and students taught in the 2021 – 2022 academic year was a welcome change, especially after a few years of a downward trend. As previously mentioned, the number of library instruction sessions increased from 23 instruction sessions in the 2020-21 academic year to 33 instruction sessions in the 2021-22 academic year. The authors believe that this increase in library instruction sessions occurred because the

library discontinued the social distancing requirement in the library building and discontinued the maximum capacity limit in the library's instruction classroom in the summer of 2021. Discontinuing those COVID-19-related protocols led to in-person library instruction being available again to faculty without the challenges of the protocols. The library was able to discontinue those COVID-19 protocols since the severity of the COVID-19 virus had decreased.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the librarians, like other faculty members in teaching capacities, were faced with the challenges of a well-structured layout of teaching in one mode and having to switch in the middle of the semester to virtual learning. The librarians pivoted from offering in-person library instruction and having to quickly change to a new mode of teaching virtually. Switching to virtual library instruction prompted the librarians to quickly learn how to use Zoom and other technologies to provide library instruction virtually. The librarians had to adapt quickly and learn quickly, but they successfully provided virtual library instruction sessions. Although most of the DSU Library's library instruction sessions are now in-person, virtual library instruction is still an

option and will remain an option. Virtual library instruction will remain an option since it is helpful to distance education students who live too far away to drive to campus. Also, virtual instruction can be helpful to students who cannot meet in person in the library because of COVID-19 or other issues.

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2022 MLA Executive Board Minutes:

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SLIS Notes

Burnout!

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Burnout. It is not a new topic in libraries or library research. Anecdotal articles and research on burnout in information settings started appearing in the 1980s (Wood, et al., 2020). Burnout is “a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity” (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 4). Although defined by various research decades before, it became an officially recognized psychiatric medical diagnosis in 2018 (Wood, et al., 2020). Often times, it leads to having a lack of enthusiasm for the job and a lack of productivity. There can also be manifestation of health issues—both physical and mental (McCormack, 2013; Dixon, 2022). Many describe burnout as a physical and mental exhaustion that weighs down library employees, and they may see their customers as a burden and feel negatively about them and their job (McCormack, 2013).

Library workers across all levels and in all types of libraries can be subject to burnout leading to job departure and even field departure. This is disheartening especially in light of the cost and commitment to training employees, the loss of institutional memory and cohesiveness, and the financial burdens incurred by those with undergraduate and graduate degrees (Dixon,

2022). Burnout can be tied to emotional labor. “Jobs that require emotional labor typically are those that (a) involve direct contact with the public, (b) require the employee to use emotions to produce an emotional state in another person, and (c) allow the organization to exert some control over the felt and/or displayed emotions of employees. Customer service jobs are those most typically associated with high demands for emotional labor. Service employees spend a great deal of time interacting with the public” (Pugh & Gabriel, 2017). The toll that is caused by trying to be everything to every customer in need is problematic especially when coupled with “job creep,” a.k.a. the addition of non-traditional library duties (Dixon, 2022, p. 45). Library workers are being asked to be social workers, tutors, teachers, technology experts, drug counselors, medics, and more.

The emotional labor of working in a library is not new, but has it been exacerbated by the recent pandemic and the new war on Intellectual Freedom? While libraries and library employees wait for some of the changes that need to happen at a large systematic level—pay increases, environments that protect employees, training, adequate staffing, social workers /social services in libraries, and protection from overseeing bodies and governments that do not understand Intellectual Freedom—what can be done in the meantime? What are some minimal things that can be done by

employers and employees to combat burnout in libraries and other information settings?

In *Managing Burnout in the Workplace: A Guide for Information Professionals*, McCormack (2013), lists some things that may be more accomplishable than the systematic changes needed, like pay increases. She suggests reducing excessive workload and communicating expectations. If special projects are taking additional time, then where does that time come from? It should not just be added on to the normal time without adjustments. Employers also need to address boredom and work to eliminate it. What about the workday is excessively boring? How can that time be broken up? Is there a way to make it better? Employers should model behavior that includes examples of work-life balance. Instead of emailing employees while you are thinking about it at 7pm, schedule it to go out the next workday during work hours. Employers need to review their behavior and see if they are micromanaging. What control can be given to the employee? Allowing them some level of control can reduce burnout. Is there something that they can have a volunteer assist with? Can they schedule their off-desk time without management input? While rewarding employees monetarily is not a possibility, rewarding them with workshop attendance, recognition in newsletters or on social media, a day of reduced time on the desk—even if it means management takes one of their hours, and

Table 1. Preventative Measure (World Health Organization, n.d.)

