



ALLA

2025

CON

BE UNCONVENTIONAL

CONVENTION  
**PROGRAM**

ALABAMA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
Annual Convention

APRIL 9-12, 2025  
Guntersville, AL

# WELCOME TO ALLA CON2025

## FROM THE ALABAMA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



“Your work is essential, and this convention is a testament to the resilience and dedication of library professionals across our great state.

## Dear Librarians, Library Professionals, and Friends,



**Craig Scott**  
President, 2024–2025  
Alabama Library Association

**W**elcome to the Alabama Library Association’s 2025 Convention! Along with ALLA’s Executive Committee and the fantastic 2025 Convention Planning Team chaired so well by Mandy Broadhurst, it is my absolute pleasure to welcome you to the Alabama Library Association’s Annual Convention at the breathtaking Lake Guntersville State Park Lodge & Convention Center! Nestled in the heart of North Alabama, this stunning venue offers the perfect backdrop for a gathering of passionate professionals dedicated to strengthening our libraries and enriching our communities.

This year’s convention is more than just a meeting—it is an opportunity to celebrate our achievements, explore new ideas, and embrace the future of libraries in Alabama. With insightful keynote speakers, engaging workshops, and meaningful networking opportunities, we have crafted a convention program designed to inspire, educate, and empower you.

Our theme this year, Be Unconventional, reflects our commitment to innovation, advocacy, and collaboration. As we navigate the evolving landscape of library services, we must continue to support one another, advocate for intellectual freedom, and champion the vital role of libraries in education and community development.

Your work is essential, and this convention is a testament to the resilience and dedication of library professionals across our great state.

Beyond your sessions and discussions, I encourage you to take in the natural beauty surrounding us. Whether it’s a morning hike or yoga session, a quiet moment overlooking the lake, or a shared meal with colleagues, this setting offers the perfect balance of learning and relaxation.

Thank you for your commitment to libraries and for joining us at this special event. I look forward to connecting with each of you, celebrating our successes, and charting the path forward together.

Again, welcome to ALLA’s Annual Convention—let’s make it an unforgettable and unconventional experience!

With gratitude,

Craig Scott



# ALABAMA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

## OFFICERS

**President:** Craig Scott  
**President-Elect:** James Gilbreath  
**Past President:** Matt Layne  
**Secretary:** Danny Stewart  
**Treasurer:** Jessica Hayes  
**Member-at-Large Central:** Megan Green  
**Member-at-Large North:** Karlie Johnson  
**Member-at-Large South:** Chris Warren

## DIVISION CHAIRPERSONS

**College, University, and Special:** Laura Pitts  
**Public Library:** Rex Bain  
**Youth Services & School Library:** Kristie Barnett

## EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

**Associate Administrator:** Angela Moore  
**Web Administrator:** Jodi W. Poe  
**ALA Councilor:** Paula Laurita  
**SELA Representative:** Chris Shaffer

## OTHER POSITIONS

**Alabama Libraries Editor-in-Chief:** Laura Pitts  
**ALLA COMMunicator Editor:** Sheila Brandt  
**Archivist:** Alex Boucher

## ROUND TABLE MODERATORS

**ALIRT:** Jeff Graveline  
**GODORT:** Tim Dodge  
**MCIRT:** Tim Dodge  
**PART:** John Upchurch  
**RASRT:** Piper Cumbo  
**SCRT:** Jeff Graveline  
**TSSRT:** Neil Foulger  
**YASRT:** Kristie Barnett

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**Association Awards:** Anna Mary Williford  
**Author Awards:** Wendy Stephens, Debbie Walker  
**Bibliographic:** Nancy Dupree  
**Budget & Finance:** Jessica Hayes  
**Bylaws:** Peggy Kain  
**Convention:** Mandy Broadhurst  
**Education:** Karlie Johnson  
**Emeritus Council:** Matt Layne  
**Employee Evaluation:** Matt Layne  
**Handbook:** Kevin Walker  
**Intellectual Freedom:** Jessica Hayes  
**Legislative Development:** Jessica Ross  
**Membership:** Kim Westbrook  
**Nominating:** Matt Layne  
**Planning:** Lori Northrup  
**Public Relations:** Amanda Melcher  
**Publications:** Amanda Melcher

## CONVENTION COMMITTEE

**Convention Chair:** Mandy Broadhurst  
**ALLA President:** Craig Scott  
**ALLA President-Elect:** James Gilbreath  
**Committee Advisor:** Steven Yates  
**Exhibits:** Lindsay Gardner, Craig Scott  
**Hospitality:** Wendy Congiardo, Jessica Ross  
**Local Arrangements:** Mandy Broadhurst  
**President's Reception:** Kate Etheredge  
**Programs:** Mary Campbell, Rosanna McGinnis  
**Poster Sessions:** Anthony "PJ" Pendleton  
**Public Relations:** Chris Warren  
**Registration:** Debbie Walker, Alexandria Williams  
**Speakers:** Jason Baker  
**Treasurer:** Angie Moore  
**Webpage/Pre-Registration:** Jodi Poe

## SPECIAL THANKS

**Graphic Design & Marketing Support:**  
Sarah Willis

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# SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

WEDNESDAY, 9 APRIL 2025

## WEDNESDAY, 9 APRIL 2025

- 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM GUNTERSVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
**Copyright Bootcamp (Preconference)**
- 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM CONVENTION CENTER, MAIN ENTRANCE  
**Convention Registration Open**
- 2:30 PM – 5:00 PM CONVENTION CENTER  
**Guided Hike (Preconference)**
- 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM HICKORY LODGE  
**Welcome Reception**  
\*Ticket Purchase Required

## THURSDAY, 10 APRIL 2025

- 7:00 AM – 8:00 AM TERRACE  
**Yoga**
- 8:00 AM – 5:00 AM  
**Convention Registration Open**
- 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM  
**Morning Coffee Sponsored by Bibliotheca**
- 
- 9:00 AM – 9:50 AM  
**CONCURRENT SESSIONS**
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| CAMELLIA<br>Pop-Up Joy: Creating Engaging Micro-Programs with Minimal Effort (Public)<br>Outreach Services & Programs | AZALEA 2<br>College, University, and Special Libraries (CUS) Business Meeting<br>Meeting |
| AZALEA 3<br>Public Library Division (PLD) Business Meeting<br>Meeting   | DOGWOOD<br>Adapting Story Times (School)<br>Outreach Services & Programs                 |
- 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM  
**Exhibits Opens**
- 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM  
**Poster Sessions Open**
- 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM GOLDENROD  
**Opening Session with Lisa Varga**
- 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM GRANDVIEW  
**Alabama Author Awards Program**  
\*Ticket Purchase Required

2:00 PM – 2:50 PM

**CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

AZALEA 2

**Youth Services and School Library Division (YSSLD): Meet and Greet Social**

AZALEA 3

**How to Run a Successful Best Sellers Club (Public)**  
Collections & Access

CAMELLIA

**Book-Marketing Your Collection: A Unique Way to Promote Fiction (Public)**  
Collections & Access

DOGWOOD

**Genealogy and Government Docs, Free for All! (Public/Academic)**  
Collections & Access

2:30 PM – 4:00 PM

**Energizer Break Sponsored by Washington County Public Library and Pelham Library Guild**

3:00 PM – 3:50 AM

**CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

CAMELLIA

**Libby the First Library Facility Dog (Public/School)**  
Outreach Services & Programs

AZALEA 2

**Homework Alabama (Public/School)**  
Outreach Services & Programs

AZALEA 3

**How to Catalog a Library of Things (Public)**  
Collections & Access

DOGWOOD

**Bridging the Gap in Classroom Management and Library Instruction (Academic)**  
Leadership & Management

4:00 PM – 4:50 PM

**CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

CAMELLIA

**Thinking Outside the Survey Box: Using Qualitative Tools to Gather Feedback from Unique Library User Groups (Academic)**  
Outreach Services & Programs

