

Fall 2016

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

# Footnotes



## From the Chair Cynthia Burkhead

We've only been back to school for a month, but what a busy month it has been. We hit the ground running in August scheduling events and speakers for the upcoming year, ACHE approved our new graduate program, and planning is underway to hire four new faculty members this year. Whew; 2016-17 is going to be exciting in Willingham Hall! You can read more about these activities in the following pages.

Homecoming is October 15, and once again we would like to invite our alumni to a breakfast reception in Willingham Hall at 9am. Come by to meet our faculty and students, tell us what you have been up to, and enjoy refreshments before heading downtown for the Homecoming Parade!

The English Department is looking forward to a busy and productive year. Thanks for keeping in touch!



*Members of the English Department gathered in May to celebrate the successful program completion of four MA in English students*

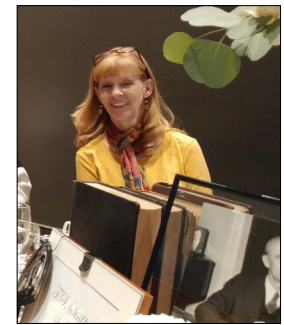
## Student Spotlight

### Stephanie Adair, Graduate Teaching Assistant

Fresh out of high school, Stephanie Adair entered college pursuing a degree in electrical engineering, but took every available humanities elective in literature. Following graduation, Adair spent ten years working in the field. After spending another ten years of working from home as a stay-at-home mom, she decided to pursue her hidden passion for reading, writing, and all things English. Adair received her B.A. in English from Athens State University, and then was offered a position at UNA as a graduate teaching assistant.

Adair describes teaching college freshmen as an amazing adventure. She feels it has been a rewarding experience to watch first-year college students make the transition into scholarly writing. With skills improved by her own observations and mentor training, Adair says she felt well prepared entering the classroom for her first semester as a composition instructor. The experiences Adair gained during her time in the Center for Writing Excellence as a consultant also gave her "an appreciation for the writing process and composition pedagogy." One thing she wishes she had known before entering the graduate program at UNA is that there is no "app" for generating or grading papers—Adair admits they remain the product of blood, sweat, and tears.

Stephanie Adair is currently researching the only two Southern U.S. Poet Laureates—Robert Penn Warren and Natasha Trethewey.



"In Trethewey's final lecture as poet laureate in 2014, she focused on Warren's transition in his later work and stressed the importance of examining an author's corpus before pigeonholing based on a particular text." In her research, Adair plans to work through Trethewey's poetry to discover a similar course of reflection and growth. "Trethewey's poetry provides a fascinating approach to Southern history, both public and private, in an eloquent mix of ekphrasis, imagery, and form." So far, the research has far exceeded Adair's initial expectations; she is enthusiastic to discover where the research will lead her next.

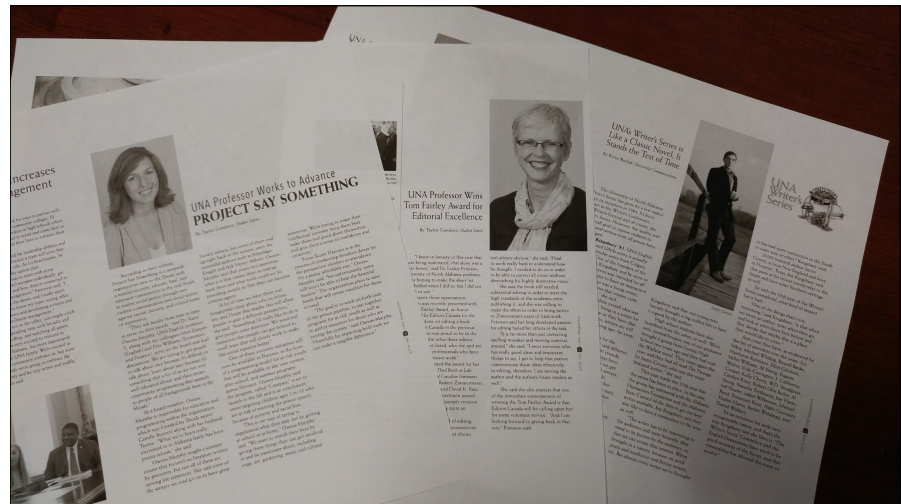
Adair's post graduation plans are still in the works, but because of her work with beginning college writers, she has begun to consider teaching at the junior college level. She believes the basics of composition to be crucial skills for any person in any given job field. The idea of making "basic writing skills accessible and achievable for a variety of students" is something Adair is very optimistic about. She has not ruled out the prospect of entering a PhD program at some point in the future; Adair believes it is important to keep one's options open.

## Faculty Notes

"The summer night is like perfection of thought."