Set clear and consistent goals for staff
Provide frequent training to increase role effectiveness and coping strategies
Provide work-focused consultations to staff who are experiencing job stress
Encourage the development of support groups and resource exchange networks
Maximize staff autonomy and participation in decision-making
Provide training in conflict resolution
Organize work to reduce job strain by optimizing workload and working time, ensuring safe staffing levels, encouraging regular breaks and having flexible schedules
Optimize shift lengths to avoid fatigue, giving preference to shift rotation in a forward direction
Provide accommodation for health workers during emergency operations with access to food services, sanitary facilities and recreational opportunities

other out-of-the-box (or wallet) rewards may reduce burnout and help with motivation. Encourage employees to be empowered to say “no” and set boundaries whenever possible. Conduct staff workshops on time-management and include downtime and family-time in the presentation (McCormack, 2013).

While the suggestions by WHO in Table 1 are meant for health workers, there are recommendations included that are accomplishable by management in information settings with little to no cost.

Perhaps one of the simplest and most effective things that can be done to address burnout is to talk about it and to destigmatize it (McHone-Chase, 2020). Burnout does not happen overnight so it can be more difficult to notice and catch early, but if library employees know what it is and feel empowered (and not ashamed) to talk about it, then libraries may keep an employee that they may lose otherwise.

The resources listed below may be helpful for library management to use to begin the burnout conversations and to share with employees.

RESOURCES

This article from Berkley Extension (<https://bootcamp.berkeley.edu/blog/mental-health-resources-to-help-prevent-creative-and-professional-burnout/>) serves as a general guide to understanding different types of burnout, as well as the ways employers or individuals can aim to prevent burnout. The end of the article provides an additional comprehensive resource list one can utilize to further their understanding and develop techniques.

This video playlist from Monterey Bay Aquarium (https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLq_DVMr7CmlJ3DJothjCJNylwgyrB72V6) was first created in the initial months of COVID-19. In the videos, they feature mesmerizing visuals of their marine life while providing audio of guided meditations.

In the podcast series *Burnout* (<https://lemonadamedia.com/show/burnout/>), host Connor Franta discusses how burnout has affected society. His discussion outlines what burnout is, how it affects your mind and body, as well as different ideas for its solutions.

In this article from *Harvard Business Review* (<https://hbr.org/2021/01/how-to-tell-your-boss-youre-burned-out>), the author lists some general strategies one can use to talk to their boss about feelings of burnout. Additionally, the author discusses the importance of these conversations, and how one should not sacrifice their mental health for the sake of others’ perceptions or convenience.

Ambient-Mixer (<https://www.ambient-mixer.com/>) is a crowd-sourced project that allows users to listen to unique soundscapes, atmospheres, etc. Unlike other ambient sound resources, this website allows users to listen indefinitely to each soundfile, as well as change different aspects of each mix in real time. One of the biggest draws to this site is in using it for background sounds for relaxing, working, etc.

Finch: Self Care Widget Pet is an app that uses a digital pet to help you practice, track, and learn new self-care habits. Some features include a habit tracker, guided mood journal, guided breathing, quizzes to help understand mental health, mood tracker, analytics, and more. If one struggles with keeping up with this kind of tracking, journaling, or depression, then taking care of the app’s digital pet may make these things easier to maintain.

APPS

While the meditation app *Head-space: Mindful Meditation* has some features locked behind a paywall, it has various helpful guided meditations, courses, and mindfulness exercises available for free, as well as several videos on its YouTube channel. Their guided meditations are a great starting point for those new to meditating, and their sessions can

last for as little as three minutes. Additionally, the app provides stories, music for sleep, and other calming sounds to help one de-stress and relax.

As its name suggests, the app *Antistress — relaxation toys* (from JindoBlu) allows one to interact digitally with stress relief toys and trinkets such as buttons, boxes, a piano, and even a tube of toothpaste! The premise of this is to practice repetitive, calming movements to help de-stress. New anti-stress toys are added every few weeks.