AZALEA 3

**Fiction Reimagined: Rightsizing Academic Collections with AI and Collaborative Expertise (Academic)**  
Collections & Access

AZALEA 2

**Lessons Learned from a Circulation Manual Overhaul (Public)**  
Leadership & Management

DOGWOOD

**Building a Loyalty Forcefield: What Truly Matters for the Future of Libraries (Public)**  
Leadership & Management

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

HICKORY LOUNGE

**SLIS Alumni Mixer**  
Social

8:00 PM – 9:00 PM

HICKORY LOUNGE

**Mysteries & Mind Games**  
Social

## FRIDAY, 11 APRIL 2025

7:00 AM – 8:00 AM	TERRACE <b>Yoga</b>	
8:00 AM – 12:00 PM	<b>Convention Registration Open</b>	
8:00 AM – 10:00 AM	<b>Morning Coffee Sponsored by the Alabama Library Association</b>	
9:00 AM – 9:50 AM <b>CONCURRENT SESSIONS</b>	CAMELLIA <b>Technical Services and Systems Round Table (TSSRT) Business Meeting Meeting</b>	DOGWOOD <b>The Best of Friends: Best Practices for Public Libraries and Friends Groups (Public) Leaders &amp; Management</b>
	AZALEA 2 <b>Alabama Library Instruction Round Table (ALIRT) Business Meeting Meeting</b>	GOLDENROD <b>Libraries Under Fire (2-hour session 9:00 –10:50am) Collections &amp; Access</b>
	AZALEA 3 <b>Youth Services and School Library Division (YSSLD) Business Meeting Meeting</b>	
10:00 AM – 3:00 PM	<b>Exhibits Opens</b>	
10:00 AM – 5:00 PM	<b>Poster Sessions Open</b>	
10:00 AM – 10:50 AM <b>CONCURRENT SESSIONS</b>	CAMELLIA <b>Exploring Faculty Attitudes Toward AI use in Classrooms: A Study in Progress by the Houston Cole Library's Instruction Committee (Academic) Systems &amp; Technology</b>	AZALEA 3 <b>Word Clouds for Collection Development: Using Alma Analytics and Python to Identify Patron Preferences and Areas for Growth in Collections (Academic) Collections &amp; Access</b>
	AZALEA 2 <b>Scholarly Communication Round Table Meeting</b>	DOGWOOD <b>Unconventional Solutions for Workforce Development Partnership (Public) Leadership &amp; Management</b>
11:00 AM – 11:50 AM <b>CONCURRENT SESSIONS</b>	CAMELLIA <b>Creating a Things Library: The Good, The Bad, and the Unexpected (Public) Collections &amp; Access</b>	AZALEA 3 <b>Creating Interactive Storytimes with Music, Movement, and More (Public/School) Outreach Services &amp; Programs</b>
	AZALEA 2 <b>Public Library Directors Association of Alabama (PLDAA) Meeting Meeting</b>	DOGWOOD <b>Unveiling a New Institutional Repository and Its Inaugural Multimedia Archival Collection (Academic) Collections &amp; Access</b>
12:00 PM – 2:00 PM	GRANDVIEW <b>President's Program with Sam Helmick</b>	

\*Additional Ticket Purchase Required

2:00 PM – 2:50 PM  
**CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

AZALEA 2  
**Tenure-Track Librarians: Mentoring to Master Tenure & Promotion Pathways (Academic)**  
Leadership & Management

AZALEA 3  
**“AI, you’re rocking my world!”: Implications of AI for Scholarly Communication (Academic)**  
Collections & Outreach

CAMELLIA  
**From Fandom to Shelf: How BookTok, Discord, and Ao3 Are Shaping the Future of Reading (Public)**  
Collections & Access

DOGWOOD  
**Building Resilient Communities: How and Why to Develop Sustainability Programs at Your Library (All)**  
Outreach Services & Programs

2:30 PM – 4:00 PM

**Chocolate Break Sponsored by Opelika Public Library**

3:00 PM – 3:50 PM  
**CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

CAMELLIA  
**An Extraordinary Future: AACRL & CUS Lightning Talks (Academic)**  
Mixed

DOGWOOD  
**From Interest to Attendance: Adult Programming (Public)**  
Outreach Services & Programs

AZALEA 2  
**Solo Librarians: An Inside View from Two Community College Librarians (Academic)**  
Leadership & Management

GOLDENROD  
**Wellness Session: Sound Bath Social**

AZALEA 3  
**Wading Through the Weeds: Reevaluating & Reimagining the Juvenile Collection in the Academic Library (Academic)**  
Collections & Access

4:00 PM – 4:50 PM  
**CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

CAMELLIA  
**Uncovering Your Library’s Unique Narrative: Storytelling for Engagement and Impact (All)**  
Programs & Outreach

AZALEA 3  
**The Passport Project: Embracing Cultural Differences Through Travel and Books (School)**  
Collections & Access

AZALEA 2  
**Excel for Analyzing and Managing your Data (Public)**  
Collections & Access

DOGWOOD  
**Library Advocacy Campaign: Videography Session**

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

**President’s Bash and Association Awards**

\*Additional Ticket Purchase Required

8:00 PM – 9:00 PM

HICKORY LOUNGE  
**Mysteries & Mind Games**  
Social

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

DOGWOOD  
**Grab & Go Breakfast Sponsored by Guntersville Public Library**

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

DOGWOOD  
**ALLA Annual Meeting and Transition Meeting**

**SATURDAY, 12 APRIL 2025**

## WEDNESDAY, 9 APRIL 2025

1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

### Copyright Bootcamp (Preconference)\*

GUNTERSVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

This dynamic half-day pre-conference workshop explores key copyright concepts. Through lectures, discussions, and interactive activities, you'll gain a solid foundation in copyright law, fair use, and statutory exceptions. The session will also tackle emerging issues like AI's impact on copyright and the future of Controlled Digital Lending (CDL), equipping you with the knowledge to navigate complex legal scenarios with confidence.

*\*This is a free preconference event, but you must register. Registration is limited.*

**Jeff Graveline**, University of Alabama at Birmingham Libraries

**Dr. Marla Hertz**, University of Alabama at Birmingham Libraries

2:00 PM – 6:00 PM

### Convention Registration Open

GUNTERSVILLE LODGE & CONVENTION CENTER, MAIN ENTRANCE

2:30 PM – 5:00 PM

### Guided Hike (Preconference)\*

CONVENTION CENTER

Be Unconventional on a 2.5 to 3.0 mile hike before we kick-off ALLACon25! This hike will begin at 2:30 pm and should conclude by 4:30/5:00 pm depending on the pace of the group. Experienced hikers and beginners are equally welcome.

*\*This is a free preconference event, but you must register. Registration is limited. Weather permitting.*

**Mary Campbell**, Pelham Public Library

**Lindsay Gardner**, O'Neal Library

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

### Welcome Reception\*

CONVENTION CENTER, HICKORY LOUNGE

Kick off ALLACon25 with great company, good food, and a relaxed atmosphere! Mingle with fellow attendees, reconnect with colleagues, and make new connections as we celebrate the start of an inspiring conference. Come enjoy refreshments, conversation, and a warm ALLA welcome!

*\*Please note: An additional ticket is required to attend.*

## THURSDAY, 10 APRIL 2025

7:00 AM – 8:00 AM

### Yoga

CONVENTION CENTER, TERRACE

Start your day with gentle movement and mindfulness! Join us for a refreshing morning yoga session—perfect for all levels—to energize your body and focus your mind before a full day of conference activities.

**Kristie Barnett**

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

### Convention Registration Open

8:00 AM – 10:00 AM

### Morning Coffee Sponsored by Bibliotheca

UPSTAIRS FIREPLACE

Welcome to the Alabama Library Association Convention! Start your day off right by stopping by the registration desk to check in and pick up your materials. Once you're all set, head to the Upstairs Fireplace and grab a fresh cup of coffee, courtesy of our generous sponsor, Bibliotheca! It's the perfect opportunity to connect with fellow attendees, chat with the Bibliotheca team, and get energized before diving into a full day of sessions, discussions, and networking.

