



WRITING  
CENTER

ATHENS STATE UNIVERSITY

SUMMER  
WRITING

*June 26-27, 2025*



& ARTS  
SUMMIT



*in partnership with*



ALABAMA CENTER FOR THE  
**A R T S**

*artwork by Trevor Thomas*





Studying biology today...  
advancing medicine tomorrow.

**It's how  
you finish.**

**Caleb**  
*BS, Biology*



**ATHENS STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

**ATHENS.EDU**

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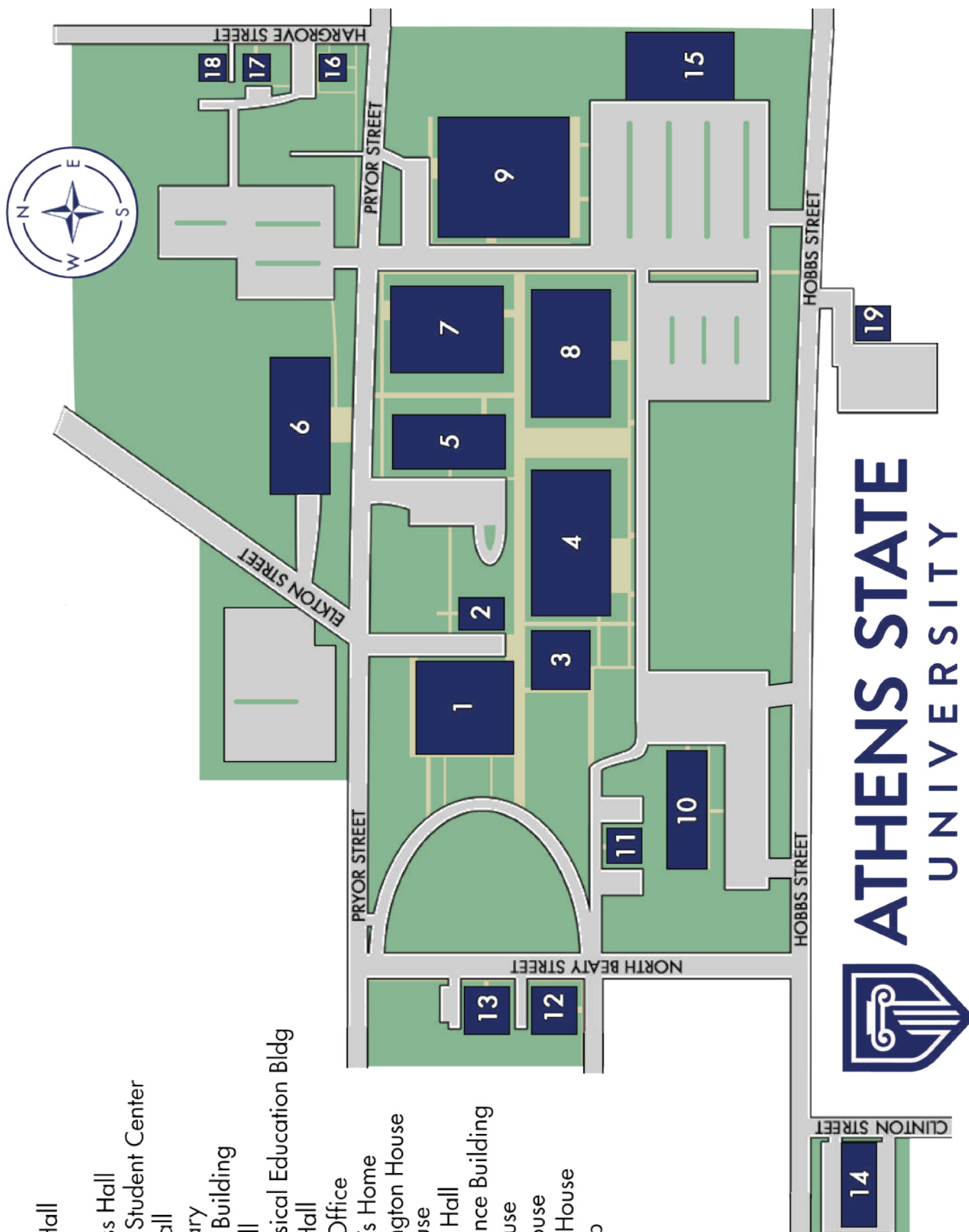
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# ABOUT ATHENS

The city's proximity to transportation, recreational facilities, and educational centers make it a vibrant spot today.

The rich soil still offers farming opportunities but also recreational ones. The Swan Creek Greenway, for example, offers hiking, a covered bridge, and access to an archery course.

The railroads combined with Interstate 65, major highways, and nearby Tennessee River provide quick access for business and industrial transportation needs. Citizens are within short distances to universities and educational



training facilities.

Historic Downtown offers unique shopping and dining opportunities while chain restaurants, stores, and trendy shops are located along U.S. 72, U.S. 31, and at the Interstate 65 exit.

[athensalabama.us](http://athensalabama.us)

## WHERE TO DINE

Hall. Lunch is served from 10am–1pm Monday–Friday. However, if you want to venture out, these restaurants are all 5-10 minutes' drive from campus:

- Lucia's Cocina Mexicana | 208 Market St W
- The Southern Table | 105 N. Jefferson St
- Village Pizza | 222 Market St. W
- Lil Massara's | 102 Washington St. E
- Sweetest Things Tea Room  
216 Market St. W
- Whitt's Barbecue | 525 S. Marion St.
- Old Black Bear Brewing Company  
311 S. Marion St.
- Roosters Restaurant | 125 US-31

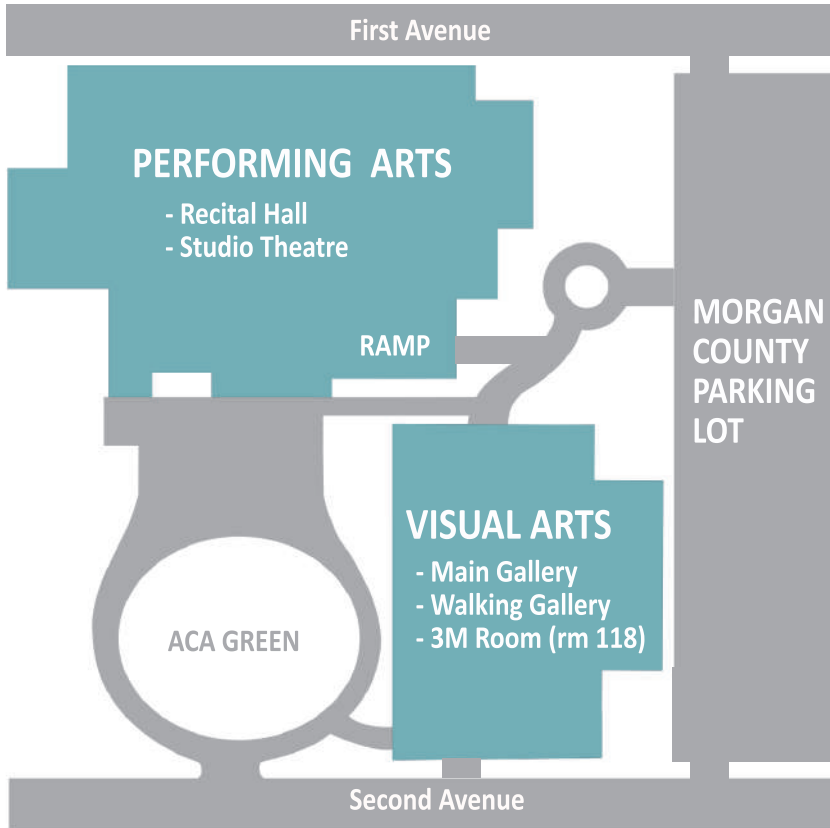


Café 1822 is open and ready to serve Athens State students, faculty, staff, and public patrons at their location in Sandridge





**CAMPUS MAP**  
Alabama Center for the Arts  
133 2nd Avenue NE; Decatur, AL 35601



**Free Parking** is recommended in the Morgan County parking lot on the corner of Lee Street and 2nd Avenue. Two-hour parking is allowed on 2nd Avenue. No parking is allowed in the People's Bank lot across the street.

