

# English Matters

Working for Student Success

Spring 2018

## A Word from the Chair

Welcome to the 2017-18 edition of *English Matters*, the official newsletter of the Department of English at Samford University!

It was a momentous year for our faculty and students. The department expanded its intellectual and aesthetic horizons by hosting several invigorating guest-speakers (pages 3 and 5). English majors took their time, talent, and hard work beyond the classroom in various ways through their participation in Sigma Tau Delta, Film Club, *Wide Angle*, and the Howard College Undergraduate Research Fair (pages 4-7). As we celebrate our current students, we proudly boast the achievements of our alumni, who are completing masters' degrees, beginning doctoral programs, and continuing work as successful authors (page 2).

It was and continues to be a year of transitions for the department: we bid farewell to Jane Hiles and Kathy Flowers, who both retired after more than twenty years of service to Samford. We hired Dr. Julianne Sandberg, a Renaissance specialist, who will be joining us in August. And, also in August, we will be moving into a new building on campus. The English department is finally going to a better place!

My thanks to Gretchen Sexton, the department's amazing Administrative Assistant (AAA) for all she has done for the faculty and our students. Gretchen was a huge support to me this semester while I filled in as acting department Chair. Special thanks to Gretchen for producing the newsletter. She penned all that you're about to read and took all the wonderful pictures of smiling, successful people.

In appreciation of "theology and geometry" (see *A Confederacy of Dunces*),

*Dr. Geoffrey A. Wright,*

English Department Acting Chair

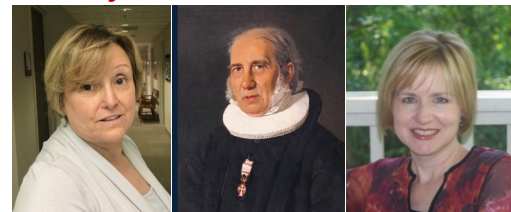
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## Notable Alumni

**Kathryn Ormsbee ('11)** published the final installment of her Middle Grade fantasy trilogy, *The Current & the Cure*. It will be released June 2018, as will the audiobook of her debut novel, *The Water and the Wild*. *The House in Poplar*



*Wood*, a murder mystery folk tale, comes out from Chronicle Books in August 2018. *The Great Unknowable End*, a Young Adult speculative novel set in 1977 Kansas, comes out from Simon

& Schuster in Spring 2019. Ormsbee's most recent YA novel, *Tash Hearts Tolstoy*, was sold to both Brazilian and Polish publishers. Ormsbee continues to write full-time in Austin, Texas, when not on book tours.

**Megan Burr ('16)** just wrapped up her

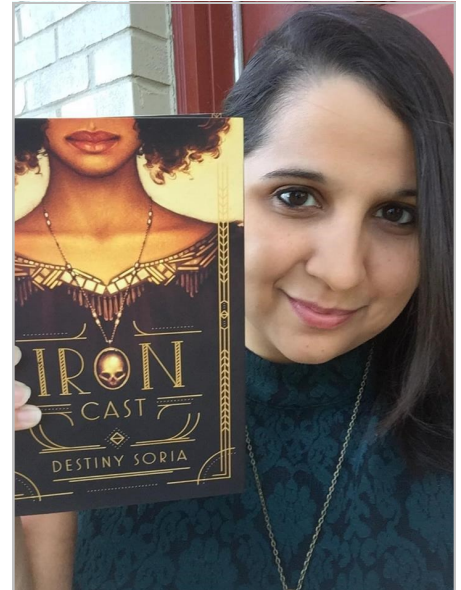


Masters at Florida State University, where she studied Film and Screenwriting. She just landed a position with Entertainment One! as a Film Acquisitions Assistant. Burr resides in Los Angeles, California,

where she regularly enjoys new films.

