

Almost 100 Presenters, Chairs, and Exhibitors for O'Connor Conference at GCSU, Sept. 12-15, 2024

(as of 9-2-24)

**Charlotte Aexel**, Georgia College, is a senior English and French double major with a minor in Black Studies, and as part of the Double Bobcats program, she is also pursuing her master's degree in literature. She serves as editor-in-chief of Georgia College literary journal *The Peacock's Feet*, as President of the Literary Guild, and as the GCSU Chapter President of Sigma Tau Delta. She is a three-time first place winner at the annual Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Awards. Her poem "Miss Flannery" was nominated to represent Georgia College in the AWP Intro Journals Project, and she was the winner of the 2022 Andalusia Institute Undergraduate Essay Contest. Originally from Wisconsin, Aexel came to Milledgeville to study O'Connor.

**Christine E. Atkins**, SUNY Corning Community C, was selected as a fellow for the 2023 NEH Summer Institute "Reconsidering Flannery O'Connor" in June 2023. She has previously published on O'Connor in the collection *On the Subject of the Feminist Business*. A Professor of English, Atkins conducts research that focuses on issues of gender and sexuality, Holocaust Literature, Post-Colonial Literature, and Gender-Queer Politics.

**Chip Bell**, Georgia Writers Museum, is a board member and curator for GWM in Eatonton. He is the managing editor of the museum's quarterly e-magazine, *Page Turner*. Bell is the author of several books, including *Magnetic Service*, *Service Magic*, and *Kaleidoscope*. His newest book, *Inside Your Customer's Imagination*, ranked #1 on Amazon's best-seller list for books on "business innovation." His work has been featured in *Fortune*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Businessweek*, *CEO World Magazine*, and *Entrepreneur Magazine*. A graduate of UGA, he holds a master's from Vanderbilt U and a doctorate from the George Washington U.

**Taylor Black**, Duke U, is Assistant Professor of English, specializing in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century American Literature, Popular Music Studies, and Queer Theory. He is the author of *Style: A Queer Cosmology* (NYU) and is currently at work on a project exploring American personality cults.

**Jennifer Renee Blevins**, U of South Carolina, is a full-time faculty member in English. Her book, *Limited by Body Habitus: An American Fat Story*, won the 2018 Autumn House Press Nonfiction Prize, and her article, "'I Ain't You': Fat and the Female Body in Flannery O'Connor," appeared in the Spring 2020 issue of *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*. She holds degrees from Wake Forest U and the U of South Carolina.

**Carol Bokros**, Mercer U, holds the position of Director, Pre-Health Professions Programs. She has a gift in managing advocational botanical work in middle Georgia and building bridges with professional botanists. Bokros is the first President of the Fringed Campion Chapter of the Georgia Native Plant Society. Under her leadership, the Chapter has designed a signature native plant garden at Amerson River Park in Macon and established gardens in Centerville, downtown Macon, and downtown planters in Milledgeville. Bokros has nurtured partnerships with local native plant nurseries and has initiated invasive plant removal events. A new partnership this year is with Andalusia.

**Will Brantley**, Middle Tennessee State U, is Professor of southern and modern American literature. He is the author of *Feminine Sense in Southern Memoir* (1992) and the editor of volumes on Pauline Kael (1996), Edmund White (2017), and Sarah Schulman (2024) for the UP of Mississippi's Literary Conversations series. He co-founded the Carson McCullers Society, and he edited a 50th anniversary edition of Lillian Smith's *Now Is the Time*. His recent scholarship has focused on letters by southern women writers, including an essay in the MLA's *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Flannery O'Connor*.

**Benjamin Brothers**, U of South Florida, is a third-year Literature PhD student. His research interests include Southern Gothic literature, Latin American Boom literature, Southern Studies, Global South Studies, Modernism, Postmodernism, and literary methods of cultural reproduction. Authors of major interest include

Poe, Chopin, Faulkner, Welty, O'Connor, Gabriel García Márquez, Carlos Fuentes, Harry Crews, Cormac McCarthy, Toni Morrison, Donald Ray Pollock, and Jesmyn Ward. He received his BA in English from LSU and his MFA in Creative Writing from The New School. He is currently preparing for portfolio defense.

**Matt Bryant Cheney**, U of Tennessee, is Assistant Director for Faculty Development, Community Engagement, and Research at the U of Tennessee's Herbert Writing Center. He holds a PhD in English from the U of Kentucky; his scholarship and teaching focuses on Community-Engaged Pedagogy, 20th Century US Literature, Southern & Appalachian Literatures, and most recently, the rise of Artificial Intelligence in writing classrooms. President of the Flannery O'Connor Society since 2021, Bryant Cheney participated in the NEHSI "Reconsidering Flannery O'Connor" at Georgia College in 2023. His writing on O'Connor has appeared in *The Georgia Review* and *The Routledge Companion to Literature of the U.S. South*. With Anthony Szczesiul, Bryant Cheney is co-editing *Reckoning with Racism and Flannery O'Connor*.