### ACA Campus buildings:

**Visual Arts** - The Main and Walking Galleries with art exhibitions are located here.

**Performing Arts** - Performances in the Black Box Studio Theatre and Recital Hall are located here.  
Ramp is accessible from the north side of the building.

## Alabama Center for the Arts

**The most affordable path**

**...to your dream arts career**

Alabama Center for the Arts  
2 + 2  
4-Year Art Degrees

The ACA is an institution that provides the highest quality education by combining the best arts degree offering of two colleges, Calhoun Community College and Athens State University, on a single campus that feels like a private art college.

Start your education at Calhoun and seamlessly continue your education with Athens State for a four-year degree in the arts - all at the Alabama Center for the Arts.

## Alabama Center for the Arts

**What You Can Study Here**

Our wide range of arts degrees and programs are designed to support every part of your journey from passionate maker to professional creator.

133 2nd Avenue NE  
Decatur, AL 35601

**Campus Hours:**  
Mon - Thu 8 am - 8 pm  
Fri 8 am - 12 pm

For more information about our campus, degrees and majors, upcoming events, or to schedule a Campus Tour, please visit:  
[AlabamaCenterForTheArts.org](http://AlabamaCenterForTheArts.org)



# ABOUT DECATUR

Located on the Tennessee River in Morgan County, Decatur boasts a rich heritage and a dynamic future. In addition to three historic districts and Decatur's unique shopping and dining experiences, the city is home to a thriving arts and educational community. From the state of the art Alabama Center for the Arts to the heralded Princess Theatre Center for the Performing Arts, there is never a shortage of creative inspiration or artistic outlets. The Carnegie Visual Arts Center offers a host of exhibits, classes, and events featuring all mediums of visual art and the Cook Museum



of Natural Science is a state-of-the-art natural science museum in downtown Decatur. Voted #1 in the USA Today's Best New Museum 2021 contest, Cook Museum provides a hands-on, immersive experience where kids can explore, interact with, and learn about nature.

<https://www.cityofdecatur.com/>



## WHERE TO DINE

- Nature's Table Cafe | inside the Cooks Museum
- Let's Do Lunch | 435 Holly Street NE
- Don's Mercantile ( Convenience Store - very casual with very limited seating, order at counter) | 119 2nd Ave NE
- Moe's Original BBQ | 202 Moulton Street E
- Mellow Mushroom | 202 Moulton Street E
- Kimmie's Kitchen  
107 2nd Ave NE
- B.B. Perrin' s | 608 Holly Street NE
- Mi Hacienda Mexican Restaurant  
404 6th Ave NE
- 609 Social Market & Provisions  
609 Bank street NE
- Bank Street Grill | 719 Bank Street NE





# WELCOME!

from the Office of the President

Welcome to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Athens State University's Summer Writing and Arts Summit! I am delighted to have you join us for this exciting gathering of creativity, learning, and inspiration. Prepare to immerse yourself in this two-day summit of creativity and community. This year's event features workshops, author panels, roundtables, Art, Music and of course writing!

Throughout this summit, you'll have opportunities to enrich your writing journey, explore new perspectives on self-expression, and embrace the power of innovation and imagination while also connecting with and drawing insight from fellow writers. Your voice matters, and we're here to celebrate the transformative power of words together.

Thank you for being part of this vibrant community. Let's make this summer unforgettable!

*Dr. Catherine Whelburg*

President

DREAM.BELIEVE.WRITE.PAINT. BE.







# WELCOME!

from the Office of Academic Affairs

Welcome to Athens State University and to our Writing and Arts Summit. As Provost, I deeply value the role that writers play in shaping thought, culture, and connections. I have long believed that in order to write well we also need to have access to a restorative place where we can just reflect and bring those words home before we pour them onto the page. While you have all traveled here along different paths and for different reasons, I hope that this workshop is that space for growth, reflection, and creativity for all of you.

Thank you for bringing your voice and your vision to the Writing and Arts Summit. I am delighted that you are joining us, and look forward to meeting all of you.

*Dr. Alyson Gill*

Vice President of Academic Affairs



DREAM.BELIEVE.WRITE.PAINT.BE.





# WELCOME FROM THE ACA!

Welcome to Athens State University's 3rd Annual Summer Writing Summit! It is my pleasure to extend a warm greeting on behalf of the College of Arts and Sciences and to especially welcome you to the Alabama Center for the Arts for an exciting arts-centered extension of the Summit at our arts hub in downtown Decatur. We are thrilled to host this gathering of writers, educators, and scholars, all coming together to explore the power and creativity of the written word. At Athens State, we recognize that strong writing is the foundation of effective communication, critical thinking, and creative expression. Whether you are here to refine your craft, engage with fellow writers, or gain new insights into the teaching of writing, I think you will find this Summit a valuable opportunity to grow as a writer and thinker. Our Athens State Writing Center, under the direction of Dr. Kem Roper, has worked diligently to curate a program that is both inspiring and practical, ensuring that you leave with fresh ideas and renewed enthusiasm.

As you participate in workshops, discussions, and networking opportunities, I encourage you to embrace the collaborative spirit of this event. Writing is often a solitary act, but the process of learning and improving is best done in community. May this summit spark new ideas, deepen your passion for writing, and provide you with the tools to support both your own work and that of your students and colleagues. Best wishes for a productive and inspiring Summit,

C. D. RAGSDALE

Dean



DREAM. BELIEVE. WRITE. PAINT. BE.





# WELCOME FROM THE WRITING CENTER!

What an honor it is to welcome you to our 3rd Annual Summer Writing & Arts Summit! Although this is our third year, it is the first year that we've added "Arts" to the name, and this shift is an indication of our growth. For those of you who have been with us since the beginning, you know how far we've come in such a short time. We began with the seed of an idea: to invite faculty, staff and students to gather and share their work. We believe collaboration is conducive to learning, and the enthusiasm of our community that first year—including faculty, staff, students and community friends—enlivened our event and inspired us to widen our scope. Last year, Alabama's poet laureate, Ashley Jones, drew a crowd and her presence invited more creatives into our midst. Then, the cherry on top of a very sweet event was the Open Mic, which can only be described as *wonderful*! So, it led us, this year, to go all in!

This year we're diving headfirst into the cool waters of creativity, exploring poetry, prose, painting and more. We're not abandoning the written word, but we are going beyond it. You might wonder what yoga, slow-stitch and stage lighting has to do with writing and academia, but studies show that creativity enhances learning, fosters innovation, and develops essential life skills. Creative thinking invigorates critical thinking and academic work need not be isolated from creative work. The two can--and should--exist together.

This year we continue with the collaboration that we began with, but we're also--every year--expanding. Today's floor was yesterday's ceiling. Can you imagine what we'll do next?

*Kem Roper*  
Director

DREAM. BELIEVE. WRITE. PAINT. BE.



# MEET THE TEAM!

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**Lily Winborn** is a senior English major from Huntsville, AL. She helps students write business reports and marketing plans, literary analysis papers and assists with MLA formatting and other documentation styles. Lily will also be working as assistant editor of *Athena's Web* in the fall.



