

# The Alabama Communicator

Newsletter of The Alabama Communication Association

Spring 2023

## Gaillard To Give ACA 2023 Convention Keynote Address

**Plans taking shape for first ACA gathering at Samford University in Birmingham**

One of the state's most prolific authors on Southern history and a member of the faculty at University of South Alabama will be the keynote speaker for the 13th Annual ACA Convention on July 29.

Frye Gaillard will give the luncheon address during the convention, which will be hosted by Samford University. His talk on "Communication, Christianity, and Politics" will highlight many of the points from his latest book, *The Southernization of America: A Story of Democracy in the Balance*, which was

published by New South Books in 2022. He co-authored this latest project with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Cynthia Tucker.

Gaillard serves as the University of South Alabama Writer in the Residence in the Department of English at the school in Mobile.

The author of more than 30 books, Gaillard previously served as Southern Editor at *The Charlotte Observer*. In addition to his books, he's co-written songs that have made the U.S. folk and country music charts.



Frye Gaillard

**INSIDE: READ MORE** on Gaillard's book *The Southernization of America* on page 5

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** As the Alabama Communication Association is set to hold its convention at Samford University in Birmingham, ACA Executive Director Jeff Walker interviewed the Chair of the Department of Communication and Media Dr. Ignatius Fosu.

**Walker:** What are your teaching interests?

**Fosu:** My areas of focus are primarily advertising and media effects. So I teach advertising and media courses. Specifically, I teach Principles of Advertising, Advertising Practicum, and Mass Media and Society.

**Walker:** Tell us about a recent research project on which you've worked.

**Fosu:** I have been researching universal broadband access, focusing primarily on sub-Saharan Africa. Broadband has a unique potential to accelerate socio-economic development. Sub-Saharan Africa in particular stands to gain from universal broadband access. My recent research has used a case study approach to examine broadband access and usage in Ghana. It presents policy recommendations to facilitate universal broadband access in Ghana.

**Walker:** What do you enjoy most about being Chair of the Communication and Media Department at Samford University?

**Fosu:** Our department is made up of faculty, staff, and students who are full of energy, have innovative ideas and always looking for ways to make a difference. I absolutely love working with this wonderful group as we explore ideas and strategies for preparing students to make a difference in the real world.



### ACA PROFILE

## Fosu Leads Samford Unit, Researches Broadband Access in Sub-Saharan Africa

**Walker:** What kind of message do you have for ACA members as they make plans to attend the conference at Samford this summer?

**Fosu:** Samford is very excited to host this year's conference. We look forward to having you visit our beautiful campus and experience the Samford hospitality. And of course, we look forward to all the wonderful presentations, friendships, and networks that would result.

**Walker:** What sort of advice do you have for students who might be doing their first academic conference presentations at this year's ACA?

**Fosu:** I would like them to know that it's great to attend a conference like ACA. It presents a unique opportunity to receive feedback on research in a non-threatening/non-judgmental and supportive environment. I encourage first time student attendees to be curious and inquisitive as they attend presentations, make new friends, expand their networks, explore opportunities to collaborate on research, and hopefully build lifelong research partnerships.

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## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear ACA Colleagues,

With Spring Break 2023 in the rearview mirror for most of us, we are now looking toward the final weeks of the Spring semester and making plans for the summer.

I hope that your summer plans include attending our 13th Annual Convention, which will be held for the first time at Samford University on July 29.

In this issue of the *Alabama Communicator*, we announce our keynote speaker (p. 1) as well as the Call for Papers and Panels (p. 5) for this year's convention. One of the perks of being president is chairing the Awards committee. This will be the second year we're giving the John Saunders Award. Please submit your nominations for our two awards.

### TIMING IS EVERYTHING

At our meetings starting last fall, the ACA Executive Committee discussed extensively how we could improve the planning window for our annual convention, while encouraging more submissions.