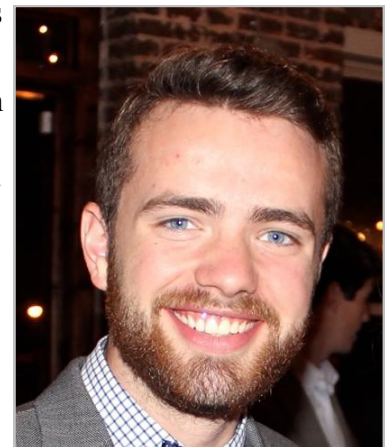
**Destiny Soria's ('11)** latest novel, *Beneath the Citadel*, will be released by Abrams/Amulet Publishers in October 2018. Her first novel *Iron Cast* is available

anywhere books are sold and is available in ebook and audiobook formats. She has more novels in the works and hopes to have more publishing news to announce soon. Soria currently lives in Birmingham. For latest updates, visit her Facebook page



or her website at [destinysoria.com](http://destinysoria.com) or follow her on Twitter/Instagram @thedestinysoria.

**Adam Quinn ('15)** was accepted to the University of Kentucky and will pursue his Ph.D. in English this fall. He hopes to expand his background in Irish Literature as well as his interest in the American South. Quinn received a Fulbright scholarship to study for his Masters from University College Dublin. He has most recently been an adjunct professor at Troy University in Alabama.



### We Appreciate Your Support!

Your gift directly impacts the lives of current and future generations of English majors at Samford! To make a donation to the English Dept.-just note 'English Department Fund' on the memo area of your check.



## Faculty Bid Farewell

Dr. Jane Hiles and Professor Kathy Flowers are both retiring after this spring semester.



Hiles, the department's Renaissance professor, has taught at Samford since the early '90s. She plans to leave in a manner befitting both Milton ("At last he rose, and twitch't his Mantle blue: / Tomorrow to fresh Woods, and Pasture's new" *Lycidas* 191-2) and Shakespeare ("I go, I go; look how I go! / Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow" Puck, *Midsummer Night's Dream* 3.2 100-01).

At the end of spring semester, Flowers completed her twenty-third year at Samford. She will move to Florida to join her husband there.

When asked about her time at Samford, Flowers noted, "I have long said that the English Department is the best department on campus. Though I have only recently been added as an official member the department, I have known the friendship

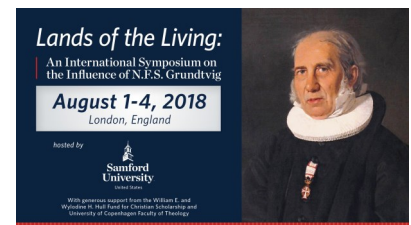


and camaraderie of the faculty and staff of the English Department for over twenty years. The friendships I have made here will remain with me for the rest of my life."

All good wishes to our colleagues as they embark on the next chapter of their lives.

## Busbee Receives Hull Grant

Dr. Brad Busbee was one of eight to receive a William E. and Wylodine H. Hull Grant awarded by Samford University for Christian Scholarship. The fund seeks to support faculty who are interested in how the integration of faith and higher education enriches the life of the



academy and the Church. Busbee is collaborating with Anders Holm, 2016 Fulbright Fellow at Samford from The University of Copenhagen's School of Theology, to host an international gathering of global educators from seventeen countries to discuss priest, poet, and educator N.F.S. Grundtvig's Christ-inspired model of education.

## Scholarships for Entering First-Year Students

We are pleased to announce the class of 2022 Entering First-Year Scholarship recipients: Jenna Barron, McKenzie Glaze, Jake Lane, and Paulina Rueda. These students will begin their studies at Samford this fall.

The English Department is grateful for all of the encouragement and donations that come from our alums and former faculty. It is truly a blessing to those who work and study here to have the support of those who have experienced, firsthand, the power of a liberal arts degree and the growth that happens at a fine university like Samford.



## BACHE Visiting Writers 2017-18

Twice this year Samford English majors have been able to meet and learn from authors via the BACHE visiting writer's events. At these events, visiting writers share their publications with readings and Q & A sessions. In October, Karen Bender, author of *Refund*, *Like Normal People*, and *A Town of Empty Rooms*, read from her most recent work. And in March, Dr. Christopher Abani came to campus. Both events were well attended and provided insights to all.