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**Stacey Brown** is a junior English major from Susan Moore, AL. She helps students who struggle with getting started on their writing assignments. Her calm demeanor puts them at ease, whether they're working on a long report or a short one! Don't miss Stacey's "Writing & Anxiety" workshop where she'll share tips and tricks for tackling those tough tasks.



**Kaydee Roden** is a senior English major from Somerville, AL. She helps students think outside the box and draw on their personal experiences to make writing assignments more meaningful. Kaydee is good with grammar and gives feedback on all types of writing.

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**Kailey Burbank** is a graduate student at Athens State pursuing a Master's degree in Religious Studies. She helps students with psychology, sociology and biology papers and is well-acquainted with the APA documentation style. Although not an English major, Kailey is one of the most creative team members contributing greatly to the Writing Center social media and promotions.

Laura Brink is a veteran in the ASU Writing Center. As Lead Writing Tutor, Laura works with students on many writing tasks. She enjoys helping them harness their strengths rather than focus on their weaknesses. Check out Laura's workshop--"Writing to Heal"--where she shows that writing isn't scary; it's empowering!





# MEET THE ARTISTS!

Here are a few of  
our featured ACA  
student artists  
whose works will be  
featured  
throughout this  
event.



**Trevor Thomas**, whose art is featured on the inside cover, began drawing at a very early age. He eventually developed an interest in the impressionists and continues to be inspired by them today. Knowing firsthand how difficult it can be to gain access to quality art education, Trevor aspires to make art more accessible to interested students in the future. To see more from Trevor, follow him on Instagram @trevorthomasfinearts

**Donna Miller's artwork is featured below.** A desire to explore the possibilities and acquire new skills inspired her to leave a 40-year career as a graphic designer for the government where she used Adobe software applications to produce various products, large scale displays and video productions. Now an MFA student at Athens State, Donna finds solace and inspiration from acrylic painting of abstract landscapes. **See more of Donna and her artwork at the ACA on Friday, June 27th.**



**Char Baxter** is a second year graduate student in the MFA program at the ACA. She is a mixed media artist working in oils, watercolor, ink, acrylic, textiles and found objects. Her approach defies traditional categories, but defines her vision of storytelling through art. Featured near the end of this book is one of the stunning pieces in Char's new series "Wise Women." See more from Char Baxter at: <https://charbaxter.com/>

artwork by: Donna Miller



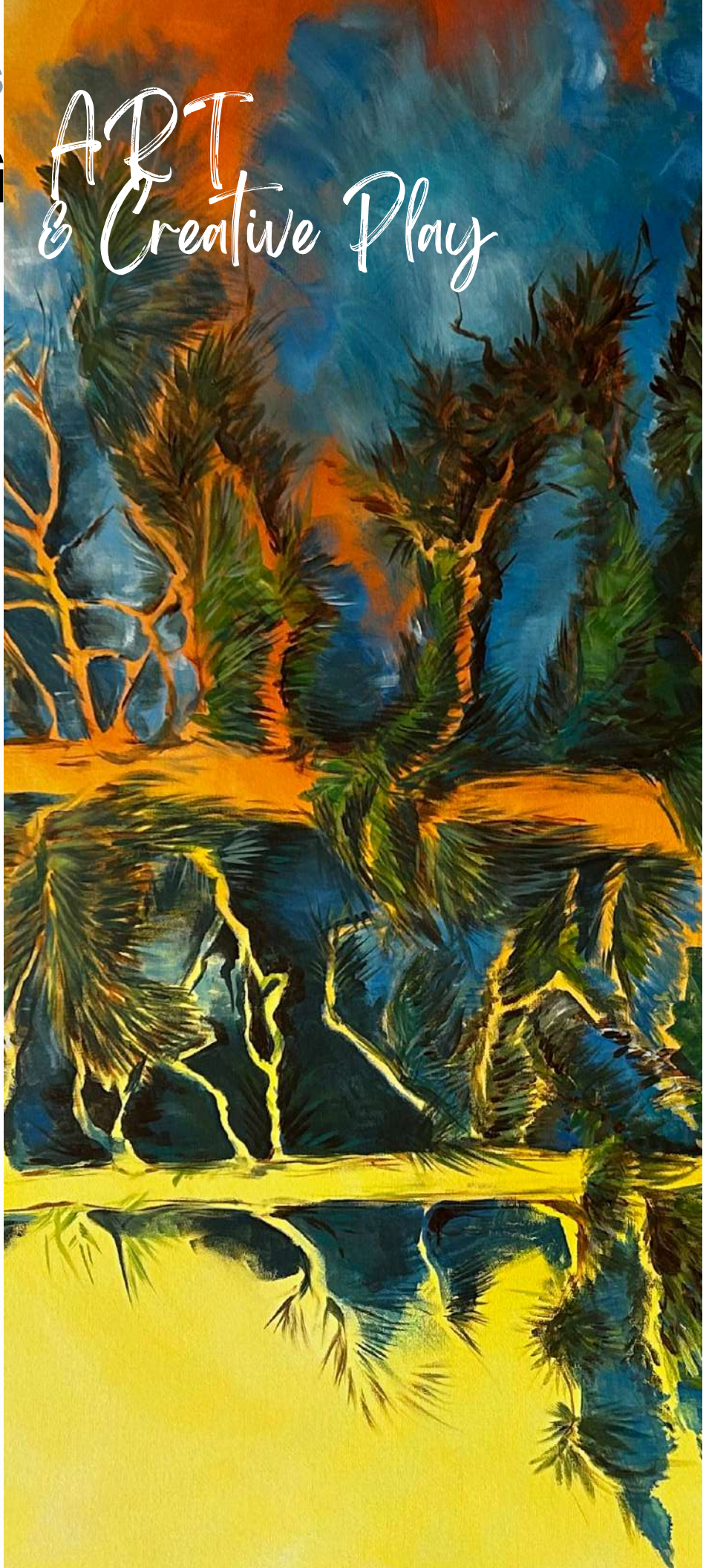


SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

# WRITING

*This year we have a wonderful mix of beauty and brains! Check out the author pics and bios and be sure to peruse the array of conference offerings.*

ART  
& Creative Play



artwork by Donna Miller



# AT A GLANCE

(See pages 27-31 for full session titles & descriptions.)

## OPENING SESSION • 9:00AM–9:50AM • KARES LIBRARY

WELCOME • ANNOUNCEMENTS

### THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2025 • CONCURRENT SESSION I • 10:00AM–10:50AM

SESSION TITLES	LOCATION	PRESENTER
Writing Through Anxiety	Kares Library – Writing Center	Stacey Brown
Marrying the Personal and Political in your Writing	Waters Hall Room 202	Whitney Washington
Writing the Wild: Creative Connection in Nature	Founders Lawn (Kares Library - Room 114 in case of inclement weather)	Anne Markham Bailey
The Self as Inspiration	Classroom Building 204	Jacqueline Allen Trimble

### THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2025 • CONCURRENT SESSION II • 11:00AM–11:50AM

SESSION TITLES	LOCATION	PRESENTER
Get to the Point	Waters Hall 201	Amy Garrison & Natalie Vedder
Show, Don't Tell	Waters Hall 105	Laura Hunter
Haiku in Focus	Kares Library - Room 114	Chandra Mountain
Paths to Publishing & Acquiring an Agent	Classroom Building 204	Georgina Cross

### LUNCH/ARTS & AUTHORS PANEL • SANDRIGE STUDENT CENTER BALLROOM • 12:00PM-1:00PM

GEORGINA CROSS • SARAH CROUCH • ROBERT BAILEY • SLYVIA CORTES  
HEATHER MONTGOMERY • JACQUELINE TRIMBLE • MARY BETH JOHNS