9:00 AM – 9:50 AM

### Concurrent Sessions

#### Pop-Up Joy: Creating Engaging Micro-Programs with Minimal Effort (Public)

CONVENTION CENTER, CAMELLIA | [OUTREACH SERVICES & PROGRAMS](#)

Not every library program needs weeks of planning—some of the best community engagement moments happen on the fly! This session will focus on pop-up programming: short, spontaneous, and fun activities that can be deployed with minimal staff and resources. Attendees will leave with easy-to-replicate ideas for surprise and delight moments in their library spaces.

**Rosanna McGinnis**, Opelika Public Library

#### Public Library Division (PLD) Business Meeting

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 3 | [MEETING](#)

Join us for the PLD Business Meeting to discuss important updates, initiatives, and plans for the year ahead. This is a great opportunity to connect with colleagues, share ideas, and get involved in shaping the future of our division within the Alabama Library Association. All members are encouraged to attend!



## College, University, and Special Libraries (CUS) Business Meeting

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 2 | [MEETING](#)

Join us for the CUS Business Meeting to discuss important updates, initiatives, and plans for the year ahead. This is a great opportunity to connect with colleagues, share ideas, and get involved in shaping the future of our division within the Alabama Library Association. All members are encouraged to attend!

## Adapting Story Times (School)

CONVENTION CENTER, DOGWOOD | [OUTREACH SERVICES & PROGRAMS](#)

Learn how to create engaging and accessible storytimes for children with disabilities. This session will explore techniques for adapting storytime to meet the needs of children with physical and cognitive challenges. Participants will also have the opportunity to share their own successful strategies and gain new ideas for fostering inclusive, welcoming library experiences for all young readers.

**Katie Lovell**, AIDB, Alabama Instructional Resource Center for the Blind

10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

## Exhibits Opens

10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

## Poster Presentations Open

Presenters will be stationed at their posters periodically throughout the day and open to conversation and questions!

10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

## Opening Session with Lisa Varga

CONVENTION CENTER, GOLDENWOOD

Lisa Varga is the Executive Director of the Virginia Library Association, a professional organization representing more than 5,000 librarians and library staff in Academic, Public and Special libraries throughout the Commonwealth. In 2024, she was named Librarian of the Year by Library Journal. Lisa is the immediate past Chair of the Virginia Beach Public Library Board. She is a member of the International Council of Library Association Executives, the Virginia Society of Association Executives, and the American Library Association Policy Corps, working on the Unite Against Book Bans program. She has presented locally and nationally on a variety of library and association topics, and is a mom to three young men who all went through a “reluctant reader” phase.

**Lisa Varga**, Virginia Library Association

12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

## Alabama Author Awards Program\*

CONVENTION CENTER, GRANDVIEW

Celebrate outstanding literary achievements at this special luncheon honoring this year’s award-winning authors. Enjoy a delicious meal while we recognize excellence in writing and storytelling. Awards will be presented during the event, offering an inspiring opportunity to hear from the honored authors.

*\*Please note: An additional ticket is required to attend.*

Author Awards Committee

2:00 PM – 2:50 PM

## Concurrent Sessions

### Youth Services and School Library Division (YSSLD): Meet and Greet

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 2 | [SOCIAL](#)

Join us for the YSSLD Meet and Greet to discuss important updates, initiatives, and plans for the year ahead. This is a great opportunity to connect with colleagues, share ideas, and get involved in shaping the future of our division within the Alabama Library Association. All members are encouraged to attend!

### Book-Marketing Your Collection: A Unique Way to Promote Fiction (Public)

CONVENTION CENTER, CAMELLIA | [COLLECTIONS & ACCESS](#)

Bookmarks aren’t just for keeping your place! With the right graphic design program, they can also be used as an eye-catching way to list book recommendations, disseminate information on library resources or other helpful lists, and display checklists to help patrons keep up with popular book challenges.

**Elizabeth Winn**, Pelham Public Library

### How to Run a Successful Best Sellers Club (Public)

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 3 | [COLLECTIONS & ACCESS](#)

Learn how the Birmingham Public Library’s Best Sellers Club has grown to over 450 members and how you can implement a similar program at your library. This session covers organizing, purchasing, and administering a best-selling book club, conducting cost-benefit analyses, selecting vendor programs, and managing author selections with a diversity audit. Discover practical strategies for tracking memberships and holds using Excel and Sierra to keep your program running smoothly.

**Cynthia Barnett**, Birmingham Public Library

**Jennifer Hancock**, Birmingham Public Library

**Adrian Moultrie**, Birmingham Public Library

## Genealogy and Government Docs, Free for All! (Public/Academic)

CONVENTION CENTER, DOGWOOD | [COLLECTIONS & ACCESS](#)

Join us for the CUS Business Meeting to discuss important updates, initiatives, and plans for the year ahead. This is a great opportunity to connect with colleagues, share ideas, and get involved in shaping the future of our division within the Alabama Library Association. All members are encouraged to attend!

**Tim Dodge**, GODORT Moderator, Auburn University Libraries

**Mary Beth Newbill**, Birmingham Public Library

**2:30 PM – 4:00 PM**

## Energizer Break Sponsored by Washington County Public Library and Pelham Library Guild

CONVENTION CENTER, LOBBY

Stop by the Lobby near the registration desk and take a moment to recharge and connect! Enjoy a fresh cup of coffee and light refreshments while mingling with fellow attendees. This is the perfect opportunity to network, reflect on sessions, and prepare for the next part of the convention.

**3:00 PM – 3:50 PM**

## Concurrent Sessions

### Libby the First Library Facility Dog (Public/School)

CONVENTION CENTER, CAMELLIA | [OUTREACH SERVICES & PROGRAMS](#)

Ever wondered what it takes to have a facility dog in your library? Learn about the different types of facility dogs, their roles, and how they differ from therapy animals. Discover the process of acquiring a facility dog, the challenges and benefits, and how one could enhance your library's services. Hear real experiences, including the journey to bringing Libby to the library, and gain insights into whether a facility dog might be right for your community!

**Wendy Geist**, Hoover Public Library

### How to Catalog a Library of Things (Public)

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 3 | [COLLECTIONS & ACCESS](#)

Learn how to effectively catalog Library of Things objects and kits using MARC21 and RDA. This session will cover best practices for descriptive cataloging, creating access points for both focused searches and serendipitous discovery, and utilizing online resources for object cataloging. Gain the skills needed to enhance patron access and discovery of non-traditional library materials.

**Emily Allee**, Birmingham Public Library

**Cynthia Barnett**, Birmingham Public Library

**Jason Brown**

## Utilizing Your Homework Alabama Tutor.com Program (Public/School)

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 2 | [OUTREACH SERVICES & PROGRAMS](#)

Join Dorsey Baldwin and Pamela Brehm from Tutor.com for a live demonstration of the Homework Alabama program. Discover how to offer free, 24/7 tutoring support for learners of all ages, including bilingual options, writing review services, and test prep from The Princeton Review®. This session will cover key features, promotional resources, and how to access Tutor.com University for self-paced training, followed by a Q&A.

**Dorsey Baldwin**, Tutor.com

**Pamela Brehm**, Tutor.com

## Bridging the Gap in Classroom Management and Library Instruction (Academic)

CONVENTION CENTER, DOGWOOD | [LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT](#)

In an era where libraries are evolving into dynamic learning environments, the role of library workers extends beyond traditional information services to include effective classroom management and instructional techniques. Many MLIS programs overlook practical teaching skills, such as classroom management, instructional design, and assessment techniques, leaving graduates unprepared for real-world educational settings. To address these gaps, programs should incorporate hands-on experiences, collaborative learning strategies, and ongoing professional development to better equip future librarians for their instructional roles. Through a combination of theoretical insights and practical strategies, this panel will explore methods for enhancing library instruction, fostering collaborative learning, and managing diverse user groups in various types of library settings. Participants will engage in discussions around integrating classroom management principles into library practices, leveraging instructional design frameworks, and developing interactive programming that meets the needs of various audiences. By equipping library workers with these essential skills, we can create more engaging, inclusive, and educational library experiences, ultimately strengthening the library's role as a vital community resource.