## Outstanding Students Honored

Pictured right are the top award winners for the English Department.

Left: Exemplary Film Studies, Katie-Bryn Hubbard; Center: Exemplary English Major Award, Ben Crabtree; Right: Vivian Campbell Lankford Creative Writing Award, Madeline Perkins.

Other English majors earning recognition from Samford University: Bailey Bridgeman, who received the Omicron Delta Kappa Circle Leader of the Year Award. This is given for exemplary service to the circle and to the Samford community. Casey Cunningham received the Service Award. The award honors a student in the graduating class who best exemplifies the qualities of social service.



(Far left) Dr. Geoffrey Wright introduces the Film Club officers. (Left) Katie-Bryn Hubbard, President, fills in the details of the work of the club and films that were screened this past year. (Details page 7)

Sigma Tau Delta seniors sport their cords for graduation (below right); Madeline Perkins, President, (below center) shares the accomplishments of the honor society for 2017-18. All the new inductees (below left) joined as a result of the successful membership drive in the fall. More details of Sigma Tau Delta members' activities can be found on page 5.



**SIGMA TAU DELTA**  
INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH HONOR SOCIETY





## First Annual Howard College of Arts & Sciences Research Fair

Students representing the various departments of Howard College of Arts and Sciences gathered to share their research and encourage others to participate. Ryan Lally represented the Department of English and presented his senior thesis, "Deeper Visions: Yusef Komunyakaa's Odes and the Elevation of the Mundane." Over seventy-five students toured, met representatives, and asked questions about students' research projects. Lally is pictured below with the display and top right in action.



## Sigma Tau Delta Members Attend Convention in Cincinnati, OH.

This year four members of Sigma Tau Delta attended the National Convention held in Cincinnati, Ohio. Emily Youree, Amelia Megginson, Sydney Berry, and Bailey Bridgeman gave the following papers there:

Sydney Berry, "The Catholicism of Judaism in *The Merchant of Venice*";  
Bailey Bridgeman, "Nature Sprouts Legs: Classical Personification in *West Wind*";  
Emily Youree, "Rehabilitation in *Brideshead Revisited* and Foucault";  
Amelia Megginson, "The Role of Women in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*."

They also enjoyed the famous Skyline Chili, local bookstores, and historic sites.



## Workman Lecture: Mary Flowers Braswell

This year's Workman lecture gave the Department of English the honor of hosting special guest-speaker Dr. M. Flowers Braswell professor emeritus from UAB. Flowers Braswell spoke on the Medieval research by nineteenth-century-scholar Mary Eliza Haweis. In addition to many English majors, several of Dr. Flowers Braswell's former students attended this event. Special thanks to Dr. Charles Workman and the The Charles Workman Lecture Fund, which enabled the department to invite Dr. Flowers Braswell to share her knowledge and experience.

Pictured right: former students of Dr. Flowers Braswell (L-R): Professor Sonya Davis, Dr. Flowers Braswell, Assistant Dean Dana Basinger, and Dr. Charlotte Brammer





## Student Activities



Please join us in congratulating the editors of *Wide Angle: A Journal of Literature and Film*, the scholarly publication of the Department of English at Samford University. It is a forum for the best critical and creative writing by Samford students. The journal also provides English majors experience in academic editing and publishing. *Wide Angle* completed its seventh year.

We hope you will support Samford English scholars by searching for *Wide Angle: A Journal of Literature and Film* and reading this semester's issue!

Go to the English Department homepage and click on Wide Angle or use the following URL:

[www.samford.edu/arts-and-sciences/english/wide-angle](http://www.samford.edu/arts-and-sciences/english/wide-angle).



**Wide Angle editorial staff** pictured L-R: Regan Green, Emily Youree, Casey Cunningham, Lauren Morris, Ben Crabtree, Dr. Geoff Wright, Hannah Warrick.



### Dean's List highest honors

Pictured left are most of the English majors who received medals for their academic achievement of 3.5-4.0 GPA. They were honored at the annual English Awards Banquet on April 26. The department is proud of all their hard work and academic excellence.