### ARTS & AUTHORS FAIR • 1:00-3:00PM • ANNEX/BEAR CAVE

### THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2025 • CONCURRENT SESSION III • 2:30PM–3:20PM

SESSION TITLES	LOCATION	PRESENTER
Gentle Yoga for Mental & Physical Fitness	Kares Library 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor	Dana Waldrop
People not Portraits Gallery Talk	Kares Library – Main	Mary Beth Johns
Focused Writing Group	Kares Library - Room 114	Writing Center Staff

### THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2025 • CONCURRENT SESSION IV • 3:30PM–4:20PM

SESSION TITLES	LOCATION	PRESENTER
Research Lightning Rounds	Kares Library - Room 114	Shannon Pittman
Crafting a Bestselling Novel	Classroom Building 204	Sarah Crouch
Not Your Grandma's Nonfiction!	Classroom Building 203	Heather Montgomery
Introduction to Grant Writing	Waters Hall Room 201	Rachel O'Sullivan & Gabrielle McGraw



**THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2025 • CONCURRENT SESSION V • 4:30PM–5:30PM**

SESSION TITLES	LOCATION	PRESENTER
The Importance of “THE END”	Classroom Building 204	Robert Bailey
Banned Books and Their “Other” Characters	Classroom Building 203	Laurie Fowler
Introduction to Calligraphy	Waters Hall 105	Beth Paul

**THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2025 • SPECIAL SESSION & CLOSING • 5:30PM–6:30PM**

SESSION TITLES	LOCATION	PRESENTER
Your Voice, OUT LOUD! Pt.1	Kares Library	Susan Guthrie

**ACA STUDENT ARTISTS AND FACULTY PANEL • 9:00AM-9:50AM**

**ACA RECITAL HALL (PERFORMING ARTS BUILDING)**

PAMELA KELLER • DONNA MILLER • BETH PAUL • MARY BETH JOHNS • WILLIAM RICHARDSON

**FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2025 • CONCURRENT SESSION VI • 10:00AM–10:50AM**

SESSION TITLES	LOCATION	PRESENTER
Writing an Artist’s Statement	Visual Arts Building Room 313	Mary Beth Johns
Pondering Paradox	Visual Arts Building Room 113	Holly Gorman
Gentle Yoga for Mental & Physical Fitness	Visual Arts Building Room 314	Dana Waldrop
Art Talk	Visual Arts Building Room 314	Donna Miller
Storytelling with Light	Performing Arts Building Theatre Studio	William Richardson

**FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2025 • CONCURRENT SESSION VII • 11:00AM–11:50AM**

SESSION TITLES	LOCATION	PRESENTER
Scrapbooking & Card Making	Visual Arts Building, Room 118 (3M)	Leah Frachiseur
Make an Exquisite Corpse: A Collaborative Poetry and Art Game	Visual Arts Building, Room 312	Jessica Spowart
Reading Your Wardrobe	Visual Arts Building, Room 313	Kim Jack
Research Lightning Round	Visual Arts Building, Room 113	Shannon Pittman

**LUNCH BREAK • 12:00PM-1:00PM**

**FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2025 • CONCURRENT SESSION VIII • 1:00PM–2:00PM**

SESSION TITLES	LOCATION	PRESENTER
Slow Stitching Story Craft	Visual Arts Building, Room 118 (3M)	Danielle Chouinard and Jennifer Wolfe
Having Fun With Calligraphy Part 2	Visual Arts Building, Room 313	Beth Paul



Telling Your Story, Poetically	Visual Arts Building, Rm 113	Keiani Taylor
Pen Meets Pixel: Writing in the Age of AI	Visual Arts Building, Rm 312	Valentina Castilla

**FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2025 • CONCURRENT SESSION IX • 2:10PM–3:10PM**

SESSION TITLES	LOCATION	PRESENTER
Reclaim, Restore, Rewrite: Becoming the Author of Your Own Healing	Visual Arts Building, Room 113	Laura Brink
Self-Care Focused Paint & Sip	Visual Arts Building, Room 313	Kailey Burbank
Crochet Basics	Visual Arts Building, Room 118 (3M)	Edyn Roper

**FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2025 • SPECIAL SESSION • 2:00PM–3:30PM**

SESSION TITLES	LOCATION	PRESENTER
Watercolor Journaling & Gallery Tour	Visual Arts Building, Room 312	Pamela Keller
Your Voice, OUT LOUD! Pt. 2	Performing Arts Building, Theatre Studio	Susan Guthrie

**RECEPTION • 3:15-4:00PM**

**AWARD/RECOGNITION/THANKS • 4:00PM-4:30PM**

**OPEN MIC • 4:30PM-5:30PM**

**WRITERS OF THE ROUNDTABLE  
PODCAST**

Find a seat at the table with the Writing Center at Athens State University as we explore all things writing!

Listen on Spotify

**WRITING CENTER**  
ATHENS STATE UNIVERSITY



# next to normal

a rock musical



book and lyrics by Brian Yorkey | music by Tom Kitt | directed by Dr. Hugh K. Long

Starring...

Diana - Gizelle Ysalgue  
Gabe - Caleb Baldwin  
Dan - Ryan Rorick  
Natalie - Carolina Riddle

Henry - Eli Brown  
Dr. Fine - Vicki Montgomery  
Dr. Madden - Simon Tsikalas



ALABAMA  
CENTER FOR  
THE ARTS

STUDIO THEATRE

**July 17-19 | 7:00 pm**

**July 20 | 2:00 pm**

**Ticket information:**

[alabamacenterforthearts.org/event](http://alabamacenterforthearts.org/event)

# 2025 SUMMER SUMMIT FACILITATORS



## Robert Bailey

Robert Bailey is the *Wall Street Journal* bestselling author of the Jason Rich series, which includes *Rich Justice*, *Rich Waters*, and *Rich Blood*; the Bocephus Haynes series, which includes *The Wrong Side* and *Legacy of Lies*; and the

award-winning McMurtrie and Drake legal thriller series, including *The Final Reckoning*, *The Last Trial*, *Between Black and White*, and *The Professor*. He also wrote the inspirational novel *The Golfer's Carol*. The *Boomerang* is Bailey's eleventh novel. The author lives in Huntsville, Alabama, with his wife, Dixie, and they are the proud parents of three children, two dogs, and two cats. For more information, please visit [www.robertbaileybooks.com](http://www.robertbaileybooks.com).



## Anne Markham Bailey

Anne Markham Bailey is an American poet and author. She teaches poetry and creative writing to incarcerated people through the Alabama Prison Arts and

Education Project with Auburn University. Anne is a teaching artist with UAB Arts in Medicine, focusing on therapeutic creative writing and awareness programs. She developed Writing the Wild, a program that combines connection in nature with creative writing. Her most recent book is *The Practice of Being* (2022), a pithy creative awareness practice guidebook. To learn more and to check out her books, projects, and programs: <https://www.annemarkhambailey.com/>

## Laura Brink

Laura holds a BA in English from Athens State University and is working toward her MA in Writing at the University of North Alabama. She works part-time as the lead writing consultant at the ASU Writing Center. When she's not tutoring, she's managing her gaggle

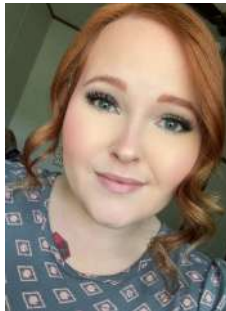


of children and animals. From student to tutor to wife and mother, on any given day Laura wears a number of different hats with a number of different titles, but her favorite is "writer."