This year, you'll notice the April 30th deadline is earlier, which we hope will encourage people to get

their work in sooner while allowing our reviewers time to review papers and determine winners so that we can provide notification in early June rather than 3-4 weeks before the conference. We're not planning to extend the deadline, as has been done in previous years.

### WHY A STATE ASSOCIATION?

Some of our colleagues have questioned why they should spend limited travel funds on a conference that is mainly attendees from just Alabama.

To that, I say good work becomes great work when you gain feedback from colleagues. Those colleagues are not just in your department, but as close as the school in the next county or town.

And, as we've reported in *The Alabama Communicator*, book projects have grown out of conversations at ACA conventions. Last semester, I participated in a panel at the Alabama Higher Education Diversity Officers conference that started from a session at the ACA convention in Mobile.



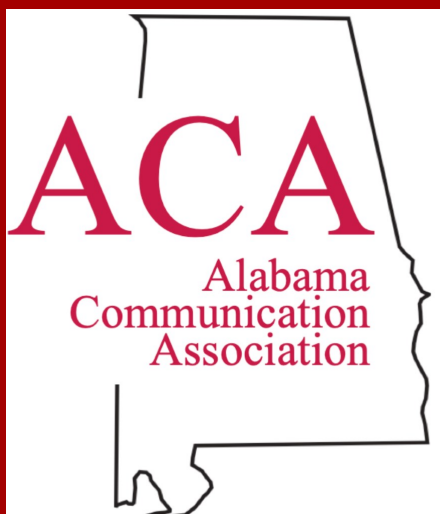
**Dr. George L. Daniels**

I don't mind lifting up my newest friend at Auburn University— Neal Reid, who presented for the first time in Mobile. He was on that panel last fall and stole the show! That's just another reason why our state association is so important.

### INTRODUCING/RE-INTRODUCING ACA

This brings me to the topic of how we get more people participating in our annual convention. Each of us who has an ACA story must be a committee of one to share our story with others and introduce the organization to new students, faculty colleagues and those outside of our field.

I hope at our convention this summer to do a special recognition of all first-time attendees and the ones who invited them to participate. Stay tuned for that!



### *Alabama Communication Association 2022-2023 Executive Board*

President— George L. Daniels, The University of Alabama  
Vice President - Niya Pickett Miller, Samford University  
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## Alabama Communication Association

### CALL FOR PAPERS

### 13th Annual Convention

July 29, 2023

The Alabama Communication Association invites submissions of scholarly papers, practitioner and student projects, and panel presentations for its 13th Annual Convention, which will be hosted by the Department of Communication and Media at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama on Saturday, July 29, 2023.

We especially welcome original research by undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty/professional members and practitioners from Alabama and the surrounding area. We invite individuals to submit a variety of projects from Communication centered disciplines such as communication studies, journalism, media studies, advertising, public relations, mass communication, etc. Disciplines intersecting with Communication (such as sociology, marketing, English, etc.) are also welcome.

This conference is committed to focusing on the following submission types:

**Completed Papers:** Research papers (no more than 25 pages including tables, figures, and other material, but not including references) will be competitively evaluated. Papers that exceed this page limit will not be reviewed. We will recognize the top faculty/professional paper, top graduate student paper, and top undergraduate papers.

**Research-in-Progress:** Faculty and student authors are encouraged to submit 500 to 700-word abstracts of research that will not be completed before the conference. Participants in Research-in-Progress panels will not give a paper presentation, but an overview of the work in progress and receive feedback from attendees. Research-in-Progress abstracts should include a clear purpose statement, an overview of the literature driving the research and the method or approach being taken. Research-in-Progress submissions are not eligible for ACA Awards.

**Great Ideas for Teaching Students (G.I.F.T.S):** Instructors may submit teacher and student tested ideas for effectively teaching a wide variety of communication concepts and contexts (e.g., health communication, research methods, theory, gender, organizational communication, PR). We encourage presenters to bring handouts of the activity for the audience.