With the app *Calm. - Sleep, Meditate, Relax*, one can follow guided mediations, listen to sleep stories, and more from both the voices of experts and familiar celebrities. Some of their features are available only for those with a paid subscription, but part of the appeal of this app is how many features remain available for free. There is a reason it has remained the number one app for sleep and meditation for so long.

While the app *Water Reminder* differs slightly between the Apple and Google Play stores, the name and overall message remain the same. Using this app, one can set reminders and goals for drinking water, and track your water intake. The app uses one's age and weight to suggest their water intake goal, then displays the data over time to show trends across weeks, months, and a year.

With the app *Colorfy: Coloring Book Games*, one can color simple or complex coloring book pages ranging from animals, patterns, flowers, and more. Creativity is a good way to help combat stress, and the tedious nature of coloring can help one to relax further.

The sole function of the app *Done — A Dead Simple Checklist* is to provide space for to-do lists in a simple format. With no ads and a clutter-free design, one may find themselves feeling more capable of tackling their stressors each day.

The app *Happify's* "science-based" content is aimed to overcome negative thinking, de-stress, and build resilience in support of emotional well-being. It has been praised by numerous media outlets such as *The New York Times* and *The TODAY Show*. Like other apps in its category, some of *Happyify's* features are locked behind their subscription fee. However, many of their features remain free as one uses their activities and games.

The app *I am — Daily affirmations* can be used to practice verbal affirmations. While verbal affirmations are not for everyone, they can be one method to help improve one's self-esteem and confidence, which are both important building blocks to a happier, stress-free life. With this app, one can set daily reminders and notifications to read and then verbally reaffirm their intentions.

The journaling app *Three Good Things* asks one to list three good things that happen each day. Using the app, one can set reminders to help them continue practicing this reflective strategy, and over time they will be able to look back on what has made them happy, even on days they were feeling down. This practice is good for those learning to notice more things each day that make them happy, which can combat trends of negative thinking. Plus, it might surprise users to find three good things that happen even on the days they have increased depression

or anxiety.

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Feedback and suggestions are welcome – send to 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.

SLIS also offers a Bachelor of Science degree in LIS as well as a LIS minor. All classes are online and typically meet once each week during the evening hours.

MLA/SELA Joint Conference 2022 Recap

Janessa Ullendorf

MLA Reporter

MLA Publicity Committee Chair

The Mississippi Library Association (MLA) partnered with the Southeastern Library Association (SELA) in Meridian, MS for their annual conference held October 11-14. The theme for this year's conference was *Libraries Uncensored*. The goal of this theme was to explore the many issues that are facing libraries with the rise of censorship initiatives sweeping the nation and how libraries and librarians may navigate the hurdles facing them during a materials challenge.

This was the first time the MLA had attempted a hybrid conference - in-person sessions were broadcast through Whova for virtual attendees.

The **Whova app** also allowed for in-person attendees to create a personalized agenda, share photos (more than 300 photos were shared), and communicate via the message boards (1,196 messages were sent). There were 293 registered attendees on-site for the event. The top ten sessions viewed in Whova were:

1. Words Matter: Strengthening Academic Library Collection Development Policies to Support Selection and Deselection Decisions
2. Pulling Digital Weeds: Perspectives on E-Book Weeding from University and Community College Librarians
3. Serving the Profession that Serves Us: The Importance and Challenges of Professional Library Service

2022
**PEGGY
 MAY**
SCHOLARSHIP
 LARA TAYLOR

2022
**VIRGIA
 BROCKS-
 SHEDD**
SCHOLARSHIP
 CONTAKA NORMAN

2022
**TERRY
 LAJAUNIE**
**MLA CONFERENCE
 SCHOLARSHIP**
 JANESSA ULLENDORF

4. Public Library Leadership Uncensored: Becoming, Surviving, and Thriving as a Public Library Leader
5. Hit Me with Your Best (One) Shot
6. Censorship Happens! Are You Ready?
7. Trends and Issues in Academic Libraries
8. Handling Censorship in Today's Political Climate
9. Fight Fake News and Censorship in 2022
10. Good Looking Out: Taking Care of Ourselves and Each Other in Trying Times

Phillip Carter, Vice President of the MLA, headed the 2022 Conference Committee which was comprised of Matt Gully (Exhibits), Janessa Ullendorf (PR/Marketing), Sarah Mangrum (Programming), Selena Swink (Registration), Justin Easterday (Silent Auction), Melissa Dennis (SELA President), Crystal Gates (SELA Vice President), and Robin Campbell (SELA PR/Marketing).