## Stacey Brown



Stacey Brown is a Junior at Athens State University, majoring in English Language with a minor in education. She currently works as a writing consultant in the writing center. Her interest in literature and written composition have motivated her to pursue a teaching career.



## Kailey Burbank

Kailey is a graduate student of Religious Studies at Athens State. She has a passion for all things sociology, community service, and advocacy for mental health and other disabilities. Kailey enjoys being creative whenever possible—

She aims to inspire, encourage, and lift the spirits of those around her.



## Danielle Chouinard

Danielle Chouinard is the Access and User Experience Librarian at ASU Kares Library. She enjoys sewing and crafting in her spare time.

## Valentina Castilla

Valentina is a dedicated 7th grade ELA, ELL, and Spanish teacher passionate about empowering students through language and literacy. With a focus on inspiring curiosity, ownership, and personal growth, she strives to create a





classroom environment where students explore the world and themselves through reading and writing.



## Georgina Cross

Georgina Cross is the author of *One Night* and *Nanny Needed* (Bantam, Penguin Random House) and the Amazon Bestselling author of *The Stepdaughter*, as well as *My Perfect Husband*, *The*

*Missing Woman* and *The Niece* (Bookouture, Hachette). *The Stepdaughter* and *Nanny Needed* were optioned by Netflix. Georgina is a member of International Thriller Writers and Mystery Writers of America. Married to David, the Crosses enjoy time spent with their combined family of four sons. More info: Instagram: @georginacrossauthor, Facebook: @GeorginaCrossAuthor, and Georgina-Cross-Author.com



## Sarah Crouch

Sarah Crouch is the USA Today Bestselling author of *Middletide*, a Book of the Month Club selection, a Barnes and Noble Monthly pick, and one of Amazon's "Best Books of 2024." She

is also known in the world of athletics as a professional marathon runner.



## Leah Frachiseur

Leah Frachiseur is a dedicated employee at Wilson's Fabric in Marshall County, AL. Outside of work, she has a passion for all things crafty! From hand-sewn purses, coin pouches, and pencil bags to quilts,

stuffed animals, and more. Leah showcases her creations on her personal business page, Ivory Jaide Designs, on social media.



## Laura Fowler

Dr. Laurie Fowler taught English and Latin to high school students for ten years in Tuscaloosa. She also served as the director of the International Baccalaureate Program for five years.

Dr. Fowler was a state technology coach for Technology in Motion, a director of staff development for Tuscaloosa County Schools, and an assistant professor at the University of West Alabama. Currently, she works for Savvas Learning Company as an educational consultant for English and social studies curricula.



## Amy Garrison

Amy Garrison is the Director of Student Engagement with 20 years in the Higher Education Administration Student Affairs field. She is known for helping students build skills and community

as they tackle their next big life goal. She's also a fan of political and science podcasts, great storytelling, and apparently has the kind of face that makes everyone think they've met her before.



## Holly Gorman

Holly is a wife, a mother, and a grandmother with a passion for creativity and storytelling. She holds a B.S. from Purdue University and is a licensed Metaphysical Minister. She has traveled extensively, living

in various parts of the country and overseas. Writing has become a cherished part of her journey, allowing her to weave together insight, imagination, and the spiritual side of life's unfolding lessons.

**"CREATIVITY IS INTELLIGENCE HAVING FUN"**

**-ALBERT EINSTEIN**



## Susan Guthrie

S. Hazen Guthrie is a Master Teacher of voice and speech and a stage director/choreographer, specializing in Shakespearean production and training. Guthrie is a lecturer and presenter for the National Endowment for the

Arts and the Poetry Foundation. She is listed with many state arts councils and has directed and acted for resident theaters across the country. Guthrie is the author and lead artist of Shakespeare in the Classroom; a member of Alabama's Coweeta Poets and Scribe South and the author of *we held our breath, the birds and I*, (Finishing Line Press).



## Laura Hunter

Laura Hunter was raised in Alabama hill country and now lives near Tuscaloosa. She has published sixteen award-winning fiction pieces and nine poems, in addition to numerous articles published through different media

outlets. *Beloved Mother*, her award-winning novel, was released April 1, 2019. It received eleven awards during its first year of publication. She has written a collection of fictional short stories, *Southern Voices*, focused on Copeland's Crossing, Alabama. It appeared in print August 2020. Her last novel, *Summer of No Rain*, was released February 2022.



## Kim Jack

Dr. Jack is a Professor of English and Drama at Athens State University, specializing in Pre-Modern Literature. Her scholarship focuses on "sartorial semiotics," or how clothing functions as communication in

14th-Century Middle English Literature. Costuming plays at the Alabama Center for the Arts puts this scholarship into practice.

**"CREATIVITY THINKING IS NOT A TALENT, IT IS A SKILL THAT CAN BE LEARNED AND PRACTICED"**

**-EDWARD DE BONO**



## Mary Beth Johns

Mary Beth is a native of Huntsville. She taught elementary school art in Tuscaloosa after receiving her Masters in Art Education from U of A. She then completed her Ph.D. in Art Education from Penn State in 2002. Mary Beth is a practicing

artist in her studio at LoweMill in Huntsville. She has been with Athens State as Associate Professor of Art Education for 13 years.



## Pamela Keller

Professor Pamela Keller has taught art at Athens State University since 1981. She is the current Chair of Fine and Performing Arts. Her studio work includes painting, drawing and watercolor along with large-scale, public figurative bronze sculptures.



## Gabrielle McGraw

Gabrielle McGraw is the External Support & Grant Specialist at Athens State University, where she supports all stages of the grant lifecycle. Over the past three years, she has supported and led 40 proposals, helping to secure and manage nearly \$6.7 million in funding.



## Donna Miller

A desire to explore the possibilities and acquire new skills inspired Donna Miller to leave her 40 year career as a graphic designer for the government where she used Adobe software applications to produce various products, large scale displays and video productions. Now an MFA student at Athens State, Donna finds solace and inspiration from acrylic painting of abstract landscapes.





## Heather Montgomery

Heather L. Montgomery writes for kids who are wild about animals. An award-winning author/educator, Heather uses “yuck appeal” to engage young minds and has published 18

nonfiction books. Her recent works include: *What's in Your Pocket? Collecting Nature's Treasures*; *Something Rotten: A Fresh Look at Roadkill*, and *Sick! The Twists and Turns Behind Animal Germs*. [www.HeatherLMontgomery.com](http://www.HeatherLMontgomery.com)



## Chandra Mountain

Dr. Chandra Tyler Mountain is Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences and Professor of English at Oakwood University. She has served in academia for 30+ years in the capacities of professor, chair, assistant dean, dean, and Assistant Vice

President of Academic Administration. In addition to her work as a scholar and professor, Dr. Mountain is an award-winning poet and writer, photographer, and self-described doodler who is rarely without camera, pen, and journal. Find her books at [www.iamchandralynn.com](http://www.iamchandralynn.com)



## Shannon Pitman

Dr. Shannon Pittman is an Associate Professor of Biology and Co-director of the Athens State Honors Program. Dr. Pittman has 8 years of experience as a professor and scholarly mentor and her research interests include population

biology of endangered species, invasive species management, and the effects of behavior on spatiotemporal population dynamics.

## Beth Paul

Beth Paul has over 40 years of experience in the art of calligraphy. She has taught workshops in calligraphy and art for various organizations over the

years. Her work has been recognized in numerous awards and exhibitions in the South and is a part of several personal collections. She is a member of the International Association of Master Penmen, Engrossers and Teachers of Handwriting (IAMPETH). She is serving her third year as Vice President of the Nashville Calligraphers Guild as well as the Newsletter Editor. Beth is currently pursuing her Master of Fine Arts in Integrated Design specialist in Drawing and Painting with a particular focus on calligraphic art.