**Project Panels:** Creative panel ideas that explore applied and scholarly experiences are encouraged from multiple perspectives. Topical roundtable discussions from scholars and/or practitioners who have collaborated and applied communication practices in communities or the classroom are ideal. Individuals from a variety of institutions and backgrounds may submit ideas. We also encourage students to submit capstone course work and other class projects.

**Submission Guidelines:** Papers and panel submissions should be prepared for anonymous review; please remove all identifying information with only the title on the title page. Put title, name, and complete contact information in the body of the email. In addition to indicating whether you are FACULTY, GRADUATE STUDENT or UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT on the title page, please note whether you are likely to present in-person or virtually. Panel submissions should include a brief abstract of the activity and up to two pages of supporting materials that articulate the goal, rationale, directions, and explanation of how the activity connects to/with communication concepts, theories, and/or various skills. Please limit paper submissions to two per individual. Send all submissions to [alabamacomassociation@gmail.com](mailto:alabamacomassociation@gmail.com)

**Call for Respondents, Chairs, and Reviewers:** We invite faculty members who would like to serve as respondents and graduate students who would like to serve as chairs to contact Niya Pickett Miller, ACA vice president and 2023 conference planner with their areas of interest and expertise. Faculty who are willing to serve as paper reviewers should also contact the conference planner at the following email address: [nmiller@samford.edu](mailto:nmiller@samford.edu)

#### Conference Timeline:

Submission deadline: **April 30, 2023 (midnight CDT)**

Notification of Acceptance/Non-Acceptance: early June 2023

Conference: July 29, 2023

# Saunders Award Nominees Sought



## John H. Saunders Service Award

Named for ACA Founder John H. Saunders, the John H. Saunders Service Award recognizes those who have actively created opportunities for others to use their voice. This could include those who have made a significant contribution to growing the ACA, faculty who have encouraged their students to present, faculty who have driven their students to conferences, faculty who create assignments meant for students to engage people beyond their classroom, and those who have created opportunities for faculty, students, and professionals to engage others outside of their own environments.

Nominations, including self nominations, require the following materials:

- 1) a single letter of nomination,
- 2) the nominee's curriculum vitae, and
- 3) a statement outlining specific activities related to service such as supporting the growth of ACA, supporting students or creating opportunities for students to engage with those outside of their own environment. The statement should not exceed 500 words.

Other materials, including supporting letters, may be submitted but are not required.

Nominations should be submitted via email to ACA President George L. Daniels at [alabamacomassociation@gmail.com](mailto:alabamacomassociation@gmail.com) NO LATER THAN June 1, 2023.

## NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR 2023

### Alabama Communication Association Award for Outstanding Teaching

The ACA Award for Outstanding Teaching recognizes individuals who demonstrate excellence in teaching communication in Alabama. Eligible nominees must be employed full-time teaching courses in communication within the state of Alabama.

Eligible nominees may teach at any level (e.g., K-12, community college, university). In order to encourage nominations and recognize excellence in teaching at all types of institutions, the award committee may present awards to individuals at different academic levels.

Nominations, including self-nominations, require the following materials: 1) a single letter of nomination, 2) the nominee's current curriculum vitae, and 3) a teaching philosophy statement not to exceed 500 words. Other materials, including evidence of teaching effectiveness and supporting letters, may be submitted but are not required.

Nominations should be submitted via email to ACA President George L. Daniels at [alabamacomassociation@gmail.com](mailto:alabamacomassociation@gmail.com) NO LATER THAN June 1, 2023.

**Editor's Note:** The Alabama Communication Association is pleased to have Frye Gaillard as its keynote speaker for the 13th Annual Convention on July 29. Gaillard's latest book, *The Southernization of America: A Story of Democracy in the Balance*, was published by New South Books in 2022.