**Christina McClellan**, Alabama Museum of the Health Sciences

**Laura Pitts**, Jacksonville State University Library

**Summer Upton**, University of Alabama at Birmingham Libraries

4:00 PM – 4:50 PM

## Concurrent Sessions

### Thinking Outside the Survey Box: Using Qualitative Tools to Gather Feedback from Unique Library User Groups (Academic)

CONVENTION CENTER, CAMELLIA | [OUTREACH SERVICES & PROGRAMS](#)

Libraries often employ surveys to collect information about their users. However, studies have shown that surveys are less effective for targeting smaller populations. In contrast, qualitative approaches are well suited to capture the diversity of experience among small communities. The task of conducting and analyzing interviews can be daunting, as it not as straightforward as surveys. This presentation will review how qualitative research can be achieved using simple coding tools and adopting key project management practices. My aim is to demystify focus group methodology by drawing from a recent study I conducted on postdoctoral fellows on how they engage with the campus library. Specifically, this talk will outline data management practices for qualitative data and feature the free, open-source software, Taguette (<https://www.taguette.org/>) for coding transcripts. Taguette is easy to use, without the steep learning curve of other qualitative analysis tools like NVivo. While Taguette is limited in the types of analyses that it can perform and lacks the polish of commercial platforms, the product works well for projects with relatively simple data. By employing these tools and practices, attendees can confidently add qualitative research to their library's research toolkit.

**Marla Hertz**, University of Alabama at Birmingham Libraries

### Lessons Learned from a Circulation Manual Overhaul (Public)

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 2 | [LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT](#)

Through a three-year project to revise the Jefferson County Public Library's circulation manual, members of the revision committee have encountered woefully out-of-date guidelines, circulation debates on topics we assumed everyone handled the same way, and the need to address questions that seemed to have no established answers. We're sharing the lessons we've learned along the way so that you can evaluate your own circulation policies and procedures - without spending three years doing it!

**Thomas Kulovitz**, O'Neal Library

**Tamara Tackett**, Irondale Public Library

**Tara Vines**, Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest

### Fiction Reimagined: Rightsizing Academic Collections with AI and Collaborative Expertise (Academic)

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 3 | [COLLECTIONS & ACCESS](#)

This session delves into the process of rightsizing the fiction collection in an academic library, addressing challenges posed

by the project's potentially overwhelming scope. It highlights how a strategic combination of AI tools, like ChatGPT, and collaborative efforts with librarians, students, and faculty can simplify the process. A key focus is placed on assessing literary value to ensure the collection encompasses diverse local voices that support student and faculty interests. Students will use a rubric to evaluate fiction titles, ensuring consistency in literary assessment while incorporating critical thinking skills in the selection process as they use AI tools. Faculty and liaison librarians involvement brings valuable perspectives on literary quality and relevance to collection. Attendees will gain hands-on insights into creating evaluation rubrics, leveraging AI for efficiency, assessing literary value, and engaging faculty for a well-rounded collection review.

**Dagan Bond-Turner**, Athens State University Libraries

**Danielle Chouinard**, Athens State University Libraries

**Laken Smith**, Athens State University Libraries

### Building a Loyalty Forcefield: What Truly Matters for the Future of Libraries (Public)

CONVENTION CENTER, DOGWOOD | [LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT](#)

Libraries tend to focus on customer service to attract and retain patrons, but it isn't enough anymore. Circulation and visitation are declining rapidly. Librarians are being threatened. Funding is being strangled. Simply put - we need a loyalty forcefield to protect us from these attacks. Research has shown that satisfied patrons are not necessarily loyal patrons. Isn't it time we stop worrying about customer service and start focusing on patron loyalty?

**Gabriel Morley**

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

## SLIS Alumni Mixer

CONVENTION CENTER, HICKORY LOUNGE | SOCIAL

Reconnect, reminisce, and network with fellow alumni of the University of Alabama's School of Library and Information Studies! This informal gathering is the perfect opportunity to catch up with old friends, make new connections, and share stories from your time at SLIS. Drop by, grab a drink, and Roll Tide!

8:00 PM – 9:00 PM

## Mysteries & Mind Games

CONVENTION CENTER, HICKORY LOUNGE | SOCIAL

Test your knowledge and challenge your wits in a fun and lively trivia night! Gather your team or play solo as you compete for bragging rights in a mix of general knowledge and bookish brainteasers. Surprises await—come for the trivia, stay for the unexpected!

**Melanie Carden**

## FRIDAY, 11 APRIL 2025

7:00 AM – 8:00 AM

### Yoga

CONVENTION CENTER, TERRACE | SOCIAL

Start your day with gentle movement and mindfulness! Join us for a refreshing morning yoga session—perfect for all levels—to energize your body and focus your mind before a full day of conference activities.

**Kristie Barnett**

8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

### Convention Registration Open

8:00 AM – 10:00 AM

### Morning Coffee Sponsored by the Alabama Library Association

CONVENTION CENTER, UPSTAIRS FIREPLACE

On your way to sessions, stop by the Upstairs Fireplace and grab a fresh cup of coffee, courtesy of our generous sponsor, Bibliotheca! It's the perfect opportunity to connect with fellow attendees, chat with the Bibliotheca team, and get energized before diving into a full day of sessions, discussions, and networking.

9:00 AM – 9:50 AM

### Concurrent Sessions

#### Technical Services and Systems Round Table (TSSRT) Business Meeting

CONVENTION CENTER, CAMELLIA | MEETING

Join us for the TSSRT Business Meeting to discuss important updates, initiatives, and plans for the year ahead. This is a great opportunity to connect with colleagues, share ideas, and get involved in shaping the future of our division within the Alabama Library Association. All members are encouraged to attend!

#### Alabama Library Instruction Round Table (ALIRT) Business Meeting

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 2 | MEETING

Join us for the ALIRT Business Meeting to discuss important updates, initiatives, and plans for the year ahead. This is a great opportunity to connect with colleagues, share ideas, and get involved in shaping the future of our division within the Alabama Library Association. All members are encouraged to attend!

#### Youth Services and School Library Division (YSSLD) Business Meeting

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 3 | MEETING

Join us for the YSSLD Business Meeting to discuss important updates, initiatives, and plans for the year ahead. This is a great

opportunity to connect with colleagues, share ideas, and get involved in shaping the future of our division within the Alabama Library Association. All members are encouraged to attend!

### The Best of Friends: Best Practices for Public Libraries and Friends Groups (Public)

CONVENTION CENTER, DOGWOOD | LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

Many public libraries are fortunate to have a group of volunteers who want to support the library's mission through the local Friends of the Library. These groups typically support their local library through fundraising, volunteerism, and advocacy. Unfortunately, even in situations where everyone has the best of intentions, there can be confusion or even enmity and resentment between public libraries and their Friends. Through a great deal of intention and effort, the Dothan Houston County Library System and the Friends of the Dothan Houston County Library System have found ways to improve communication, clarify roles, and ensure that everyone (including staff, volunteers, and trustees) understand what these two organizations do, what they don't do, and how they complement each other. As a result, the two organizations have dramatically improved how they collaborate and communicate, allowing both to be even more effective at their respective missions.

**Everlie Bolton**, Friends of the Dothan Houston County Library System

**Chris Warren**, Dothan Houston County Library System

### Libraries Under Fire

(2-hour session 9:00 am – 10:50 am)

CONVENTION CENTER, GOLDENROD | COLLECTIONS & ACCESS

Why are Alabama libraries under attack, and what can librarians do about it? This panel discussion—infused with factual evidence, nuanced conversation, and a dash of pop culture—examines the rise of book bans, anti-DEI legislation, and challenges to intellectual freedom. Featuring librarians from public, academic, and school libraries, the session will explore the impact on collection development and strategies for resistance. Moderated by MCIRT's Tim Dodge, this conversation is essential for those committed to protecting the freedom to read.