## Student Activities cont'd from page

### Film Club

During the fall semester, the SU Film Club had several great screening events, which included *Eraserhead*, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, and *The Graduate*. Film Club also collaborated with the World Languages and Cultures Department for the screening of *Two Days, One Night*.

Spring semester held even more good films. Film Club held screenings of *The Princess Bride* and *Breathless* as well as the annual **Snapshot** forty-eight-hour-student-film-making competition. Film Club finished the semester with screenings and discussions of *Blade Runner 2049* and *Singin' in the Rain*.



**Film Club officers from left to right:** Isabella Segala (Treasurer); Ben Crabtree (Vice President); Katie-Bryn Hubbard (President); Annie Brown (Social Media Czar)

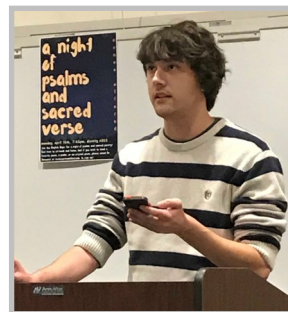
### An Evening of Psalms and Sacred Verse



Sixty people attended a student-led poetry reading, on Monday, April 16, from 7:00-8:00 pm. The participants ranged from English majors to students in other departments to our own Dr. Timothy Sutton, who read two poems.

Dr. Steward, the Coordinator of the Creative Writing Concentration, explained that "this event involved readings from the Psalms and from sacred verse, whether that verse is student-composed poetry about God or Christianity or our relation to the Divine, or the verse may be a famous sacred/spiritual poem like John Donne's Holy Sonnets." Madeline Perkins, a senior in the Creative Writing Concentration, added, "This event is tons of fun. It's also valuable because it presents poetry in a way that is

accessible rather than intimidating. The poems range from humorous to heartbreaking, but all are engaging evidences of the delights of poetry to a crowd who may not be used to it."



## Faculty News

**Tim Sutton** published “Tory-Papists and Ford’s *The Good Soldier*,” a chapter (Pages: 18–35) in Ford Maddox Ford’s *The Good Soldier*, ISBN: 9789004344136, Publishers: Brill, November 2017. He is also giving a paper (“Postsecular Joyce”) at the American Conference for Irish Studies (Cork, IE) this summer.

**David Chapman** served as Professor-in-Residence at the Daniel House in London in the fall. His article on “The Corpus of London: (Dis)covering the Victorian City” appeared in the December 2017 issue of *Journeys: The International Journal of Travel and Travel Writing*. He received a grant from the Hull Fund for Christian Scholarship to produce his original play, *The Prisoner’s Friend*, in 2019.

**Julie Steward** was on sabbatical in the fall of 2017. She spent the semester working on her book manuscript *Improvisation and the Art of Teaching*. On April 20, she presented an excerpt from the book at the annual Association for Core Texts and Courses conference in Boston, MA. She also presented a collection of her original poetry at the annual conference of the Far West Popular Culture Association in February.

**Rosemary Fisk** will present the paper “Teaching Hawthorne in Current Contexts: *My Kinsman, Major Molineaux* and the White Supremacist Mob,” at a conference jointly sponsored by the Hawthorne, Emerson, and Poe societies and hosted by the Nathaniel Hawthorne Society of Japan, meeting in Kyoto, June 21-24, 2018.

