

Miller to Receive ACA's 2023 Teaching Award

As the Alabama Communication Association holds its annual convention for the first time at Samford University, this year's recipient of ACA's top honor for teaching will be right at home.

Niya Pickett Miller, an assistant professor in the Department of Communication and Media at Samford, is the winner of the ACA Award for Outstanding Teaching.

"This award encourages me to keep going," said Miller, upon learning she would receive the award. "I've tried to be the kind of professor I didn't have (or wished I had)."

Before joining the Samford faculty in 2019, Miller taught

for two years at Tuskegee University where she was recognized as a "Skegee Spotlight Faculty" in 2018.

"Her expertise in race and communication has very positively impacted our program through her development and teaching of much needed diversity courses," said Ignatius Fosu, chair of the Department of Communication and Media, who nominated Miller for the award.

This is not Miller's first award from ACA. In 2019, she was the recipient of the Top Faculty Research Paper Award for her study on "Narrative Theory as a Pedagogical Strategy for Culturally Teaching at

Historically Black Colleges and Universities."

In 2020, she published *Deconstructing the Albino Other: A Critique of Albinism Identity in Media* (published by Lexington Books). In 2021, she published *Lizzo's Black, Female, and Fat Resistance* with Ghenni Platenburg. And most recently, she edited a collection of essays and studies under the title *Sustaining Black Music and Black Culture During COVID-19*.

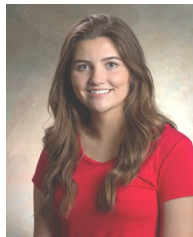


Miller

"I value my students and their lived experiences. It is important for me to incorporate who they are, and the people they will encounter in the world into the learning environment and activities."

-Dr. Niya Pickett Miller
2023 Winner ACA Award for Outstanding Teaching

Congratulations 2023 Top Student Research Paper Winners



Morgan

TOP UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PAPERS

Macie Morgan
University of Alabama in Huntsville
Explorations in Public Memory: Monuments as Incongruent Ideographs



Kennedy

TOP GRADUATE STUDENT PAPER

Clare Frances Kennedy
The University of Alabama
Intercultural Communication and the Limitations of Competition in The Food Network's Beat Bobby Flay



McGinnis



Kyker



Morelli



Goodloe

Mandelyn McGinnis, Bayleigh Kyker, Danielle Morelli and Rodnesia Goodloe
University of North Alabama
The World Cup and Budweiser Sponsorship

Both winners of the Top Undergraduate Student Research Paper Award for 2023 ACA Convention come from Northern Alabama.

A four-person team from the University of North Alabama and a student at University of Alabama in Huntsville will be recognized at the ACA Presidential Luncheon on July 29.

Macie Morgan will be a junior this fall at UAH. The communication arts major from Huntsville already has plans to pursue an advanced degree in public relations and media studies.

From the University of North Alabama, Mandelyn McGinnis is a junior from Glencoe, Ala. majoring in accounting and computer information systems. She

hopes to eventually earn her master's degree in accounting while taking the CPA exam. And, after working in the field for a few years, McGinnis wants to pursue a Ph.D. in accounting and become a professor.

Bayleigh Kyker is a senior majoring in business management from Hartselle, Ala. She will graduate this December and plans to move back to the Hartselle area and pursue a master's degree in business management.

Danielle Morelli is a senior from Delmar, Delaware. focusing on entrepreneurship. After completing her degree, Morelli plans on attending cosmetology school with a goal of one day owning and operating a nail salon.

From Cherokee, Ala., Rodnesia Goodloe is a senior (Please see **ACA Paper Winners** p.5)

INSIDE



Former ACA Executive Director Ray Ozley Wins John H. Saunders Service Award (see story p. 4)

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear ACA Colleagues,

While I've been working at the University of Alabama for 20 years, it was not the first university I ever visited in this state.

Back in the late 1990s I attended the Southern Christian Writers Conference when it was hosted at Samford University.

We stayed in the residence halls and were treated to campus dining. It was a great weekend. While we won't be staying on campus, I have great expectations for my next visit to Samford now less than a month away on July 29.

The effort to bring the ACA Convention to Samford has been several years in the making. Even before the COVID-19 Pandemic, there were discussions about the possibility of Samford hosting the conference. Now, it's finally happening. I am excited.

In this Convention Edition of the *Alabama Communicator*, you'll see an outline of the activities for this year's convention (p. 3) along with a preview from our host school (p. 3).

As president, I had the pleasure of chairing our Awards Committee. On page 1, we officially announce the winner of our Teaching Award. Then

on p. 4, you'll find a full page detailing the story of our John H. Saunders Service Award winner.

