



# English Matters

Working for Student Success

Summer 2015

## A Word from the Chair

These newsletter pages illustrate how the English Department is leading in scholarship and service at Samford University. Our English alumni are holding positions in international and regional corporations such as Walmart and Allstate; they are working towards doctorate degrees at prestigious universities such as Emory and UNC Chapel Hill; and they are publishing books of poetry and prose. For the second year in a row, an English major (this year, Audrey Ward) has won the President's Cup for highest grade point average at Samford. English major Laura Ann Prickett was elected Student Government President. And English major Adam Quinn was awarded an Academic Fulbright for graduate study at the University of Dublin. *Wide Angle*, the department's journal of literature and film, is headed into its fifth year of publication and is receiving national recognition for its excellence, and members of Samford's chapter of Sigma Tau Delta presented three papers at the organization's national conference. The Samford community recognizes the institutional service of our faculty, choosing Dr. Steven Epley (pictured at right) as the year's recipient of the Jennings Marshall Award. Our faculty continue to support excellent student work, too: Dr. Geoff Wright acts as General Editor and faculty sponsor for *Wide Angle*, while Dr. Keya Kraft hosts readings by nationally known authors and poets, and Dr. Jane Hiles shepherds students to national Sigma Tau Delta conferences. Faculty are also diligently presenting their scholarly ideas, publishing critical essays and books, and serving their communities.

The English Department is strong and growing. Our current focus is on creating more opportunities for our students to study abroad. To that end, we ask that you support our fund for study abroad scholarships. We would also like to hear from you! Please drop us a note or come by the department whenever you are in town.

*Dr. M. Brad Busbee,*

English Department Chair



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### We Need Your Support!

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

## Alumni in Action

**Bob Sands** ('96), who is Associate General Counsel at Walmart, was recently named the global compliance subject matter leader for international trade at Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. He is based at the Company's headquarters in Bentonville, AR.

**Arriean A. Schemer** ('68 and '79) retired this year after 44 years of teaching English, Speech, Shakespeare, and College Freshman Composition I and II. Former chair of the English Dept. at La Plata High School in Charles County,

Maryland, Schemer finished her career as Adjunct faculty at both Columbia College (22 years) and Palm Beach Atlantic University (11 years) in Orlando. Schemer earned her BA in '68 and her MA in English in 1979.

**Alyssa Duck** ('14), who is studying at Emory for her PhD., was accepted to both the T. S. Eliot International Summer School at the University of London and the Samuel Beckett Summer Project at Trinity College Dublin. She's also presenting a paper "'That is not your mother but her body': Plath, Hughes and the

Phenomenology of Loved Bodies in *The Birthday Letters*" at University College London's modernism conference, and on Feral Femininity in Leonora Carrington at the Modernist Studies Association conference, all this summer!

**Katie Ormsbee** ('12) has been on tour with her new novel, *The Water and the Wild*. She has two other book projects in the works. Ormsbee took time out from her tour to visit the department this past spring semester. Her book reading and signing very well attended!

**Hannah Palmer** ('09), now a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is teaching at the Universidad de Sevilla, where she is participating in a one-year teaching exchange with UNC's Department of English and North American Literature. At UNC, Palmer's focus is Indigenous Literatures. She intends to take her doctoral exams next fall in Twentieth-century Central American and Mexican Literature. She is working towards a dissertation on contemporary Maya poetry from the Yucatán.

**Brit Blalock** ('08) received a grant from the Money for Women/Barbara



Deming Memorial Fund which enabled her to complete her first poetry manuscript.

**Julianna Sparks** ('02) is Regional Senior Marketing Manager at Allstate, working in the Greater Atlanta area. As



a senior marketing and communication professional, Sparks was one of only .003% of Allstate Insurance Company professionals to

complete the company's two-year leadership development program. She has expertise in management, marketing/public relations, organizational effectiveness, research and metrics, strategic planning, and customer experience.

Among her many career highlights, all at Allstate, are creating the detailed submission package instrumental in Allstate receiving the Public Relations Society of America's (PRSA) National Silver Anvil Award for an internal employee engagement strategy, as well as leading the MOC's Acquisition cross-functional team. She also achieved highest regional enrollment in national packages with 767 SE agents participating.

## Special thanks to the following donors for their generous gifts:

Dr. Christopher Hill (via the Razoo Foundation), Ms. Jodi R. Hughes, Dr. Sandra Randleman, Mrs. Carla Carlsen Ray, Mrs. Dayna Collison, Mr. & Mrs. Matthew Garner, Mr. & Mrs. Bill L Wear, Mrs. Nina F. Chafin, Mrs. Caroline M. Wright.

These faithful donors continue to support the department's efforts to nurture articulate, insightful, and successful graduates. We appreciate their ongoing contributions to this cause.

To make a donation, simply note "English Department Fund" on the memo area of your check.  
Thank you!