**Rae Bynum**, Stephen F. Austin State U, holds a BFA in Creative Writing. She was twice named as a Finalist in SFA's undergraduate research conference, and her creative work has been published in undergraduate literary journals such as *Voices* and *twoOthree*. Bynum hopes to continue sharing her ideas and stories, not to change the world but perhaps to make a difference for a few.

**Jordan Cofer**, U of Minnesota Morris, is Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Dean. Cofer is on the Editorial Advisory Board for the *FLOCR*. He was an administrator at Georgia College before his move to Minnesota. He is the co-editor of *Reconsidering Flannery O'Connor* (Mississippi) and the author of *The Gospel According to Flannery O'Connor* (Bloomsbury).

**Carmen Comeaux**, U of Georgia, is a Lecturer in English. She earned her PhD in Cognitive Science at the University of Louisiana with a study of O'Connor. She has published in the *FLOCR*, in *Progress in Cognitive Psychology*, and in *The Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*. She was a participant in the 2007 NEH Summer Institute on O'Connor.

**Calvin Coon**, U of Arizona, is a graduate teaching assistant and doctoral candidate in English Literature. His research interests include American literature after 1865, American regionalism, rural literature, and ecocriticism. His work has been published in the *FLOCR*. He has presented his research at the ASLE Biennial Conference and the ALA Symposium on Wildness and Wilderness, and he was a participant in the 2023 NEH Summer Institute "Reconsidering Flannery O'Connor."

**Benjamin Crace**, Tennessee Tech U, has a PhD from U of Birmingham and specializes in the intersection of Christianity, popular culture, and literature. His work has appeared in *Christianity and Literature*, *The New Americanist*, *South Atlantic Review*, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, and *Nova Religio*. His monograph *Keeping the Faith in Exile: Kuwait-Coptic Orthodox Diasporic Spirituality* is available from Brill. His *The American Blockbuster: Movies that Defined Their Generations* is available from Bloomsbury.

**Jordan Crider**, Georgia College, is in the MFA program. Crider grew up in Southern Idaho. He is a returned Peace Corps Volunteer who taught English in China. He enjoys wandering the desert and train tracks searching for stories. He served as an assistant to the directors of the 2023 NEH Summer Institute on O'Connor.

**Holly Croft**, Georgia College, became Associate Director for Special Collections in May 2024. She was previously the digital archivist. Holly holds an AB in English from the U of Georgia and an MSLS from the U of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She teaches a course on the history of Georgia College and several courses within the Information Studies minor. Her research interests include climate change's effect on cultural heritage, incorporating archival research into the undergraduate curriculum, and community archiving. Croft first encountered O'Connor in a Contemporary Fiction course in 1999 and hasn't been quite right since. She has published in the *FLOCR*.

**Colin Cutler**, Guilford Technical Community C, is an instructor of English. He holds master's degrees in English and Creative Writing respectively from UNC Greensboro and York St. John U, where he also received the CELTA certificate in ESL. After serving in the US Army as an infantry officer for seven years and two deployments to Qatar and Romania, Cutler "traded in his rifle for a banjo and guitar." He returned to Romania to teach on a Fulbright in 2019, then returned to Greensboro during the COVID-19 pandemic, where he has become a teacher, singer-songwriter, folk musician, poet, and storyteller. In 2023, Cutler participated in the NEH "Reconsidering Flannery O'Connor" Summer Institute at Georgia College, where he finished writing his Flannery O'Connor-inspired fourth studio album, *Tarwater*.

**Doug Davis**, Gordon State C, is Professor of English. He is the past editor of the *Science Fiction Research Association Review* and past guest editor of two special issues of the *FLOCR* on science and technology in O'Connor's fiction. He has published essays in such venues as *Science Fiction Studies*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Configurations*, *Southern Quarterly*, and, most of all, the *FLOCR*. He is co-editor of *Science Fiction 101*, a pedagogical collection, and co-author of the American Literature II OER textbook, *Writing the Nation*.

**Jeremiah Davis**, Huntington U, is an Assistant Professor of English. His areas of interest include religion and literature, the relationship between selfhood and value formation, and literature as moral philosophy. He is particularly interested in utilizing the philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard to analyze 20<sup>th</sup> century American literature, specifically the works of Steinbeck, O'Connor, Updike, and Percy.

**Matt Davis**, Washington and Lee U, is Director of W&L's Institutional History Museum. He earned his BA and MA at Georgia College, where he worked for years overseeing the Old Governor's Mansion, the Sallie Ellis Davis House, and Andalusia. His career has been celebrated through numerous awards, including earning the 2011 Museum Professional of the Year from the Georgia Association of Museums. He also received GCSU's Outstanding Leadership Award in 2023.

**Melanie DeVore**, Georgia College, is Professor of Biology. She has taught at Georgia College since 1999. She holds appointments at the Center for Biology & Society and School of Life Sciences at Arizona State U and is Research Associate in Paleobotany at the Burke Museum, U of Washington. She is also Honorary Research Fellow in the Center of Excellence in Biodiversity & Natural Resource Management at the U of Rwanda has had fellowships at the National Natural History Museum and U of Texas-Austin. DeVore has published numerous papers on paleobotany, systematics, and taxonomy of vascular plants:  
<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Melanie-Devore>.