MLA AWARDS

The MLA Awards were presented during an on-site luncheon on Wednesday, October 12. The awards are to recognize Mississippi library professionals, staff, students, and supporters for excellence in service, marketing, scholarship, and advocacy.

- Peggy May Scholarship — Lara Taylor
- Virginia Brocks-Shedd Scholarship — Contaka Norman
- Terry Lajaunie MLA Conference Scholarship — Janessa Ullendorf
- Beta Psi Chapter of Beta Phi



Mu, Martha Case Scholarship —
Amanda Osborne

- Past President's Award — John Sanders
- Peggy May Award — Joyce Shaw
- Mary Julia Anderson Award — Linda Willis
- Outstanding Achievement Award — Ellen Ruffin
- Library Champion Award — Richard Walley
- Friends of the Library Award, Chapter One Award — Friends of the Ridgeland, Madison County Library System
- Friends of the Library Award, Ruby Assaf Presidential Award — June Lack with the Friends of the R.T. Prince Memorial Library, Central Mississippi Regional Library System
- Public Relations Awards:
 - Best effort by an individual library to publicize library services around a single theme or event — Northwest Mississippi Community College
 - Best newsletter submitted by library group — Mississippi State Law Library
 - Best year-round effort by an individual library to publicize library services in general — First Regional Library
 - Best coordinated effort of several libraries to publicize library services around a single theme or event — First Regional Library



MISSISSIPPI AUTHOR

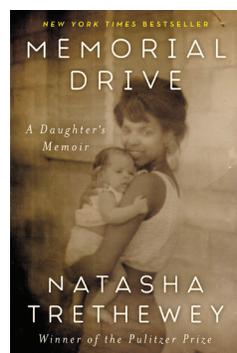
AWARDS

The Mississippi Author Awards seek to recognize and encourage Mississippi authors and promote interest in local authors' books, whether the books are about Mississippi or another subject. Caroline Barnett and her hardworking committee selected three outstanding authors to receive the award, two of which were able to attend the awards dinner to accept their awards in person. The 2022 Mississippi Author Award Winners:



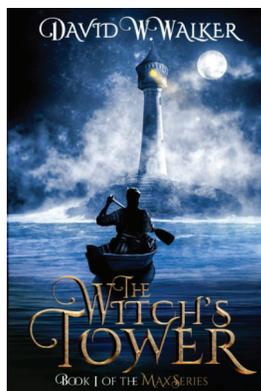
- Fiction: *The Gravedigger's Guild* by Susan Farris

- See more about *The Gravedigger's Guild* at susanfarris.me/the-gravediggers-guild



- Non-Fiction: *Memorial Drive* by Natasha Trethewey

- See more about *Memorial Drive* at natashatrethewey.com/books/memorial-drive



- Juvenile: *The Witch's Tower* by David W. Walker

- See more about *The Witch's Tower* at davidwwalkerwrites.com/the-max-series

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS

The pre-conference speaker was **John Chrastka** from EveryLibrary who discussed *From Advocacy to Activism*. His presentation explored strategies that would effect change and build power. His emphasis was to illustrate the skills and resources librarians need to develop to continue building support for funding and building a rapport with activists and community leaders for future endeavors. Discover more about EveryLibrary at everylibrary.org

The keynote luncheon speaker was two-time Grammy Award Winner, **Bobby Rush**. He is a Blues Hall of Famer, a six-time Grammy nominee, and a fourteen-time Blues Music Award winner. He also has an autobiography entitled *I Ain't Stud-din' Ya, My American Blues Story* which he autographed for attendees after his presentation and performance. Discover more about Bobby Rush at bobbyrushbluesman.com

The closing keynote luncheon speaker was the Director of the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom and

the Executive Director of the Freedom to Read Foundation, **Deborah Caldwell-Stone**. She has worked closely with library workers and trustees to address a wide range of intellectual freedom issues including book bans, internet censorship, meeting room policies, and the privacy of library users' records for the past twenty years. Discover more about the ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom at ala.org/aboutala/offices/oif. Discover more about the Freedom to Read Foundation at ftrf.org

The Conference concluded with the exchanging of the gavel by Stephen Parks, President, to Phillip Carter, President-Elect. Phillip Carter went on to thank everyone for their dedication to making the 2022 MLA/SELA Joint Conference a success.