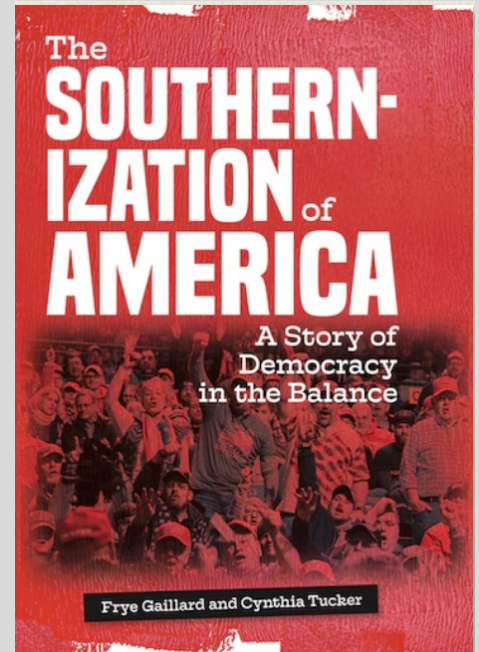
In 1974 John Egerton published his seminal work, *The Americanization of Dixie*. Pulitzer Prize-winner Cynthia Tucker and award-winning author Frye Gaillard carry Egerton's thesis forward in *The Southernization of America*, a compelling series of linked essays considering the role of the South in shaping America's current political and cultural landscape.

They dive deeper, examining the morphing of the Southern strategy of Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan into the Republican Party of today, the racial backlash against President Obama, family separation on our southern border, the rise of the Christian right, the white supremacist riots in Charlottesville, the death of George Floyd, and the attack on our nation's capitol. They find hope in the South too, a legacy rooted in the civil rights years that might ultimately lead the

nation on the path to redemption. Tucker and Gaillard bring a multiracial perspective and years of political reporting to bear on a critical moment in American history, a time of racial reckoning and democracy under siege.

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## Award-winning instructor shares teaching wisdom

### University of Alabama's Gil Carter Wins Outstanding Doctoral Student Teaching Award

I have taught Rhetoric and Society (COM 100), Critical Decision Making (COM 122), Rhetorical Criticism (COM 310), Argumentation (COM 348), and Influence (COM 380) at UA. I also teach Communication Law and Ethics (COM 400W) online for the University of North Alabama, my undergrad alma mater.

My teaching philosophy revolves around the goal "striving for fairness in pedagogy." I remember in one of my first UA teaching workshops we attendees were asked to write an adjective that epitomizes our teaching style, and I wrote "fair." I think fairness is particularly crucial for teachers of communication, as we often require assignments with subjective grading like speeches, debates, and papers. I seek to meet students where they are by recognizing that they arrive in the class with different experiences and skills. Some students come to my oral performance clas-

ses literally shaking with fear as they stand before the class, while others come as experienced members of the forensics team or other groups that push speaking concentrations. I believe it's my job to give the veteran speakers practical tips about how they can finetune their already proficient skills, while helping the novice and often scared speakers make some meaningful progress toward a more manageable relationship with public speaking.

I also believe that fairness in pedagogy is rooted in exposing students to the diverse array of communication experiences that exist. After I learned about the unfair #CommSoWhite movement while working on my MA, I wanted my classes to not be part of the problem. I have altered my classes to include more readings that highlight diversity, equity, and inclusion, such as adding John Butler's (1995) article in *Argumentation*

and *Advocacy* "Carol Moseley-Braun's Day to Talk about Race," a piece about how the first Black woman Senator used rhetoric to disrupt the whiteness of the U.S. Senate in her successful movement to revoke the authorization for a patent glorifying the Confederacy, to the readings in *Influence*. This reading sparked a class discussion about how the whiteness of the U.S. Senate has silenced efforts for equality in the U.S.

— Gil Carter  
Ph.D. Candidate  
The University of Alabama

**Editor's Note:** Since writing this article upon winning the University of Alabama award, Mr. Carter has accepted a position as assistant instructional professor and director of debate at the University of Florida starting Fall 2023 semester.



Gil Carter

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