**Tim Dodge**, MCIRT Moderator

**Jessica Hayes**

**Lacie Sutherland**

10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

### Exhibits Opens

10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

### Poster Presentations Open

Presenters will be stationed at their posters periodically throughout the day and open to conversation and questions!

**10:00 AM – 10:50 AM**

**Concurrent Sessions**

**Exploring Faculty Attitudes Toward AI use in Classrooms: A Study in Progress by the Houston Cole Library’s Instruction Committee (Academic)**

CONVENTION CENTER, CAMELLIA | **SYSTEMS & TECHNOLOGY**

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in educational settings has sparked considerable conversation among faculty regarding its potential benefits and challenges. This study, initiated by the Houston Cole Library’s Instruction Committee at Jacksonville State University (JSU), aims to explore Jax State faculty attitudes toward AI use in the classroom and the importance of AI literacy among educators. The goal of the study is to equip library staff with a deeper understanding of faculty attitudes toward AI, allowing them to tailor literacy tools and resources more effectively. By identifying specific concerns and interests among faculty, library staff can develop targeted training programs that address AI literacy, focusing on how to integrate AI tools into teaching practices. The research gathered by the Houston Cole Librarians can be used in other libraries as a way to better understand how AI literacy and AI instruction can benefit the individual needs of faculty. This presentation will explore the heart of AI literacy and ethics and why librarians are an integral part of this conversation.

**Paula Barnett-Ellis**, Jacksonville State University

**Laurie Heathcock**, Jacksonville State University

**Karlie Johnson**, Jacksonville State University

**Kim Westbrook**, Jacksonville State University

**Laura Pitts**, Jacksonville State University

**Scholarly Communication Round Table**

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 2 | **MEETING**

Join the Scholarly Communications Round Table to discuss important updates, initiatives, and plans for the year ahead. This is a great opportunity to connect with colleagues, share ideas, and get involved in shaping the future of our division within the Alabama Library Association. All members are encouraged to attend!

**Word Clouds for Collection Development: Using Alma Analytics and Python to Identify Patron Preferences and Areas for Growth in Collections (Academic)**

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 3 | **COLLECTIONS & ACCESS**

Assessing how patrons use our collections is crucial for making informed collecting decisions. It is equally important to assess what, or who, is over or underrepresented in our collections so that we offer access to as wide a variety of perspectives as possible, and patrons see themselves represented in our library.

This information can also help us identify areas of focus within the collection and anticipate needs based on discrepancies between the two datasets. I have developed a simple, yet effective, data visualization method to compare these two datasets for our leisure collection of over two hundred print books: by gathering data on our collection using Alma Analytics and cleaning it up using Python, I created a word cloud that illustrates subject terms highly present in our collection, and one that illustrates those terms which are most popular according to patron usage statistics. This visualization method can highlight target subjects in collection development and help us understand which areas have the highest potential for growth. As librarians, we seek both to respond to patron demand and introduce our users to new and diverse perspectives. I will outline how I use these tools to create word clouds and apply them to my collecting strategy for our leisure collection at a public, four-year degree-granting institution, and how they could be used for analyzing collections of academic disciplines and providing stakeholders with a birds-eye view of our institutional holdings.

**Jaycee Chapman**, University of Alabama at Birmingham Libraries

**Unconventional Solutions for Workforce Development Partnership (Public)**

CONVENTION CENTER, DOGWOOD | **LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT**

What does it really mean for libraries to support workforce and economic development? Explore how libraries of all sizes can become key partners in community growth, working alongside local officials and agencies to drive meaningful progress. Learn strategies for securing a seat at the table in development discussions and ensuring your library remains relevant, innovative, and valued in shaping the future of your community.

**Jessica Ross**, Washington County Public Library (WCPL)

**WCPL Staff**

**3:00 PM – 3:50 PM**

**Concurrent Sessions**

**Creating a Things Library: The Good, The Bad, and the Unexpected (Public)**

CONVENTION CENTER, CAMELLIA | **COLLECTIONS & ACCESS**

Thinking about launching a Library of Things? This session explores the key challenges—from purchasing and cataloging to circulation, packaging, and policies. Learn from real experiences about potential pitfalls and how to navigate them, ensuring a smooth and successful implementation for your library.

**Beth Cason**, Public Library of Anniston-Calhoun County

**Teresa Kiser**, Public Library of Anniston-Calhoun County

## Public Library Directors Association of Alabama (PLDAA) Meeting)

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 2 | MEETING

The PLDAA Executive Committee will give an overview of the 2025 legislative session and discuss advocacy strategies. There will also be a short business meeting for PLDAA members.

## Creating Interactive Storytimes with Music, Movement, and More (Public/School)

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 3 | OUTREACH SERVICES & PROGRAMS

Discover powerful ways to make your storytimes more interactive for both children and caregivers - and save your sanity in the process! Music, movement, and dramatic play help bring stories to life, allow children to fully embody new concepts, and promote caregiver interaction. Research shows that interactive storytime techniques tap into children's natural instincts to play, leverage multi-sensory stimuli, provide connections to all four lobes of the brain, and heighten emotional and social awareness - all while reinforcing the early literacy practices of Every Child Ready to Read. Not only do interactive storytime models provide engaging structure for young children, they also help increase caregiver participation and curb programmer burnout. Programmers will learn how anyone can design and lead an interactive storytime, regardless of their level of experience with music, movement, or drama. In fact, because there are no craft supplies to buy and prep, no lengthy scripts to memorize, and no story kits to make - interactive storytimes are one of the simplest, cheapest, and quickest library programs to implement. Participants will walk away with new resources, practical tips, and actionable steps for immediate program implementation.

Alyssa Jewell

## Unveiling a New Institutional Repository and Its Inaugural Multimedia Archival Collection (Academic)

CONVENTION CENTER, DOGWOOD | COLLECTIONS & ACCESS

To address a growing need for a scholarly works and archival projects digital hub, the University of Montevallo recently adopted an institutional repository. In this presentation, the Systems Librarian will provide an overview of the process used to select an institutional repository. Further, the University Archivist, along with the Systems Librarian, will showcase the repository's inaugural archival project: The Ralph and Marcia Sears Media Archive. They will describe the planning undertaken that led to a successful project implementation. The collaboration required and features used in the design of the archival project will be detailed. And, one aspect of the project, converting reel to reel recordings, will be highlighted.

Dr. Sheila Brandt, Carmichael Library, University of Montevallo

Carey W. Heatherly, Carmichael Library, University of Montevallo

12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

## President's Program with Sam Helmick\*

CONVENTION CENTER, GRANDVIEW

Sam Helmick is the President-Elect of the American Library Association (ALA) and the Community & Access Services Coordinator at the Iowa City Public Library. Sam is the Iowa Library Association's immediate past president, having led the organisation during a challenging year when Iowa had the second highest number of library-adverse bills in the nation. Their efforts to engage, organise, and mobilise local communities were critical in ensuring codified financing for all public libraries in the state. Sam's advocacy for school library workers' rights against censorship and harmful legislation culminated in two intellectual freedom lawsuits, one of which has advanced to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals. Sam has served extensively on a range of committees of the American Library Association. They have also been recognized as an ALA Emerging Leader and served as the Intellectual Freedom Round Table Chair-Elect, ALA Chapter Councilor, and member of the ALA Executive Board. Sam is an accomplished author and social media marketing instructor who speaks internationally on a variety of topics, including advocacy, intellectual freedom, social marketing, outreach, wellness, and library fundraising. Please note: An additional ticket is required to attend.