News Briefs

Brenda Comfort

*Serials & Reference Librarian
Hinds Community College*

HOLOCAUST EXHIBIT AT UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI



The University of Mississippi Libraries will host *Americans and the Holocaust*, a traveling exhibition from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum that examines the motives, pressures and fears that shaped Americans' responses to Nazism, war and genocide in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s. *Americans and the Holocaust* will be on display at the University Libraries' J.D. Williams Library along with a series of related special events, from December 1, 2021 to January 14, 2022. More information about the exhibit is available at: <https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust>.

Submitted By:



J. Adam Clemons

*Research and Instruction Librarian
The University of Mississippi*

Book Reviews

Tori L. Hopper

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

Ashford, Evan Howard.

Mississippi Zion: The Struggle for Liberation in Attala County, 1865-1915. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi. 2022. 233 pp. \$25.00 (Paperback).

Dr. Evan Howard Ashford dives headfirst into how “[slavery] exposed the competing mentalities between slaves and whites and owners and non-owners-” (21). *Mississippi Zion: The Struggle for Liberation in Attala County, 1865-1915* is a case study that opposes competing conventional historical narratives. Where other texts centralize

Southern white action, perpetuating the narrative of Black victimhood and infantilization, Ashford shrinks the memory of Southern white dominance, thus making room for the story of unrepentant, determination, and agency of Attala County's African American community. Ashford centers and re-renders Black assertions of agency and power before the American Civil War and during Reconstruction in his writing. He simultaneously confronts the accepted centralization of white Southern action and dominance of the Black Experience as he pieces together an array of evidence while employing historiographic analysis.

Ashford's previous work, *The Unshackled Past* (2014) series, maps out genealogical data of various

Attala County families from enslavement to 1940. His later articles, “Freedom Courts: An Analysis of Black Women's Divorce in Attala County During Mississippi's Anti-Divorce Campaign, 1890-1940” (2021) and “Medical Messiahs: African American Women in Mississippi Medicine, 1900-1940” (2020) expand on Ashford's research agenda. Ashford takes his cultivated skillset as a seasoned genealogy researcher and historian to bring to light the theme of African American autonomy in his latest work. He notes the political shifts that took place at the local, state, and federal level while illustrating the consensus among everyday people of the time. He relies on archival records, precise historical recounting, anecdotal evidence, genealogical data,

and visual information. *Mississippi Zion* is a deftly crafted collage of all these records combined which tells the unique history of race relations in Attala County; a county which Ashford terms as relatively “race neutral.”

Ashford insists that “African Americans did not turn inward; instead, they built their Zion’s foundations in whites’ open view, sometimes with their participation” (41). *Mississippi Zion* would serve well as a contextual and visual reference guide in archives, historical sites, libraries etc. It would also help institutions to locate gaps in visual collections which do not have photographs depicting Black life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Attala County. Let this text be a lesson in history for all.

Danielle N. Townsend
Audio Visual Special Collections Librarian
Assistant Professor
University of Mississippi



Currie, Susan Annah.

The Preventorium: A Memoir.
University Press of Mississippi,
2022. 232 pp. \$25.00 (Hardcover).

With the beginning of the twentieth century came the deadly tuberculosis disease. The United States responded by creating hospitals,

also called preventoriums, to house and care for children with tuberculosis. One of the many children to experience a preventorium was Susan Annah Currie. Currie wrote *The Preventorium: A Memoir* to share her experiences while living in the Mississippi Preventorium for 15 months. Establishing tuberculosis preventoriums was a unique piece of our nation and state’s history, so Currie begins the book by first providing the reader with a chapter that gives a general history of the time and of the preventorium in which she lived. As the reader continues to read through the book, written in first-person narration, Currie recalls the day she arrived at the preventorium, daily life, how she befriended Ethal, and finally the day she was able to go home.