## Rachel O'Sullivan

Dr. Rachel O'Sullivan is the Assistant Vice President of External Support and Alumni Affairs at Athens State University. Dr. O'Sullivan specializes in pre-award funding by creating innovative proposals that serve students and

strengthen the University. She has received over \$18 million in funding over the past 5 years from federal, state, community, and private funders.



## William Richardson

William Richardson is the Assistant Professor of Scenic and Lighting Design at Athens State University. William has a MFA in Theatre Design and Technology from Northern Illinois University. He has

worked as a Lead Electrician and Lighting Designer for Charlottesville Opera in Charlottesville, VA, as well as a Resident Lighting Designer for the Dounda Fine Arts Center in Charleston, IL. Last summer, he was the Props Artisan for Sweeney Todd. He has designed the lights for WeatherVane Playhouse in Akron, OH, Elgin Community College in Elgin, IL among others.

**“CREATIVITY IS MESSY, FRUSTRATING,  
ENJOYABLE AND DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE.”**

**-BEN BARNHART**



## Edyn Roper

Edyn is a 19 year old Psychology major at Oakwood University who taught herself to crochet when she was 14. She's now turned her hobby into a business, Made by Edyn, specializing in custom creations and special orders for blankets,

scarves, hats, clothes, stuffed toys and more!



## Jessica Spowart

Jessica Spowart is an Assistant Professor of Art at Athens State University. She teaches classes in graphic design, typography, and digital design at the Alabama Center for the Arts.



## Keiani Taylor

Keiani Taylor is a seasoned educator, poet, and workshop facilitator with over a decade of experience in teaching, leadership, and creative expression. Keiani believes in the power of language to heal, connect, and transform.

Known for her powerful voice and evocative writing, Keiani blends the discipline of education with the artistry of poetry to create transformative workshop experiences for writers of all levels. Her workshops are designed to help participants tap into the emotional core of their stories while developing a command of poetic craft that brings their words to life.



## Jacqueline Trimble

Jacqueline Allen Trimble is a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellow (Poetry), a Cave Canem Fellow, and a two-time Alabama State Council on the Arts Literary Fellow. Her poetry has appeared

in *Poetry Magazine*, *The Louisville Review*, *The Offing*, and *Poet Lore* and has been featured by *Poem of the Day*, *Poem-a-Day*, and *Poetry Daily*. Published by NewSouth Books, American Happiness, her debut collection, won the 2016 Balcones Poetry Prize. Her new collection, *How to Survive the Apocalypse*, was named one of the ten best poetry books of 2022 by the New York Public Library, and her work was most recently anthologized in *This Is The Honey: An Anthology of Contemporary of Black Poetry*. Trimble is Professor of English and chairs the Department of Languages and Literatures at Alabama State University.



## Natalie Vedder

Natalie Vedder is a communications and marketing professional with a passion for storytelling, brand consistency, and connection. With a Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations from Auburn University, she brings a decade of experience in public

relations, event planning, and content creation across higher education and the private sector. In her role as Digital Marketing and Communications Manager at Athens State University, she enlists her strategic thinking and professional writing skills to increase the University's brand across multiple platforms. Her work helps translate institutional values into compelling narratives that resonate with both internal and external audiences.



## Dana Waldrop

Dana works at the LaunchBox on the Square with Athens State as an Administrative Support Assistant and as a Servsafe Instructor for safety in the food service industry. She is also certified to teach Level I Yoga through the Yogafit program.

**“CREATIVITY IS ALLOWING YOURSELF TO  
MAKE MISTAKES. ART IS KNOWING WHICH  
ONES TO KEEP”**

**-SCOTT ADAMS**





## Whitney Washington

Whitney is a creative nonfiction writer and advocate based in Huntsville, AL. She has spent most of her life in the deep South, with time spent in Birmingham, Nashville,

and Huntsville. For more than a decade, she has worked in progressive politics in the South. During the pandemic she returned to her adolescent love of writing and has since been published in *Reckon*, *Electric Literature*, and Roxane Gay's newsletter "The Audacity." In the past year, she has taken up arts writing and been published in the magazine *Burnaway* and *The Year in Black Art* journal. She's also an alum of the Kenyon Review Writers Workshop, Tin House Summer Workshop, and Black Embodiments Studio's arts writing incubator.

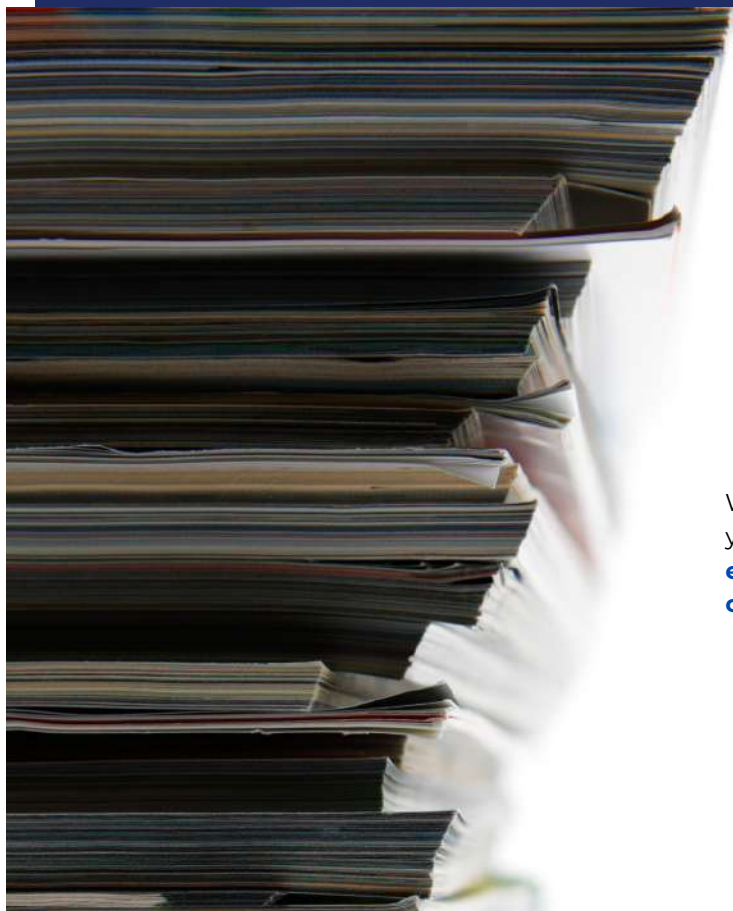


## Jennifer Wolfe

Jennifer Wolfe is a librarian at Kares Library. She's been cross-stitching, since she was about 8 years old. She's excited about learning a new craft using DMC threads in 2025 with slow-stitching.

**"CREATIVITY IS SEEING WHAT EVERYONE ELSE HAS SEEN AND THINKING WHAT NO ONE ELSE HAS THOUGHT."**

**-ALBERT EINSTEIN**



# ATHENA'S WEB

Athens State University Literary Magazine

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

After a period of dormancy, the Athens State University Literary Journal *Athena's Web* is emerging once more.

**Metamorphosis: Resilience, Rebirth, and Renewal** is the theme of our revival issue and a reflection of our literary magazine's return.