*\*Please note: An additional ticket is required to attend.*

Sam Helmick, Iowa City Public Library, ALA President-Elect

2:00 PM – 2:50 PM

## Concurrent Sessions

### Tenure-Track Librarians: Mentoring to Master Tenure & Promotion Pathways (Academic)

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 2 | LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

This panel presentation and Q&A is comprised of pre-tenure and post-tenure librarians. The panel and audience will explore strategies to support tenure-track librarians in navigating the Tenure & Promotion process through monthly mentoring and in-house meetings. These meetings foster open communication, provide peer support, and offer tailored guidance to align with institutional expectations. Attendees will learn how regular, collaborative interactions can reduce stress, enhance preparation, and build professional networks. The session will also share practical tools for developing effective mentoring and meeting structures that foster growth, reflection, and accountability.

Mary Aquila, Athens State University Kares Library

Dagan Bond-Turner, Athens State University Kares Library

Danielle Chouinard, Athens State University Kares Library

Laken Smith, Athens State University Kares Library

Jennifer Wolfe, Athens State University Kares Library

## From Fandom to Shelf: How BookTok, Discord, and Ao3 Are Shaping the Future of Reading (Public)

CONVENTION CENTER, CAMELLIA | [COLLECTIONS & ACCESS](#)

This session will take you beyond traditional publishing resources, exploring how to leverage innovative spaces like BookTok, Discord, and fanfiction platforms such as Archive of Our Own (Ao3) not only for collection development but also to help boost circulation. Learn how book influencers and fan communities are reshaping publishing, with fanfiction transitioning from niche online spaces into mainstream publishing. Discover how to use Discord to engage with book enthusiasts and recognize the increasing importance of self-published and indie authors. Attendees will leave equipped to make informed collection decisions and connect with modern readers in new ways, ultimately enhancing circulation.

**Leigh Ann Laney**, Guntersville Public Library

## “AI, you’re rocking my world!”: Implications of AI for Scholarly Communication (Academic)

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 3 | [COLLECTION & ACCESS](#)

The accessibility, power, and sophistication of Artificial Intelligence software have increased notably in the past couple of years, and researchers are using AI in a multitude of ways. This usage affects all parts of the scholarly communication process, including the literature review, data analysis, authorship, peer review, dissemination, and consumption of research. A panel of librarians will discuss the impact of AI on scholarly communication and its implications for libraries.

**Charlotte Ford**, Carmichael Library, University of Montevallo

**Jeff Graveline**, University of Alabama at Birmingham Libraries

**April Urban**, University of Alabama at Huntsville Library

## Building Resilient Communities: How and Why to Develop Sustainability Programs at Your Library (All)

CONVENTION CENTER, DOGWOOD | [OUTREACH SERVICES & PROGRAMS](#)

This session will discuss the important role libraries can play in developing resilient communities. Resilience is the capability to withstand shocks to the system and continue to function. As we have seen with Helene’s devastation to Appalachian communities far inland, there is no place that is beyond the reach of sudden impacts of climate change. During the pandemic, the fragility of the supply chain was exposed, and in this election year, the vulnerability of systems of civic order to shock are readily apparent.

What can and should libraries of all kinds do to help ensure their communities are more secure in the face of these hazards? This session will feature project and programming ideas to tackle disaster planning, food security, community-based mutual

support networks, and other approaches to resilience. While these may at first blush seem like “mission creep” or “just one more thing” that librarians are expected to do, I believe this can make a significant contribution to the seemingly never ending anxiety about the “relevance” of the future of libraries.

**John Burgess**, University of Alabama SLIS

**Ashley Williams**, University of Alabama SLIS

**2:30 PM – 4:00 PM**

## Chocolate Break Sponsored by Opelika Public Library

CONVENTION CENTER, LOBBY

Stop by the Lobby near the registration desk and take a moment to recharge and connect! Enjoy a fresh cup of coffee and chocolate treats while mingling with fellow attendees. This is the perfect opportunity to network, reflect on sessions, and prepare for the next part of the convention.

**3:00 PM – 3:50 PM**

## Concurrent Sessions

### An Extraordinary Future: AACRL & CUS Lightning Talks (Academic)

CONVENTION CENTER, CAMELLIA | [MIXED](#)

This program features a series of engaging Lightning Talks, where academic librarians will present brief, impactful discussions on a variety of topics relevant to the evolving landscape of academic libraries. Each talk will be concise, allowing presenters to share innovative practices, emerging trends, and unique challenges in the field of librarianship. Participants will gain valuable insights from their peers, discover new strategies to enhance their library services, and leave inspired to implement innovative practices in their own work. This program will also strengthen the community among academic librarians, fostering collaboration and support.

**PRESENTERS: MIXED**

### Solo Librarians: An Inside View from Two Community College Librarians (Academic)

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 2 | [LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT](#)

What are the unique challenges of being the only librarian at a community college or other small library? How does a librarian manage their time, outreach, instruction, and reference as the only librarian? Can a “solo” librarian successfully manage a college library? Tamiko Lawrence (Reid State Community College) and Leslie Rewis (Central Alabama Community College) discuss their experiences and perspectives as newly hired librarians entering a community college and navigating the uncharted territory of being the “solo” librarian.

**Tamiko Lawrence**, Reid State Community College

**Leslie Rewis**, Central Alabama Community College

## Wading Through the Weeds: Reevaluating & Reimagining the Juvenile Collection in the Academic Library (Academic)

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 3 | [COLLECTIONS & ACCESS](#)

In the 21st-century academic library, where physical space is at a premium and academic programs are moving increasingly to online or hybrid formats, reassessing our collections has become more important than ever. What role does the juvenile collection play in an academic environment? Reevaluating the collection in terms of space, usefulness of the collection, relevance for current academic programs, item format, and organization scheme can lead to more meaningful selection and weeding of this section of the library. Undertaking a major weeding project of an entire section of the academic library is an interdepartmental collaboration that takes communication, shared goals, and a clear plan of attack from all members of the library involved—whether they are involved in reference & instruction, metadata & technical services, or user access. A major interdepartmental project also brings with it unique challenges on the assessment, selection, and technical sides.

**Kelsey Robertson**, University of Alabama at Birmingham Libraries

**Summer Upton**, University of Alabama at Birmingham Libraries

## From Interest to Attendance: Adult Programming (Public)

CONVENTION CENTER, DOGWOOD | [OUTREACH SERVICES & PROGRAMS](#)

Discover effective strategies for planning, promoting, and executing engaging adult programs that keep your community coming back for more. Learn how to identify topics of interest, market creatively, and cross-promote programs for maximum impact. Walk away with fresh ideas and practical tools to elevate your library's adult programming.

**Shannon Haddock**, Hoover Public Library

## Wellness Session: Sound Bath

CONVENTION CENTER, GOLDENROD | [SOCIAL](#)

Relax, recharge, and unwind with a soothing sound bath experience. Let the calming vibrations wash over you, bringing balance and renewal to your busy conference day. No experience needed—just bring yourself and enjoy the serenity!

**Dr. Lindsey Smith**, Synaptic Harbor

4:00 PM – 4:50 PM

## Concurrent Sessions

### Uncovering Your Library's Unique Narrative: Storytelling for Engagement and Impact (All)

CONVENTION CENTER, CAMELLIA | [PROGRAMS & OUTREACH](#)

In this session, Sonni Hood, Senior Manager of PR & Communications at Unclaimed Baggage, will share her expertise in crafting compelling brand narratives through experiential marketing and PR strategy. Drawing on nearly a decade of experience elevating a brand's presence and earning national media recognition, Sonni will guide attendees through the process of uncovering their own brand's unique story. This session will equip librarians with tools to incorporate storytelling into their outreach efforts, making their services more relatable and engaging to the public. Librarians will learn how to engage audiences, attract media attention, and create meaningful connections that drive impact and results.