-Wallace Stevens

Summer was good to the English Department, and much of that goodness came from our faculty. If you read the current UNA Magazine, you've had a taste of some of the very important work our faculty have been doing. Dr. Lesley Peterson was awarded the The 2015 Tom Fairley Award, which "recognizes an editor's outstanding contribution to a work published in Canada in English or French in the award year." For her work editing *The Little Third Reich on Lake Superior: A History of Canadian Internment Camp R* by Ernest Robert Zimmermann, Michel S. Beaulieu and David K. Ratz (University of Alberta Press), the "panel lauded Peterson's advanced skill in managing conflicting expectations on a difficult work that blended memoir and scholarly research." In her first year with the English Department, Dr. Katie Owens-Murphy has been busy lending her time and expertise to a new Shoals non-profit, Project Say Something, an organization "with a mission to unify, educate, heal, and empower communities in the mid-South to realize social justice through nonviolent communication and direct action against racism, poverty, and related forms of oppression." In addition to serving on the Project Say Something Board, Dr. Owens-Murphy has brought awareness of the issues the organization



seeks to address through her teaching, including a summer course focusing on prison literature. In August, Dr. Cheryl Price's article "Probability and Capital Crime: The Rise and Fall of Actuarial Detection in Victorian Crime Fiction," was published in *Clues: A Journal of Detection*. Dr. Brenna Wardell's article, "Actors Assemble! The Intertextual Pleasures of the Joss Whedon Ensemble" was published in the Summer 2016 issue of *Slayage: The Journal of the Whedon Studies Association*. The English faculty are doing excellent work in their scholarly areas!

The UK had quite a UNA presence this summer. With Dr. Jeffrey Bibbee of the

History Department, Dr. Peterson conducted the month-long study-abroad experience in London during July. Undergraduate and graduate English majors participated in extensive research at the British Library as well having many cultural and historical experiences. Also in July, Dr. Brenna Wardell and Dr. Cynthia Burkhead attended the 7<sup>th</sup> Biennial Slayage Conference on the Whedonverses at the University of Kingston in Kingston Upon Thames, London, UK.

The coming months promise more publications and scholarly activities by our faculty, which we will be sure to share in our newsletter and at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/UNAEnglishDept/>.

## Graduate Program notes



This fall brings great news for our graduate program; make that graduate program x 2! On September 9, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education approved the MA in Writing degree we spent the

last year creating. The program is awaiting final approve from SACS, UNA's accrediting agency, but we've already begun offering the graduate writing courses and anticipate having our first MA in Writing candidates in the spring. The program offers exciting new courses in subjects as diverse as Grant Writing for the Creative Writer, Literacy, Culture, and Writing, and Document Design. Our undergraduate Professional Writing program has been so successful over the years that we expect big things to come from this new graduate program.

Our MA in English students continue to impress us. Our May graduates are all either teaching or beginning Ph.D. studies. Current students are already actively planning this year's UNA Regional Graduate Conference in English, which will take

place on February 24 and 25, 2017. This year's conference theme is "Confinement: From the Prison Block to the Margins." Last year's conference was very well attended by graduate students from across the southeast, and the upcoming conference promises to be just as successful. In addition to the student presentations, the conference organizers have lined up Anthony Ray Hinton and Gary Drinkard, who were both exonerated after spending years on Alabama's death row, as speakers. Most of the planning and organizing for the conference is handled by our graduate students, and they deserve much recognition for their efforts. They would also love to see department friends and alums at the conference, so please make plans to join us in February and help support UNA's English graduate program.



## Events, and more events!

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**October 6, 12:30 pm, GUC Loft**  
– Dr. Amy Clukey, “The Trouble with the South in Northern Ireland”

**October 15, 9am, Willingham Lobby**—Homecoming reception

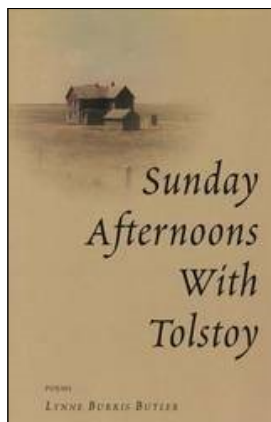
**November 3, 5pm, Wesleyan Auditorium**— Albert S. Johnston Memorial Lecture, Dr. Ayanna Thompson, Shakespeare and Race

**November 10, 4pm, TBA** – Dr. Hilary Wyss, Native American Literatures

**February 24-25** – UNA Regional Graduate Conference in English

**March 16** – Writers’ Series  
(Check una.com or our Facebook page for BIG announcement and updates)

**Spring TBA**—Alum Michael Isbell, English Alumni Speaker



### Lynne Burris Butler, 1943-2016

We were very saddened in July to learn that our friend and emeritus colleague Lynn Butler passed away. Lynne’s dedication to our Professional Writing program is immeasurable, as is the influence she had on so many students. Along with fond memories of her, Lynne’s legacy includes two collections of poetry, *Sunday Afternoons with Tolstoy* and *Forever Is Easy*, as well as two chapbooks. Lynne’s husband, Jay Deeds, has generously created a fund to sponsor a visiting literary artist event at UNA. The first Lynne Burris Butler Visiting Artist reading will take place spring, 2017.