For readers that enjoy reading first-person narrative novels and are interested in learning about the history of Mississippi, *The Preventorium* provides the same experience in a nonfiction version. Currie does a fantastic job of providing details that allow the reader to picture the events during her stay at the preventorium. Readers can easily picture a young nervous Currie sitting in the backseat next to her great-aunt Betty, as they drive to the preventorium. Using descriptive details, the book begins by showing readers

how Mississippi responded to the tuberculosis disease and the attempt made to care for infected children. Currie’s memoir is ideal for public and academic libraries that look to expand their history, memoir, or Mississippi-focused collections.

Justin Easterday
Education and Human Sciences Librarian
Gulf Coast Library
University of Southern Mississippi



Walker, David W.

The Witch’s Tower.
Independently published, 2021. 238
pp. \$13.75 (Paperback).

The Witch’s Tower, written and illustrated by David W. Walker, shares the adventures of Max, a 13-year-old prince. With his siblings, Derek and Gerald, in tow, Prince Max sets off on a perilous journey through Gaspaar to the mysterious Witch’s Tower.

The first book in the Max Series, *The Witch’s Tower* is a must-read for juvenile and young adult readers alike. Even adult readers will enjoy delving into this adventure that won the Mississippi Library Association’s 2022 Author Award for Juvenile.

Linda June Owens
Retired Library Media Specialist
Hattiesburg, MS



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Volume 85 Index

Brooke Gross

Research & Instruction Librarian
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2022 MLA/SELA Joint Conference Information (85:3, page 46)

2022 MLA/SELA Joint Conference Recap (85:4, pages 68-71)

Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill and Ocean Pollution: Teaching Resources and Reading List for Grades K-12. (85:2, pages 30-33)

The Expansion of Digital Services in Mississippi Public Libraries. (85:1, pages 4-7)

Graphic Medicine: A Guide to Increasing Health Literacy. (85:3, pages 47-50)

How The Prison Industry Crosses Us Out. (85:2, pages 28-30)

Juneteenth and African American History: Reading List for Children and Teens. (85:1, pages 8-10)

Justice, Austin. *Managing Team Projects in a Pandemic: The Civil War and Reconstruction Governors of Mississippi.* (85:2, pages 21-27)

Library Instruction at Delta State University: Teaching Information Literacy Skills to Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic. (85:4, pages 60-64)

Managing Team Projects in a Pandemic: The Civil War and Reconstruction Governors of Mississippi. (85:2, pages 21-27)

Mills, Xinyu Yu. *The Expansion of Digital Services in Mississippi Public Libraries.* (85:1, pages 4-7)

MLA "Gathers" in Ocean Springs. (85:2, pages 37-38)

MLA/SELA Joint Conference 2022 Recap (85:4, pages 68-71)

Mounce, Michael and Katembe, Margaret. *Library Instruction at*

Delta State University: Teaching Information Literacy Skills to Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic. (85:4, pages 60-64)

News Briefs (85:1, page 14) (85:3, page 54) (85:4, page 72)

People in the News (85:1, page 15) (85:2, pages 39-40) (85:3, page 54)

Presidents Page (85:1, pages 3-4) (85:2, pages 20-21) (85:3, pages 45-46) (85:4, page 59)

Salazar, C.T. *How The Prison Industry Crosses Us Out.* (85:2, pages 28-30)

Shaw, Joyce M. and Le, Megan. *Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill and Ocean Pollution: Teaching Resources and Reading List for Grades K-12.* (85:2, pages 30-33)

Shaw, Joyce M. and Lindsey, Alisha. *Juneteenth and African American History: Reading List for Children and Teens.* (85:1, pages 8-10)

Shaw, Joyce M. and Parks, Stephen. MLA "Gathers" in Ocean Springs. (85:2, pages 37-38)

SLIS Notes (85:1, pages 11-13) (85:2, pages 34-36) (85:3, pages 51-53) (85:4, pages 65-67)

Stanfield, Jamie. *Graphic Medicine: A Guide to Increasing Health Literacy.* (85:3, pages 47-50)

BOOK REVIEWS

The Age of Discovery and Other Stories. Book review by Hannah Madonna (85:3, pages 55-56)

Altobello, Brian. *Whiskey, Women and War: How the Great War Shapes Jim Crow New Orleans.* Book review by Tamara D. Blackwell (85:1, page 16)