**Sonni Hood**, Senior Manager of Public Relations & Communications, Unclaimed Baggage

### Excel for Analyzing and Managing your Data (Public)

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 2 | [COLLECTIONS & ACCESS](#)

Librarians are all about data, but, frequently, Excel is under-utilized in libraries due to its reputation for being too complicated. From tracking sheets that automatically do math to in-depth collection analysis for weeding & collection development purposes to creating charts for talking to a library board or city council, Excel is a vital tool in any librarian's tool-kit. This session, intended for participants with a basic proficiency with Microsoft Office programs like Word, will provide an introduction to these skills in both Excel and Google Sheets

**Cassandra Brindle**, Guntersville Public Library

### The Passport Project: Embracing Cultural Differences Through Travel and Books (School)

CONVENTION CENTER, AZALEA 3 | [COLLECTIONS & ACCESS](#)

We all live in bubbles—little spheres where we are surrounded by people similar to ourselves. And travel is the best way to pop these bubbles and develop a true appreciation for cultural differences. While not everyone can travel the world in real life, everyone can travel through books. Hear how Alabama author and seven-continent traveler, Kellie McIntyre, has woven her family's experiences into THE PASSPORT PROJECT. This "AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS meets Middle School" teen travel memoir is based on the family's five-month global "ed-venture" and the lessons learned along the way.

**Kellie McIntyre**



## Library Advocacy Campaign: Videography Session

CONVENTION CENTER, DOGWOOD

The Public Library Directors Association of Alabama is launching an advocacy campaign to spread the word about the positive impact of our public libraries. Please stop by to meet with our videographer and share your stories about why you love what you do. We'll have some questions to help inspire you and to help steer the conversation, and we hope you'll share your stories about that patron interaction, that special program, or that special moment that has helped motivate you in your professional career, even when times are tough. Special thanks to Albertville-based videographer Chris Flores with CF Media and Dothan-based production company Evergreen Creative Company for making this session and this campaign possible.

**Names Go Here**, Organization Names here

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

## President's Bash and Association Awards\*

CONVENTION CENTER, GRANDVIEW

Join us for a special evening honoring excellence and dedication in the library community. This prestigious event, hosted by the Alabama Library Association President, celebrates outstanding contributions and achievements. Enjoy an inspiring program and a memorable gathering with colleagues. An additional ticket is required to attend.

*\*Please note: An additional ticket is required to attend.*

8:00 PM – 9:00 PM

## Mysteries & Mind Games

CONVENTION CENTER, HICKORY LOUNGE | SOCIAL

Test your knowledge and challenge your wits in a fun and lively trivia night! Gather your team or play solo as you compete for bragging rights in a mix of general knowledge and bookish brainteasers. Surprises await—come for the trivia, stay for the unexpected!

MELANIE CARDEN

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## SATURDAY, 12 APRIL 2025

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

## Grab & Go Breakfast Sponsored by Guntersville Public Library

CONVENTION CENTER, DOGWOOD

Breakfast available beginning at 9 AM in the Dogwood Room for fellowship followed immediately by the transition meeting.

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

## ALLA Annual Meeting and Transition

CONVENTION CENTER, DOGWOOD | MEETING



# KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**Lisa Varga**  
2024 LJ Librarian of the Year

Lisa Varga is the Executive Director of the Virginia Library Association, a professional organization representing more than 5,000 librarians and library staff in Academic, Public and Special libraries throughout the Commonwealth.

In 2024, she was named Librarian of the Year by Library Journal. Lisa is the immediate past Chair of the Virginia Beach Public Library Board.

She is a member of the International Council of Library Association Executives, the Virginia Society of Association Executives and the American Library Association Policy Corps, working on the Unite Against Book Bans program.

She has presented locally and nationally on a variety of library and association topics, and is a mom to three young men who all went through a “reluctant reader” phase.

## OPENING SESSION

**Thursday, April 10, 2025**

10:00 – 11:30 AM

GOLDENROD



**Sam Helmick**  
ALA President-Elect, 2024–2025

Sam Helmick is the President-Elect of the American Library Association (ALA) and the Community & Access Services Coordinator at the Iowa City Public Library.

Sam is the Iowa Library Association’s immediate past president, having led the organization during a challenging year when Iowa had the second highest number of library-adverse bills in the nation. Their efforts to engage, organize, and mobilize local communities were critical in ensuring codified financing for all public libraries in the state.

Sam’s advocacy for school library workers’ rights against censorship and harmful legislation culminated in two intellectual freedom lawsuits, one of which has advanced to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Sam has served extensively on a range of ALA committees. They have also been recognized as an ALA Emerging Leader and served as the Intellectual Freedom Round Table Chair-Elect, ALA Chapter Councilor, and member of the ALA Executive Board.

Sam is an accomplished author and social media marketing instructor who speaks internationally on a variety of topics, including advocacy, intellectual freedom, social marketing, outreach, wellness, and library fundraising.

## PRESIDENT’S PROGRAM

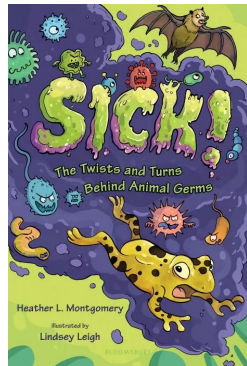
**Friday, April 11, 2025**

12:00 – 2:00 PM

GRANDVIEW

# ALABAMA AUTHOR AWARDS

## CHILDREN'S BOOKS



### ***Sick! The Twists and Turns Behind Animal Germs***

by Heather L. Montgomery

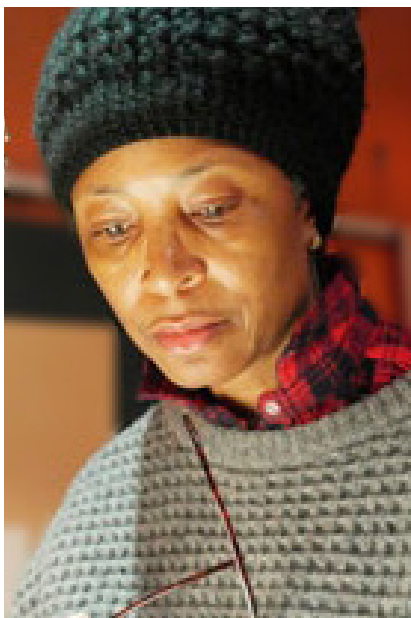
(BLOOMSBURY CHILDREN'S BOOKS, 2024)

Heather L. Montgomery has spent over 20 years educating both in and beyond the classroom, including directing a school-based environmental center. She has developed curricula, trained hundreds of educators, naturalists, and librarians, and helped thousands of children connect with the natural world. Each year, she engages with more than 10,000 students through festivals, school visits, and environmental programs.

Known for her dynamic presentations, she uses unexpected natural artifacts—such as petrified body parts and tree interiors—to spark scientific curiosity and inspire reluctant readers. Her professional development programs for teachers have received awards and widespread acclaim.

[heatherlmontgomery.com](http://heatherlmontgomery.com)

## YOUNG ADULT BOOKS



### ***My Selma: True Stories of a Southern Childhood at the Height of the Civil Rights Movement***

by Willie Mae Brown

(FARRAR, STRAUS AND GIROUX BYR, 2023)

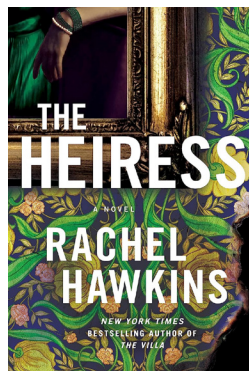
Willie Mae Brown left Alabama in 1970 at the age of seventeen to start a new life in Brooklyn, New York, where she worked for the New York Telephone Company until 2003. A visual artist and author, she began writing about her childhood in 2012, weaving the vernacular of her Southern upbringing into her storytelling. Brown has shared her work at numerous public events, including Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebrations at Brooklyn Borough Hall and various gatherings across the country.

In her debut book, she offers a compelling coming-of-age narrative, blending family stories of both the everyday and the extraordinary through the eyes of her twelve-year-old self, set against the backdrop of a town at the crossroads of history.