In Summer, 2016, our Professional Writing students gained valuable experience through off-campus internships with Marshall Space Flight Center, IFDC, Alabama Energy, Southern Aerospace Company, and the Alabama State Government. Four students completed on-campus interviews with Career Services, Alumni Relations, and the Graduate English Program. If you or your organization would like to provide practical, professional experience to a UNA English major and gain the benefit of working with highly skilled professional writers, please contact Dr. Tammy Winner at [twinner@una.edu](mailto:twinner@una.edu).



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**THE DEPARTMENT OF  
ENGLISH**

University of North Alabama  
UNA Box 5050  
Florence, AL. 35632-0001

Phone: 256-765-4238  
Email: [english@una.edu](mailto:english@una.edu)



UNA Department of English

## Alumni updates ...

**Eric Hughes**, MA, 2016—Graduate teaching assistant and Ph.D. student at Middle Tennessee State University.

**Jency Wilson**, MA, 2016—Graduate teaching assistant and Ph.D. student at Middle Tennessee State University.

**Destiny Richards**, MA, 2016—Adjunct faculty, UNA

**Katie Todd**, MA, 2015—Adjunct faculty, UNA and Calhoun Community College

**Tenna Patel**—BA, 2015—Graduate teaching assistant and MA student at Auburn University

**Katie Lindsay**—BA, 2016—Internship, IFDC

**Graham Harkness** - MA, 2016—Adjunct faculty, Calhoun Community College

**Blake Guffey**—BS, 2012—earned MFA at The *Jack Kerouac* School of Disembodied Poetic, Naropa University

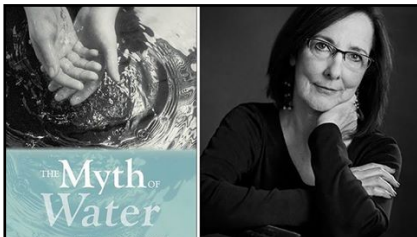
This is just a taste of our alumni's exciting achievements. We would like to highlight the accomplishments of all our alumni, so please send us your news at [english@una.edu](mailto:english@una.edu), or join our Facebook group, UNA Department of English, and share your news there.

## What we've been up to lately...

UNA Alum and Pulitzer Prize winning author T.S. Stribling was inducted into the Alabama Writers Hall of Fame on September 29. Through the generosity of COAS Dean Burkhalter, Alum Jency Wilson, whose MA thesis focused on Stribling's detective fiction, attended the event with Dr. Burkhead and grad students Tonia Turner, Stephanie Adair, and Brett Fish.



Jency Wilson, Tonia Turner, Brett Fish, and Dean Carmen Burkhalter at the Alabama Writers Hall of Fame Induction



On September 13, the English Department hosted a Brown Bag lunch discussion with Jeannie Thompson about her new collection of poetry, *The Myth of Water*: poems from the life of Helen Keller.

In November, Diane Dodson will be traveling with 10 former and current Language Arts Students to the annual ALAN (the NCTE's Assembly on Literature for Adolescents) Conference in Atlanta.



Make plans to attend Reader Riot. Confirmed authors include acclaimed AfriLachian poets Frank X Walker and Randall Horton, best-selling sci-fi author Tobias Buckell, and children's book author and illustrator Lori Nichols.

**POPULAR CULTURE ASSOCIATION IN THE SOUTH  
&  
AMERICAN CULTURE ASSOCIATION IN THE SOUTH**

On October 13, two of our alums and one History Department alum will present conference papers at the annual Popular Culture of the South conference in Nashville. The papers were all written for Dr. Burkhead's "Film Musical" course last fall.



The English Department is committed to finding ways to support student travel to scholarly conferences and other learning enhancement opportunities. Help us defray travel costs for our students as well as provide quality programming for them on campus by sending your donation to English Department, UNA Box 5050, Florence, AL., 35630, or visit <https://www.una.edu/annual-giving/give-to-the-college-of-arts--sciences.html> and select the English Department. **Thank you!**





## Then and Now

We're not sure of the date of the Sigma Tau Delta induction captured in the top photo, but what a great group! Below is the inductee class of 2015. We would love help identifying the year and students in the early picture; send us an email at [english@una.edu](mailto:english@una.edu).



**English Department Faculty 2007 and 2016**