We hope this convention edition will convince you to go ahead and finalize your plans to join us in Homewood on July 29.

COMMUNICATING ALABAMA ON A NATIONAL SCALE

Even as we commemorate the 60th anniversary of some of the most consequential events in our nation's history—the Stand in the Schoolhouse Door, the introduction of what would become the Civil Rights Act of 1964, The March on Washington, the deaths of Four Little Girls at Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church—our state is once again back in the national spotlight.

The U.S. Supreme Court has mandated that our lawmakers redraw our congressional district maps so that there are two majority-minority districts. What is communicated about this process will be more important than ever. It is another reason why communication is key to the image people around the nation have of our state.



FINISHING STRONG

As I finish my term as president and our new leaders take over at the end of this year's convention, I plan to remain active in the association.

One thing that we've discovered this year is the importance of ensuring there's continuity between leaders from one year to another. This mandates good internal communication. At the same time, this newsletter is one tool for external communication that we hope will continue.

With our regional association, SSCA, coming to Birmingham in 2026, that gives us a few years to strengthen our network of communication scholars. We have new leadership at the *Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric*, who will need our full support. I will address these issues when I see you at Samford later this month.

Dr. George L. Daniels
ACA President



Alabama Communication Association *2022-2023 Executive Board*

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

Vice President-Elect - Tiffany R. Wang, University of Montevallo

Secretary - Lindsey Sherrill, University of North Alabama

Immediate Past President- Sally Hardig, University of Montevallo

Executive Director- Jeff Walker, University of Montevallo

From the Vice President

We know the month of July in the state of Alabama is HOT! But, did you know the weather is not the only reason why?

We're gearing up for a "hot" summer conference and are excited to be at Samford University—a first-time host location for ACA! Samford is a private, Christian university nestled among the hills of Homewood, a suburb of Birmingham, Alabama.

Samford's Department of Communication and Media is pleased to welcome all attendees and highlight our commitment to scholarship and missions. Conference goers should expect to see lush lawns *and* renovation work in progress.

Efforts to enhance facilities and spaces for students during the downtime of summer are underway. Nonetheless, we will convene in Cooney Hall, home to our acclaimed business school, away from any hustle and bustle.

This year's conference promises to be very robust, with many panel and paper presentations featuring undergraduate and graduate students from across the state and with varying topics! And, of course, dynamic faculty/professional GIFTS, paper presentations, and panels are slated for the day.

Please remember to register early. You don't want to miss this opportunity to learn and network with ACA!



Dr. Niya Pickett Miller
Vice President
Alabama Communication Association



13th Annual ACA Convention Schedule at a Glance

**7:30 a.m. Registration Opens
 Continental Breakfast**

**8 a.m.
 Conference kickoff and
 Presidential Remarks**

8:20-9:30 a.m. Block 3

9:40-10:50 a.m. Block 4

11:00 - Keynote Address
 Speaker: Frye Gailliard
 University of South Alabama

**Presidential Luncheon and
 Award Presentations;**

-Top Research Paper Awards
 -ACA Award for Outstanding
 Teaching



Samford University's Cooney Hall will be the main location for this year's ACA Convention.

-John H. Saunders Service Award

1:00-2:10 p.m. Block 6

Noon -1 p.m. ACA Business Meeting

(All attendees are invited to participate)

- Election for Secretary

- Election for Vice President-Elect

2:10-2:40 Cookie Break

2:40- 3:50 p.m. Block 8

2023 Saunders Service Award Goes to Ozley

Former ACA Executive Director

By **George L. Daniels**
ACA President

After shepherding the Alabama Communication Association through a once-in-a-century pandemic, hosting the state convention on his campus for multiple years and mentoring multiple ACA leaders, Ray Ozley is finally getting recognized for his sustained record of service.

The man who recently became chair of the Department of Communication at University of Montevallo will receive the John H. Saunders Service Award at the association's 13th annual convention.

"I have experienced firsthand Ray's dedication to the provision of exemplary service through departmental, college, university, professional and community activities," said Tiffany Wang, ACA vice-president-elect and a professor of communication studies at the University of Montevallo.

Ozley served as ACA's executive director between 2019-2022. He has held every other office in the association, including in 2017 when he was the ACA President.

The man for whom this award is named had nothing but great things to say about Ozley and his work with ACA.

"Ray is an excellent choice for this award. He was at our inaugural conference, and has been working with the ACA every step of the way since then," said John Saunders, who was the first recipient of the award when it was established in 2021.

Even while serving as executive director, Ozley led the Faculty Senate at University of Montevallo while mentoring dozens of students.