Americorona: Poems about the

Pandemic. Book review by Wil'Lani A. Turner (85:2, page 41)

Ashford, Evan Howard. *Mississippi Zion: The Struggle for Liberation in Attala County, 1865-1915.* Book review by Danielle N. Townsend (85:4, pages 72-73)

Beach, Audrey. Book review by (85:3, page 56)

Blackwell, Tamara D. Book review by (85:1, page 16)

Carter, Hodding III. *The South Strikes Back.* Book review by Joyce M. Shaw (85:3, page 55)

Coastal Mississippi Alphabet. Book review by Tori Hopper (85:1, pages 16-17)

Currie, Susan Annah. *The Preventorium: A Memoir.* Book review by Justin Easterday (85:4, page 73)

Easterday, Justin. Book review by (85:4, page 73)

Giles, Rebecca M. *Coastal Mississippi Alphabet.* Book review by Tori Hopper (85:1, pages 16-17)

Hagenston, Becky. *The Age of Discovery and Other Stories.* Book review by Hannah Madonna (85:3, pages 55-56)

Heritage and Hate: Old South Rhetoric at Southern Universities. Book review by Diana Simpson (85:1, pages 17-18)

Hilkert, Judith. Book review by (85:2, pages 41-42)

Hopper, Tori L. Book review by (85:1, pages 16-17; 85:2, pages 41-42; 85:3, pages 55-57)

Kolin, Phillip C. *Americorona: Poems about the Pandemic.* Book review by Wil'Lani A. Turner (85:2, page 41)

Love, Daddy: Letters from My Father. Book review by Jeffrey Martin

(85:3, pages 56-57)

The Lucky Ones. Book review by Tori L. Hopper (85:2, page 42)

Madonna, Hannah. Book review by (85:3, pages 55-56)

The Mama Chronicles: A Memoir. Book review by Danielle N. Townsend (85:3, page 57)

Martin, Jeffrey. Book review by (85:3, pages 56-57)

McLaughlin, Chris. *Mississippi Barking: Hurricane Katrina and A Life That Went to the Dogs*. Book review by Judith Hilker (85:2, pages 41-42)

McPhail, Diane C. *The Seamstress of New Orleans*. Book review by Audrey Beach (85:3, page 56)

Mississippi Barking: Hurricane Katrina and A Life That Went to the Dogs. Book review by Judith Hilker (85:2, pages 41-42)

Mississippi Zion: The Struggle for Liberation in Attala County, 1865-1915. Book review by Danielle N. Townsend (85:4, pages 72-73)

Monroe, Stephen M. *Heritage and Hate: Old South Rhetoric at Southern Universities*. Book review by Diana

Simpson (85:1, pages 17-18)

Morris, David Rae, and Willie Morris. *Love, Daddy: Letters from My Father*. Book review by Jeffrey Martin (85:3, pages 56-57)

Nicholas, Teresa. *The Mama Chronicles: A Memoir*. Book review by Danielle N. Townsend (85:3, page 57)

Nolden, Jewel. *The Tale of the Dingy Handkerchief*. Book review by Alisa St. Amant (85:1, page 18)

Owens, Linda June. Book review by (85:4, page 73)

The Preventorium: A Memoir. Book review by Justin Easterday (85:4, page 73)

The Seamstress of New Orleans. Book review by Audrey Beach (85:3, page 56)

Shaw, Joyce M. Book review by (85:3, page 55)

Simpson, Diana. Book review by (85:1, pages 17-18)

The South Strikes Back. Book review by Joyce M. Shaw (85:3, page 55)

St. Amant, Alisa. Book review by (85:1, page 18)

The Tale of the Dingy Handkerchief. Book review by Alisa St. Amant (85:1, page 18)

Townsend, Danielle N. Book review by (85:3, page 57) (85:4, pages 72-73)

Turner, Wil'Lani A. Book review by (85:2, page 41)

Walker, David W. *The Witch's Tower*. Book review by Linda June Owens (85:4, page 73)

Whiskey, Women and War: How the Great War Shapes Jim Crow New Orleans. Book review by Tamara D. Blackwell (85:1, page 16)

Williams Jackson, Linda. *The Lucky Ones*. Book review by Tori L. Hopper (85:2, page 42)

The Witch's Tower. Book review by Linda June Owens (85:4, page 73)



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