### WHO SHOULD APPLY?

We invite **Athens State students, faculty and staff** to submit your best fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and visual art that **explores change, growth, and the many ways we redefine ourselves and the world around us.**



### HOW TO APPLY

For full submission details scan QR or email:  
[athena.web@athens.edu](mailto:athena.web@athens.edu)  
Or call Writing Center 256-216-6665

**Note: we will also publish a select number pieces written by non-Athens State writers AND a supplemental digital version to include non-literary work.**

**All submissions are subject to the discretion of the editorial team**

# SESSION TITLES & DESCRIPTIONS

**CB – CLASSROOM BUILDING**

**LB – KARES LIBRARY**

**W- WATERS HALL**

## DAY 1 • THURSDAY, JUNE 26<sup>TH</sup>

### Writing Through Anxiety

**Stacey Brown**

**Thursday, 10:00am, LB Writing Center**

This workshop is all about helping you deal with the stress and self-doubt that can make writing feel hard. We'll talk about where writing anxiety comes from and try out simple tools to handle things like perfectionism, procrastination, and fear of feedback. With a mix of discussion, exercises, and support from others, the workshop aims to help you feel more confident and comfortable with your writing.

### Marrying the Personal and Political in your Writing

**Whitney Washington**

**Thursday, 10:00am, W 202**

This workshop will discuss the basics of creative nonfiction and political writing, identify ways to incorporate the personal into the political and vice versa, and discuss opportunities for this type of writing. The workshop will include examples of effective writing that fuses the personal and the political, as well as the opportunity for attendees to draft and share their own writing.

### Writing the Wild: Creative Connection in Nature

**Anne Markham Bailey**

**Thursday, 10:00am, Founders Lawn**

Explore the power of our creative connection in nature and its benefits. Through prompts and sharing circles, we will join in community in a variety of creative explorations.

### The Self as Inspiration

**Jacqueline Allen Trimble**

**Thursday, 10:00am, CB 204**

Writing is about looking at the world carefully. This looking begins with the self. This session is a generative workshop that will use prompts to write epistolary (letter) poems, using the self as a source.

### Get to the Point

**Amy Garrison/Natalie Vedder**

**Thursday, 11:00am, W 201**

Do you communicate on behalf of a student or professional organization? Do you struggle with what to write and where to share it? In this session you will learn how to "Get to the Point" utilizing clear, targeted writing practices and explore avenues for message dissemination across campus. Plus, each writer will have the opportunity to craft their own professional bio!

### Show, Don't Tell

**Laura Hunter**

**Thursday, 11:00am, W 105**

One of the most powerful tools in a writer's arsenal is the ability to create vivid, memorable images through description. Good description involves more than dropping in an adjective here and there. This session will focus on effective and ineffective techniques for writing descriptions. Participants will learn how to enhance their manuscripts by integrating descriptive elements into plots to build fiction and nonfiction worlds. Participants will also be given opportunities to create and share effective descriptions.

### Haiku in Focus

**Chandra Mountain**

**Thursday, 11:00am, LB 114**

In this session, participants will use both pen and eye to capture a moment in time, expressing it through micropoetic forms—especially haiku. Through the practice of focused observation, they will explore the art of haiku, translating fleeting moments into poetry and images. Depending on participation, we may also create an ebook showcasing our collective work.



## **Paths to Publishing & Acquiring an Agent**

**Georgina Cross**

**Thursday, 11:00am, CB 204**

In this session I'll share tips I wish I'd learned in the beginning! I'll talk about how to acquire an agent, you'll learn about the different publishers, plus I'll share what the editing & marketing process for reaching your completed book can look like.

## **Arts & Authors Panel**

**Thursday, 12:30pm-1:30pm**

**Sandridge Student Center Ballroom**

In this session artists and authors will discuss their creative processes and why creative work matters.

## **Gentle Yoga for Mental & Physical Fitness**

**Dana Waldrop**

**Thursday, 2:30pm, LB (2nd Floor)**

Come and put your day away for a few minutes! We will focus on low-impact activities that help maintain your range of movement no matter what your age or fitness level, and focus your mind away from stress. Taking care of your physical and mental health is not a luxury, it is vital to a good quality of life!

## **People not Portraits Gallery Talk**

**Mary Beth Johns**

**Thursday, 2:30pm, LB Main**

Participants will engage in a gallery talk with Dr. Johns about her show in Kares Library which is a part of her collection, People not Portraits. A discussion of her artist statement that accompanies this work will be shared with the aim of educating participants in comprehensive statement writing.

## **Focused Writing Group**

**Writing Center Staff**

**Thursday, 2:30pm, LB 114**

Need some time to work? Steal away to a quiet place and we'll help you finish your task! Bring any work-in-progress to our writing group session and sit alongside others who are doing similar work. This quiet parallel work helps writers focus. Also, sitting with others keeps us accountable to our goals. At the end of this session, we'll ask everyone to share what

they accomplished and offer resources to help with your revisions and next steps.

## **Research Lightning Rounds**

**Shannon Pittman**

**Thursday, 3:30 pm, LB 114**

Give a quick, 5-minute explanation of your scholarly activity! Get immediate feedback and practice your presentation skills in a friendly, supportive forum.

## **Crafting a Bestselling Novel**

**Sarah Crouch**

**Thursday, 3:30pm, CB 204**

Together, let's dive into the nuts and bolts of the novel writing craft! We will explore how to structure your novel, how to create compelling plots and characters, and how to self-edit your work effectively, all with an emphasis on crime fiction.

## **Not Your Grandma's Nonfiction!**

**Heather Montgomery**

**Thursday, 3:30pm, CB 203**

Today's nonfiction is bold, engaging, and innovative! Attendees will take an in-depth look at what books are (and aren't) being published. For the sake of time (and variety), the exemplars will be children's books, but the principals explored apply to all informational books. Come ready to investigate, explore, sort, and discover!

## **Introduction to Grant Writing**

**Rachel O'Sullivan & Gabrielle McGraw**

**Thursday, 3:30pm, W 201**

This session will provide an introduction to the fundamentals of grants, including an overview of different types of funding, how to search for funding opportunities, and how to develop a compelling proposal. Ideal for beginners, the session will offer practical tips and tools to help you take the first steps toward successful grant writing.

**"THERE IS NO INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY WITHOUT FAILURE"**

**-BRENE BROWN**

## **The Importance of “THE END”**

**Robert Bailey**

**Thursday, 4:30pm, CB 204**

You cannot overstate how important “THE END” is to a writer. The two most important words. Your book will never be sold in a bookstore if you don’t finish it. In this session, you will hear Robert’s experiences and his advice, suggestions and encouragement on how to complete your story or project.

## **Banned Books and Their “Other” Characters**

**Laurie Fowler**

**Thursday, 4:30pm, CB 203**

Participants will examine titles deemed inappropriate by adults for K-12 students. The audience will explore what characters defined as “other” are vanishing from school libraries. A web site of resources will be provided.

## **Introduction to the Art and Practice of Calligraphy**

**Beth Paul**

**Thursday, 4:30pm, W 105**

In this session, you will learn to use a broad edged marker to learn basic strokes. By following along with the instructor, we will go through the alphabet so you will see how each letter is created. With a little practice, you will soon be writing beautiful letters!

## **Your Voice, OUT LOUD! Pt. 1**

**Susan Guthrie**

**Thursday, 5:30pm, LB Main**

Authors often feel a little exposed reading their own words out loud, yet we long to get our work OUT THERE. These sessions introduce natural and easy methods for nerves, preparation, and presentation of literature. Most importantly, you will be individually guided in the language you wrote and directly prepared for the open mic we celebrate at the close of the Summer Writing Summit. Participants will benefit from attending both sessions by receiving extra attention and rehearsal AND assist with those who cannot attend both sessions.

## **SESSION TITLES & DESCRIPTIONS**

**VAB- VISUAL ARTS BUILDING**

**DAY 2 • FRIDAY, JUNE 27<sup>TH</sup>**

### **ACA Student Artists and Faculty Panel**

**Friday, 9:00am, ACA Recital Hall**

Meet the ACA faculty and student artists! Learn what it’s like to be a student in the MFA program plus other ACA program highlights.