"His passion for the art of communication inspired me to become a marketing manager at a local non-profit ministry," said Charlotte Knapp, a University of Montevallo graduate of the public relations minor that Ozley created. "Dr. Ozley goes above and beyond to empower his students in every area of life."

Noting how he was "surprised, honored and humbled" by the news of his selection as the 2023 Saunders Award winner, Ozley said he was inspired by John Saunders' focus on providing a place to amplify other's academic voices.

"I hope that my work has contributed to a collaborative strengthening of someone's voice, maybe even many voices," Ozley said.

The Saunders Award will be presented as part of the Presidential Luncheon at this year's ACA Convention July 29.



Ozley took time for a photo op with those behind ACA's 2022 Convention at University of Mobile.

The Ozley file

Current position: Chair, Department of Communication; Professor and Coordinator of Communication Studies, the University of Montevallo

ACA Resume: ACA Executive Director (2019-2022)
ACA Host Site Coordinator (2019-2021)
ACA Executive Director-Elect (2018-2019)
ACA President (2017)
ACA Vice President (2016)
ACA Vice President-Elect (2015)
ACA Secretary (2011-2013)

Education: Ph.D. (with honors) Communication Studies, University of Kansas
M.A. Communication, University of Memphis
B.A. Communication & Spanish, University of Central Arkansas



At the University of Montevallo, Ozley has been regularly engaged with students in the Department of Communication and elsewhere on campus. While sometimes he was taking less serious photos (see left), most often as a leader in his unit, Faculty Senate President and ACA leader, he spent time doing more listening than speaking, especially with students (see above).

ACA Paper Winners

(Continued from page 1)

majoring in computer Information systems with a minor in cybersecurity. Goodloe's plan is to work for the FBI as an information technology specialist.

Also recognized this year is Clare Frances Kennedy, a master's student at The University of Alabama, who is originally from Nashville. As the winner of the Top Graduate Student paper, she is looking forward to using her free registration for the Southern States Communication Association in Frisco, Texas in 2024 where she plans to present more of her research.

SAVE THE DATE July 27, 2024

Alabama Communication Association 14th Annual Convention

Plan now to join us in the Shoals as The University of North Alabama hosts our 14th Annual Convention next summer. ACA Vice President-Elect Tiffany R. Wang will be soliciting volunteers to serve as reviewers and assist with planning the conference.



University of North Alabama

Alabama Communication Association Member News



Brewer-Strayer

After several years at Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Dr. Kathryn Brewer-Strayer, chair and professor of English, Journalism and Media Communications, has retired. Congratulations Dr. Brewer-Strayer!

Also from Stillman College, two out of the six finalists for the Coca-Cola HBCU Emmy Production Grant films are Stillman students. Congratulations to Reba Gist for "The Pride is Coming" and Jayden Mills for the film "Golden Perfection". Gist also had her film "The Pride is Coming" selected for screening at the "Indie Night Atlanta Film Festival" hosted by Actor Morris Chestnut.

These are all students of Romeo Reese, assistant professor and multimedia specialist at Stillman College.



Dr. John H. Saunders has assumed the duties of editor of *The Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric*, ACA's peer-reviewed academic journal. He's now accepting manuscripts at the following address: editor@contemporaryrhetoric.com Saunders will be participating in the "Demystifying the Academic Publishing Process" panel at the convention.



Saunders



Griffin

Dr. Darrin J. Griffin was officially named as chairman of the Department of Communication Studies at The University of Alabama. He had been serving as the interim chair since 2021.



Ohl

Dr. Jessie Ohl is the winner of the 2023 Outstanding Mentor Award at The University of Alabama. Dr. Ohl is currently an associate professor in the Communication Studies Department in the College of Communication & Information Sciences. Since joining the faculty in 2017, he has been the primary advisor for 8 MA students, four of whom wrote a thesis, and for 10 Ph.D. students. He has even served as an external committee member to a doctoral student enrolled at the University of Cape Town. During his time at The Capstone, he also won the Excellence in Academic Advising award.



Singleton

Congratulations to Bill Singleton who successfully defended his dissertation, "We Have Felt the Trauma, But We Are Still Going to Work: Black Journalists In A Changing Journalism Field and the Negotiation of Objectivity, Roles and Emotional Labor." This fall Dr. Singleton will begin a new position as assistant professor in the Department of Communication and Media at Samford University.



SEND US YOUR NEWS!

Recently received a promotion, award, published a book or article? We want to share your good news. Send your update with a photo for the "ACA Member News" in our Fall 2023 edition. Send items to George Daniels at gdaniels@ua.edu

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