**Brad Busbee** published his second book, *Approaches to Teaching the Middle English Pearl*, with the Modern Language Association, in December. In January, he was awarded the William E. and Wylodine F. Hull Research Fellowship for the 2017-2018 academic year to host a conference this summer (August 1-4) at the University of London, titled “Lands of the Living: An International Symposium on the Influence of N.F.S. Grundtvig.” Speakers from over 15 countries will describe how they have adopted or adapted Grundtvig’s pioneering educational philosophies to suit the needs of their communities. Planning for the conference has dominated his sabbatical this semester. Last fall, Busbee completed his fourth year as co-editor for the journal *Grundtvig-Studier* while also serving on the editorial board for *LATCH: Literary Artifact in Theory, Culture, and History*, on the review board for *Medieval Perspectives*, and as a reviewer for *Romantik: Journal for the Study of Romanticisms*. He continues advisory work for *Grundtvigs-Værker* (online corpus of the work of N.F.S. Grundtvig). Last summer, he was a site reviewer for centers at the University of Copenhagen and, while in Denmark, he served on a review board for a PhD dissertation. His article “Grundtvig and Tolkien on Beowulf: A Comparative Analysis” has been contracted to be reprinted in *NCLC: Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig*. In March, he published a book review in Danish of Keld Zeruneith’s *DE SIDSTE TIDER - Hedenskab Heroisme Kristendom - En angelsaksisk overgangshistorie [THE END OF TIMES: paganism, heroism and Christianity—An Anglo-Saxon History of Ideas]* in *Dansk Kirketidende [Danish Church Times]*. His article “Grundtvig’s Educational Use of Medieval ‘Nordisk’ Literature: An Experiment that Succeeded” will be published in *Proceedings for the International Conference on “Lifelong Learning in Developing Countries: Issues and Perspectives (Kalyani, India)*. And his piece on the Anglo-Saxon queen Ælfthryth will be printed in *Anglo-Saxon Women: A Florilegium* later this year. Busbee expresses his gratitude to Dr. Wright for his excellent leadership this spring semester!

**Mark Baggett** delivered a paper, “‘Read the Eternities’: The Alabama Baptist and Its Legacy of Influence” at The Alabama Baptist 175th Anniversary Symposium on March 2, 2018. He also had “Mark Twain’s Legal Burlesques and the Democratization of American Legalese,” accepted for the Mark Twain Circle of American session of the American Literature Association Conference, Friday, May 25, 2018.

**Steven Epley** received a \$3,500 grant from Mass Humanities to support research and public outreach this fall at the Medford, Mass., Historical Society and Museum. Dr. Epley will research holdings at the society and other repositories in New England to learn more about a scandal in Medford in 1799 that might have inspired American best-selling writer Susanna Rowson’s last novel. He will also give public talks on his research findings and on Rowson’s place in Massachusetts literary culture. In May, Dr. Epley will report on his progress so far to a panel at the American Literature Association annual convention in San Francisco. In April, he gave a presentation on teaching Laurence Sterne’s novel *Tristram Shandy* to the Association for Core Texts and Courses annual conference in Framingham, Mass.

**Kathy Flowers** spent fall 2017 in London as Professor-in-Residence at the Daniel House where she taught the Survey of English Literature course. In spring 2018 she served the English Department as a member of the search committee for the Shakespeare/Early Modern assistant professor job opening. Professor Flowers is currently enjoying her final semester at Samford. In May she will retire to live with her husband in Florida.

**Lynette Sandley** is currently working on a chapter book of poetry about characters working in the textile mills of Alamance County, North Carolina from the 1830s to the 1960s. She is an active member of the North Carolina Writers Network and writes both fiction and poetry. Professor Sandley has assessed student writing within Core classes as part of Samford’s Quality Enhancement Program: Level Up. In a related QEP project, she has been working with Samford’s librarians to further enhance student research and writing within undergraduate classes.

**Geoff Wright Dr.** Wright published two journal articles this past year: “The Anatomy of Shame: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of the Self in Iraq War Memoirs,” which appeared in the *PsyArt Journal*, and “‘A kind of misguided archeology’: The Iraq War and Postmodern Memory in Kevin Powers’ *The Yellow Birds*,” which is forthcoming in the *South Atlantic Review*. In November, he presented a paper titled “‘I’m a soldier, not a gender’: Iraq War Literature and the Double Bind of Being a Woman in Combat” at the South Atlantic MLA convention. As always, he served as faculty advisor to the SU Film Club and as General Editor of *Wide Angle: A Journal of Literature and Film*, which published its seventh volume this year. He is currently serving as acting Chair of the English department while Dr. Busbee is on sabbatical.