[williemaebrown.com](http://williemaebrown.com)

# ALABAMA AUTHOR AWARDS

## ADULT FICTION



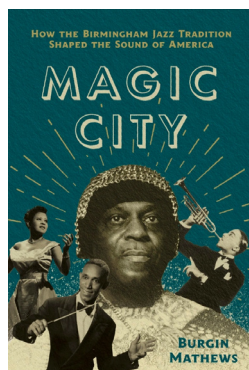
***The Heiress***  
by Rachel Hawkins  
(ST. MARTIN'S PRESS, 2024)

Rachel Hawkins was born in Newport News, Virginia and moved to Dothan, Alabama at a young age. Her writing journey began in kindergarten with a story about a unicorn, a witch, and a princess and was praised as “very imaginative” by her teacher and “a searing work of genius” by her mother.

She earned a degree in English literature from Auburn University in 2002 and later wrote her debut novel, *Hex Hall*, while teaching English at Sparkman High School in Madison County. She also writes paranormal comedies under the pen name Erin Sterling. Her latest novel, *The Heiress*, is a thriller full of unexpected twists.

[rachelhawkinsbooks.com](http://rachelhawkinsbooks.com)

## ADULT NONFICTION



***Magic City: How the Birmingham Jazz Tradition Shaped the Sound of America***  
by Burgin Mathews  
(UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS, 2023)

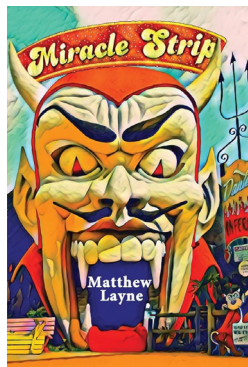
Burgin Mathews, born in Montgomery, taught English, Creative Writing and Film Studies at an Alabama high school. As an author and radio host, he wrote *Magic City*, exploring Birmingham’s jazz scene and the educators, club owners, and civic leaders who shaped its culture in the segregated South.

In 2023, he was the founding director of the Southern Music Research Center, a nonprofit dedicated to documenting and preserving the musical histories, communities, and cultural expressions of the American South.

[burginmathews.com](http://burginmathews.com)

# ALABAMA AUTHOR AWARDS

## POETRY



### **Miracle Strip** by Matthew Layne

(BRICK ROAD POETRY PRESS, 2023)

Poet, librarian, and storyteller, Matt Layne has been exploring the world with curiosity and creativity since childhood. A founding member of the 1990's improvisational poetry collective The Kevorkian Skull Poets, he encourages others to write and share their truths through poetry.

A multiple-time Hackney Award winner, his work has also been recognized by the National Society of Arts and Letters and has appeared in Peek Magazine, Birmingham Arts Journal, Steel Toe Review, B-Metro, and other publications. His poetry collection, *Miracle Strip*, offers the added experience of hearing him bring each poem to life in his distinctive style.

[mattlaynepoetry.com](http://mattlaynepoetry.com)

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



### **Howell Raines**

Born in Birmingham, Alabama, Mr. Raines earned a bachelor's degree from Birmingham-Southern College and a master's degree in English from the University of Alabama.

He began his journalism career as a reporter for The Birmingham News before working at The Birmingham Post-Herald, The Tuscaloosa News, The Atlanta Journal, and The St. Petersburg Times. In 1978, he joined The New York Times as a national correspondent based in Atlanta.

Over the years, he held several key positions at the publication, including Atlanta Bureau Chief, White House Correspondent, London Bureau Chief, Editorial Page Editor, and ultimately, Executive Editor. His essay *Grady's Gift*, published in The New York Times Magazine, received the Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing in 1992.

His other works include *Whiskey Man*, *My Soul Is Rested: Movement Days in the Deep South Remembered*, *Fly Fishing Through the Midlife Crisis*, *The One That Got Away*, and most recently, *Silent Cavalry: How Union Soldiers from Alabama Helped Sherman Burn Atlanta—and Then Got Written Out of History*.

In recognition of his distinguished career in journalism and authorship across Alabama and the Southeast, the Alabama Library Association is honored to present Howell Raines with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

# ASSOCIATION AWARDS

## DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

## INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AWARD



### Lindsay Gardner

Recipient of the Distinguished Service Award and the Intellectual Freedom Award

Lindsay Gardner began her career as a Children's Librarian at the Birmingham Public Library in 1998 after graduating from the University of Alabama (BA English) and the University of Maryland (MLS). She served as the Director of her hometown library, Demopolis Public Library, from 2001-2007. In 2007, she accepted a position as Director of the Community Library in Kilmarnock, Virginia. In 2017, she returned home to Alabama to accept the position of Director of the O'Neal Library in Mountain Brook. In 2024, Lindsay became the first president of the Public Library Director's Association of Alabama.

## PARALIBRARIAN AWARD



### Jason Robinson

Recipient of the Paralibrarian Award

Jason Robinson started his career at the Homewood Public Library in 2007 as Assistant Circulation manager. In 2024, he was promoted to Head of Circulation. He previously worked at the Birmingham Public Library and Davis Library at Samford University. He received his B.S. in Physical Education and is an avid basketball player and coach. He and his wife, Stefanie, and their 3 children live in Homewood.

# ASSOCIATION AWARDS

## EMINENT LIBRARIAN AWARD



### Elizabeth Swift

Recipient of the Eminent Librarian Award

Elizabeth Swift began her career as a cataloger for the Birmingham Public Library in 1992, after graduating from Auburn University with a B.A. in History and from Florida State University with a MS in Library Science. In 1997 she began working for the Jefferson County Library Cooperative (JCLC) as their System Librarian, and in 2006 she became their Integrated Library Systems Administrator. She is responsible for coordinating the services provided via the "one county, one card" system for the JCLC, a non-profit organization made up of 20+ independent library members and multiple branches.

## OUTSTANDING YOUTH SERVICES AWARD

### Jeremy Davis

Recipient of the Outstanding Youth Services Award

Jeremy Davis, MLIS, is a librarian from Birmingham, AL, with 31 years of experience in public library service. Since 2017, he has served as the Youth Department Coordinator at the Hoover Public Library. Known for his innovation, passion, and kindness, Jeremy has played a pivotal role in launching many impactful library initiatives and programs, including the Little Free Libraries, a Food Pantry, a Bookmobile, and a free summer lunch program for children. From the outset of his library career, Jeremy has demonstrated a profound commitment to expanding library services beyond traditional offerings. Through his community outreach efforts, he has provided invaluable support to underserved populations and consistently worked to make the Children's Department a dynamic, welcoming space for all families. Outside of his professional life, Jeremy is an avid doodler, board game creator, and enjoys spending time with his family as a husband, father, and uncle.

# ASSOCIATION AWARDS

## OUTSTANDING YOUTH SERVICES AWARD



### **Rachel "Cat" Sandler**

Recipient of the Outstanding Youth Services Award

Cat Sandler started her library career before she knew it, working as a Digital Archivist for Image Hive in Birmingham for museums, national parks, and other clients. She worked as the Head Librarian in Pell City and then came to Homewood Public Library where she served as a Library Technician II for the Teen Department while working on her MLIS from the University of Southern Mississippi. She has served as the Teen Librarian and Assistant Department Head for the Adult/Teen Services Department since 2023. She won Full-Time Employee of the Year in 2023 and, in 2024, received Homewood Public Library's inaugural Above and Beyond: Leadership Award.

## HUMANITARIAN AWARD



### **Greater Birmingham Humane Society**

Recipient of the Humanitarian Award

FOR THEIR "READING BUDDIES" PROGRAM

The Greater Birmingham Humane Society's "Reading Buddies" Program features their PAWsitive Education Ambassador dogs and gives children the opportunity to practice reading skills with a four-legged friend. GBHS volunteers bring the dogs to area libraries for Reading Buddies events, and the Humane Society also has its own Reading Buddies Book Club which meets once a month at their Adoption Center. The program's impact has been wide-ranging and far-reaching, fostering not only children's literacy development, but adoption events and community connections as well.



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# BE UNCONVENTIONAL

“This year’s theme reflects our commitment to innovation, advocacy, and collaboration.

As we navigate the evolving landscape of library services, we must continue to support one another, advocate for intellectual freedom, and champion the vital role of libraries in education and community development.”

— Craig Scott

See you next year!  
[allanet.org](http://allanet.org)