### **Writing an Artist’s Statement**

**Mary Beth Johns**

**Friday, 10:00am, VAB 313**

Participants will engage in a gallery talk with Dr. Johns about her show in Kares Library which is a part of her collection, People not Portraits. A discussion of her artist statement that accompanies this work will be shared with the aim of educating participants in comprehensive statement writing.

### **Pondering Paradox**

**Holly Gorman**

**Friday, 10:00 am, VAB 113**

We will define and explore ways to include paradox in writing by examining your own writing. I’ll provide examples to jump start your creative juices. We will also explore intuition with a useful exercise to enliven your imagination and help you develop a story idea.

### **Gentle Yoga for Mental & Physical Fitness**

**Dana Waldrop**

**Friday, 10:00am, VAB 314**

We will focus on low-impact activities that help maintain your range of movement no matter what your age or fitness level.

### **Art Talk**

**Donna Miller**

**Friday, 10:00am, VAB 314**

Hear how this ACA student artist walked away from her 40 year career in government and stepped into her dream of being an artist! Donna will also share the inspiration behind some of her masterful creations.



## Storytelling with Light

**William Richardson**

**Friday, 10:00am, Performing Arts Building, Theatre Studio**

Environments tell stories of their own. Theatre lighting designers use color theory, shadows and light placement to develop characters and plot with light. We will discuss the usage of light in theatre, the tools lighting designers use to create environment and mood, and how this can inspire artists.

## Scrapbooking & Card Making

**Leah Frachiseur**

**Friday, 11:00am, VAB 118 (3M)**

In this session you will learn how to layout and construct a scrapbook page or card. Artistic materials provided, but please bring your own pictures!

## Make an Exquisite Corpse: A Collaborative Poetry and Art Game

**Jessica Spowart**

**Friday, 11:00am, VAB 312**

In this session participants will play a game inspired by the Surrealist movement to collaborate and create experimental poems and art projects.

## Reading Your Wardrobe

**Kim Jack**

**Friday, 11:00am, VAB 313**

What does your clothing say about you? How can you consciously select wardrobe pieces to foster the impressions you want others to have when they see you? In this session theatre costume-designer and English professor, Kim Jack will show you how to transform a person/character's image with thrifted materials and a little upcycling know-how!

## Research Lightning Round

**Shannon Pittman**

**Friday, 11:00am, VAB 113**

Give a quick, 5-minute explanation of your scholarly activity! Get immediate feedback and practice your presentation skills in a friendly, supportive forum.

## Slow Stitching Story Craft

**Danielle Chouinard and Jennifer Wolfe**

**Friday, 1:00pm, VAB 118 (3M)**

Open to both beginners and experienced stitchers, this session invites attendees to engage with slow-stitching as a method of creative inquiry that aligns environmental consciousness with artistic practice. Slow-Stitching Story Craft explores slow-stitching as both a sustainable textile practice and a narrative tool for personal and collective expression. Grounded in mindfulness, material reuse, and ecological awareness, this presentation examines how the act of hand-stitching can cultivate storytelling through intentional, tactile engagement. Participants will consider how the process encourages reflection, fosters connection to place and memory, and challenges the fast-paced culture of mass production.

## Having Fun With Calligraphy

**Beth Paul**

**Friday, 1:00pm, VAB 313**

Calligraphy can be fun and creative. In this session, you will learn different ways to use, draw and decorate letters using different tools and colors to create pieces of art for decoration or gifts.

## Telling Your Story, Poetically

**Keiani Taylor**

**Friday, 1:00pm VAB 113**

In this session Keiani will be empowering participants to write a personal poem that uses extended metaphor, personification, hyperbole, and vivid imagery to emotionally engage the reader and bring their story to life.

## Pen Meets Pixel: Writing in the Age of AI

**Valentina Castilla**

**Friday, 1:00pm, VAB 312**

Step into the future of writing! In this engaging session, students will explore how artificial intelligence can be a creative partner in the writing process. From brainstorming with bots to polishing final drafts, we'll dive into how AI tools can support and enhance student voice, critical thinking, and originality—while keeping the human touch at the heart of every story.

## Reclaim, Restore, Rewrite: Becoming the Author of Your Own Healing

**Laura Brink**

**Friday, 2:10pm, VAB 113**

Explore the transformative power of writing as a therapeutic tool for restoration and empowerment. Through guided exercises and discussion, participants will engage with writing as a means of processing trauma, reclaiming identity, and creating meaning from lived experience. Drawing on research in expressive writing and narrative identity, the session will introduce key approaches to redemptive storytelling through journaling.

## Self-Care Focused - Paint & Sip

**Kailey Burbank**

**Friday, 2:10pm, VAB 313**

Let creativity flow as you paint an abstract acrylic portrait while focusing on the self and being mindful of inner thoughts, expression, and manifestation. This paint and sip will feature relaxing vibes, a positive discussion on healthy habits for mental health, self-expression through art, and friendly conversation—followed by a sweet drink for our like-minded dopamine seekers. Let's paint and have fun!

## Crochet Basics

**Edyn Roper**

**Friday, 2:10pm VAB 118 (3M)**

In this session, participants will learn some of the tips and tricks that I wish I knew when I first started! We will go over some basic stitches and I'll share which projects they are best used for. I'll also show you some of my own creations so you can see how even a simple project can become something amazing!

## Watercolor Journaling & Gallery Inspiration: A Creative Workshop

**Pamela Keller**

**Friday, 2:00pm VAB 312**

Join Professor Keller for a hands-on creative experience that blends art appreciation with personal expression. In Watercolor Journaling & Gallery Inspiration, participants will enjoy a guided tour of a curated art gallery followed by a watercolor journaling session. You'll learn

techniques for capturing visual impressions, recording your responses, and developing a personalized journaling page inspired by the artwork you encounter. All skill levels welcome—materials provided.

## Your Voice OUT LOUD! Pt.2

**Susan Guthrie**

**Friday, 2:00pm, Performing Arts Building, Theatre Studio**

Authors often feel a little exposed reading their own words out loud, yet we long to get our work OUT THERE. These sessions introduce natural and easy methods for nerves, preparation, and presentation of literature. Most importantly, you will be individually guided in the language you wrote and directly prepared for the open mic we celebrate at the close of the Summer Writing Summit. Participants will benefit from attending both sessions by receiving extra attention and rehearsal AND assist with those who cannot attend both sessions.

## Reception, Awards, & Open Mic

**Friday, 3:15pm, Visual Arts Building Gallery**

We'll kick off our Open Mic event at 3:15 PM in the Gallery. Enjoy bites & beverages, courtesy of Sigma Tau Delta, and browse art from ACA students. At 4:00 PM, the winners of the 1st Annual Writing Contest will be announced, and the cover of the upcoming revival edition of Athens State literary journal, *Athena's Web*, will be revealed! Then, at 4:30 PM, we'll turn the stage over to YOU to showcase your poetry, prose, or spoken word!! Don't miss this opportunity to connect with fellow writers and make your mark on the Summit. Please note: presentations must be appropriate for a general audience and limited to a maximum of 5 minutes each. Spaces are limited, so sign up at the registration table in advance!



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# CREATIVITY



# ART







artwork by: Char Baxter



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### STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

SIGMA TAU DELTA  
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### EMPLOYEES:

AMY GARRISON  
GRAYSON SIMMONS & DARRYL O'DONNELL  
JENNIFER BUNNELL,  
MELISSA IRVIN & JORDAN DAVIS (ACA)  
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THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!  
*We hope you were inspired!*

artwork by Donna Miller