## Student Activities

### Spring Balcony Bash and *Wide Angle* Launch—the extra warm



Fellows, Dr. Bryan Johnson,

day drove the festivities indoors, but that didn't stop the fun! Plenty of food, great conversation and an unveiling of the new *Wide Angle* webpage were well received. Honored guests included contributing authors of pieces appearing in this issue of *Wide Angle*, including Assistant Provost, Dr. Chris Metress and Director of Samford

### Sigma Tau Delta Albuquerque Convention Fun



Megan Burr, Adam Quinn, and Sarah Sullivan (pictured left) represented Samford's Zeta Theta Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta at the national conference held in Albuquerque, NM, this year. The papers were well received. As a sponsor commented to Dr. Hiles (regarding Adam's paper), "That was a graduate level paper! I want some of your students before I retire."

### Bioethics Bowl Team Success



We are proud of the University Fellows Ethics Bowl team as they finished as runners-up to UAB at the National Bioethics Bowl Tournament. In their first bioethics competition, English majors *Bailey Bridgeman*, *Stone Hendrickson*, *Laura Ann Prickett*, *Caleb Punt*, along with other team members, won five matches in a row to make it into the championship match. In the championship match, they tied an all-senior UAB team only to lose on a tiebreaker. For a more detailed article—<http://bit.ly/1lhQPQT>

### Prickett Elected SGA Presidency



Laura Ann Prickett, a junior English major from Decatur, Alabama, will serve as SGA president. Prickett served on Freshman Forum and two terms on senate as the chair of the Academic Affairs Committee.

"I am honored and humbled to serve the interests of my fellow students as the SGA president for the upcoming term, said Prickett.

"I look forward to being a part of a productive and growing year for Samford!"

### Film Club Notes-

**SnapShot**, the 48-hour, film-making contest, this year co-hosted with JMC, had 16 entries this year. Audience choice went to—*Carousel Syndrome*, which had four English majors on the team (pictured with Dr. Wright and Club president, Megan Burr on right): Sarah Sullivan, Jud Potter, Mack Sexton, Hudson Reynolds, and Ariana Coin (JMC). View the film at <http://bit.ly/1KJkX8f>. The semester concluded with a screening of *Dear White People*.



## BACHE

### Brian Turner Visit Caps Year



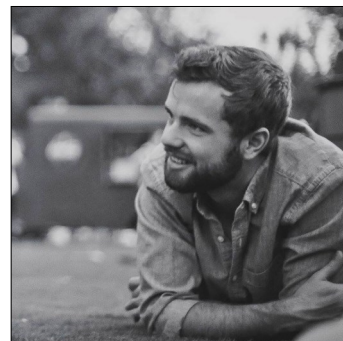
Over seventy students attended the final BACHE reading of the year by soldier-poet Brian Turner—the author of two poetry collections, *Phantom Noise* (2010) and *Here, Bullet* (2005), which won the 2005 Beatrice Hawley Award, the *New York Times* Editor's Choice selection, the 2006 Pen Center USA Best in the West award, and the 2007 Poet's Prize among others. Turner read from portions of his memoir *My Life as a Foreign Country* (2014) that retraces his war experience. He served seven years in the US Army, including one year as an infantry team leader in Iraq with the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. Prior to that, he was deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1999-2000 with the 10th Mountain Division. He earned an MFA from the University of Oregon and has lived abroad in South Korea. In 2009, Turner was selected as one of fifty United States Artists Fellows.

## Quinn Receives Fulbright and Leadership Awards

Adam Quinn has earned an Academic Fulbright Award to pursue a master's degree in Anglo-Irish Literature and Drama at University College Dublin in Ireland next year. "This honor is an incredible academic opportunity as well as a unique cultural and personal opportunity," Quinn said. "The hardest part is deciding whether I'm more excited to continue my studies at the graduate level or live in Dublin for a year." After his study in Ireland, Quinn hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in a U.S. graduate program. A single Fulbright award is a rare honor, but this is Quinn's second international study opportunity via the prestigious program. In 2012 he was one of six U.S. students chosen to participate in the Fulbright Commission Summer Institute at Queen's University in Belfast, Ireland.

"My relationships with English faculty have been instrumental in every part of the application process," Quinn said. "Even after graduation, I know they will be available to give me advice about grad school, future plans, and life as well."

In addition to winning the 'Best Paper in British/International Literature' given by English honor society Sigma Tau Delta, Quinn was named a co-winner of the James M. Sizemore Award as the student in the senior class who best demonstrates character, personality, scholarship and unselfish service to Samford.



*Wide Angle* launched its new format this spring making it easier to view all the content. This issue includes film reviews of *Birdman*, *The Lego Movie*, and *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. There is plenty of creative writing on tap as well. The launch, held in conjunction with the annual department 'Balcony Bash' was well-attended.

Special recognition was given to Dr. Geoff Wright who works with the staff to create each issue of the journal.

To read *Wide Angle* go to — <http://www.samford.edu/arts-and-sciences/english/wide-angle/>



**Wide Angle Staff L-R:** Laura Ann Prickett, Hayden Davis, Dr. Wright, Audrey Ward, and Megan Burr.

## Ward Wins Top Honors

Graduate Audrey Ward received the President's Cup—the valedictorian award—for having the highest grade point average across all university schools. She received the trophy from Samford President Andrew Westmoreland during the graduation ceremony for Samford's Howard College of Arts and Sciences.

"I like learning. I love my subject. It was a lot of work, but something that I feel is worthwhile," said Ward. "Definitely preparation for the future."

Ward continues her work this fall as a doctoral student in Comparative Literature at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.



## We Want To Hear From YOU!

Please let us know what you're up to. You can also send us your updated email address. Call us at (205)726-2946, write us at [English@samford.edu](mailto:English@samford.edu), or just drop by.



## Dr. Steven Epley Receives the Marshall Award

Dr. Steven Epley received one of Samford's top awards this spring when he accepted the Jennings B. Marshall Service Award for significant and sustained service contributions to the university.



Epley was cited for his service and leadership in many areas of campus life. Epley has been chair and secretary of the faculty senate, chair of the learning resources committee, and member of the faculty/trustee ad hoc committee on faculty governance. He has served on the university's values council and on various academic, athletic, and business committees. The sports enthusiast has also been a scorekeeper at Samford basketball games.

"He is beloved by his students, our alumni and his colleagues," Provost Brad Creed said. Epley, teaches cultural perspectives, British literature, senior thesis and medieval literature.

"When we think of him, we think of kindness, good humor, dedication to Samford, love for teaching and quiet, unassuming, faithful service," Creed said.

The English Dept. is proud of all he has accomplished in his career here at Samford.

## Faculty Matters

**Dr. Brad Busbee** is in his second year as co-editor of *Grundtvig-Studier* (based in Copenhagen, Denmark). He published "Holy Grail in Christianity and Literature" with co-author Garreth Griffith of Bristol University (England) in *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* (De Gruyter, vol. 9). He presented "Theatrical Cannibalism, Holy War, and Psychological Warfare in *Richard Coeur de Lion*" at the Southeastern Medieval Association. In January, he was invited to be a guest speaker to the community of philologists at the Grundtvig Centre in Copenhagen. His talk was titled "Grundtvig's Early Engagement with *Beowulf*." His article "Performative Cannibalism in *Richard Coeur de Lion*" will be published in *Medieval Perspectives* (vol. 30), digitally this summer and in print this fall (University of Mississippi Press). And his review of *From Lawman to Plowman: Anglo-Saxon Legal Tradition and the School of Langland* by Steven M. Yeager (U of Toronto Press) was printed in the May edition of *Choice*.

**Julie Steward** had her poem "Custodial Weekend" published in *The Midwest Quarterly* (Summer 2014). Dr. Steward also read her poetry at the 2015 National American Culture Association/Popular Culture Association annual convention in April.

**Dr. Geoff Wright** presented "The Iraq War and Postmortem Memory in Kevin Powers' *The Yellow Birds*" at the Rocky Mountain MLA convention, where he also chaired the Film panel. This spring, he guest-lectured on Film Adaptation and on *The Poisonwood Bible* in the Birmingham community. Dr. Wright serves as faculty sponsor for the SU Film Club and as General Editor for *Wide Angle*.

**Dr. Rosemary Fisk** was interviewed by Edgar Herwick of "The Curiosity Desk" (Boston Public Radio) on the 165th anniversary of the publication of *The Scarlet Letter*. Fisk and Herwick discussed the role of Hawthorne's publisher in expanding the planned tale into the full-length book that established Hawthorne's career.

**Dr. Keya Kraft** presented "Radcliffe, the Female Gothic, and the Disruption of Picturesque Modes of Viewing" at the annual conference of the North American Victorian Studies Association (7/15); she presented "The Figure of the Gothic Castle in Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*" at the first meeting of the Alabama Symposium on Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Studies; and she presented "After *The Aeneid*: Intertextuality in the Core Texts Classroom" at ACTC conference (4/15). This spring Dr. Kraft taught at Samford's Daniel House in London. She serves as Samford's representative to the BACHE Visiting Writers Series. She is a member of the Howard College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee, of WBHM's Junior Board, and of Sidewalk Film Festival's 24 Frames Per Second advisory committee.

**Steve Epley** won the Jennings Marshall award; he also presented "Teaching Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*" at the ACTC conference (4/15).

**Mark Baggett** spoke at a Faculty Colloquium at Cumberland School of Law in November 2014, on "Mark Twain's Legal Burlesques." Dr. Baggett was quoted in an interview about *Go Set a Watchman*, Harper Lee's sequel. The interview was featured in Samford's *Seasons* alumni magazine.

**Jane Hiles** presented "Harry Potter and the Labyrinth of Intellectual Development" and "Titania, Elizabeth I and the Elegiac Voice in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*" at the Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities (1/15).