**Sandy Dimon**, Georgia College, moved to Milledgeville in 1978 after spending a decade as a professional musician. She spent 22 years as a teacher of English at Baldwin High School and another 23 teaching comp at Georgia College. She has served as a Reader of AP exams for many years. She continued to participate in regional theater, serving for 20 years on the Board of the Milledgeville Players. She has since "turned in her key" to play the role of Grandma! Growing up in McCullers country, she became fascinated with O'Connor when she moved to Milledgeville, and she has been an advocate for her ever since.

**Robert Donahoo**, Sam Houston State U, is Professor of English. In both 2014 and 2023, he co-directed National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institutes on O'Connor. He also co-edited the MLA volume *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Flannery O'Connor* as well as co-editing *Flannery O'Connor in the Age of Terrorism* with Avis Hewitt (Tennessee). He has published essays on O'Connor's fiction both in journals and essay collections as well as publishing essays on southern writers including Harper Lee, Larry Brown, Clyde Edgerton, and dramatist Horton Foote. Recently he published interviews in the *FLOCR* with Frances and Louise Florencourt, O'Connor's cousins and contemporaries.

**Lauren Dose**, Reinhardt U, is a writer, editor, and MFA student. She has been published in *Sanctuary*, Reinhardt's undergraduate literary magazine, and most recently served as the managing editor of the *James*

*Dickey Review*. She presented several times at Reinhardt's Convocation of Artists and Scholars, one of which was a discussion of O'Connor's fiction as it pertains to Andalusia.

**Gabrielle Dudley**, Emory U, is the Interim Co-Director for the Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library. Dudley has conducted research on Black women writers and readers for more than a decade. She had led grant projects to increase access to Black women writers' collections and is the curator of "She Gathers Me: Networks Among Black Women Writers" and co-curator of "At the Crossroads with Benny Andrews, Flannery O'Connor, and Alice Walker."

**Tina Dunkley**, is an Artist, Curator, and Cultural Historian, and Director emerita of the Clark Atlanta U Art Museum. She holds an LHD from Clark Atlanta U, a BFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York City, and an MA in African American Studies from Atlanta U. Dunkley is the author of *The Merikins: Forgotten Freedom Fighters in the War of 1812* and co-author of *In the Eye of the Muses: Selections from the Clark Atlanta University Art Collection*. Dunkley has organized exhibitions and programs at the CAU Art Museum, the Georgia State University Art Gallery, and for the 1996 Cultural Olympiad multidisciplinary program, African American Culture: An American Experience.

**Kerry James Evans**, Georgia College, is the author of *Bangalore* (Copper Canyon), a Lannan Literary Selection. His forthcoming book is *Nine Persimmons* (Backwaters/Nebraska). Evans earned a PhD in English from Florida State U, an MFA in creative writing from Southern Illinois U-Carbondale, and a BA in English from Missouri State U. The recipient of a 2015 NEA Fellowship and a Walter E. Dakin Fellowship from Sewanee Writers' Conference, he has published poems in *Agni*, *Narrative*, *New England Review*, *Ploughshares*, etc. He serves as the poetry editor for *Arts & Letters*.

**Jordan Rowan Fannin**, Berry C, is Assistant Professor of Religion. She teaches Christian theology. She completed her PhD in theology at Baylor U, with special emphasis in theology and literature. In addition to literature (and in particular the work of O'Connor), her research interests include the significance of place and displacement in the Christian tradition and contemporary moral theology, as well as theology of material culture and the lived environment. Her work on O'Connor is published in *Literature & Theology*, *Religion and Literature*, and a forthcoming edited volume from Baylor.

**Christine Flanagan**, St. Joseph's U, has an MFA and PhD and is a Professor of English and creative writing. She is also the editor of *The Letters of Flannery O'Connor and Caroline Gordon* (Georgia), a collection of O'Connor letters which required excavation of a wide range of literary archives as well as navigating literary legal obstacles. Flanagan's most recent article ("Workshopping Flannery O'Connor's 'The Displaced Person': Fictional craft, radical revision, and racial signifiers in the creative writing classroom") appeared in the 2023 *FLOCR*. In 2024, Flanagan spoke on O'Connor during an MLA panel titled "Literary Epistolography Today."

**Alice Friman**, Georgia College, is also Professor Emerita at the University of Indianapolis. Friman is the author of eight full-length poetry collections, most recently *On the Overnight Train: New and Selected Poems* (LSU). She won the Georgia Author of the Year Award in Poetry for *Vinculum* (LSU). She has won two Pushcart Prizes and been reprinted in The Best American Poetry series. Her poems have appeared in such journals as *Poetry*, *Georgia Review*, *Plume*, *Southern Review*, and *Ploughshares*. She was recently interviewed in *The Writer's Chronicle*. Website: [alicefrimanpoet.com](http://alicefrimanpoet.com).

**Marshall Bruce Gentry**, Georgia College, is the author of *Better to See You With: Perspectives on Flannery O'Connor*, *Selected and New* (Mercer) and *Flannery O'Connor's Religion of the Grotesque* (Mississippi). He edited *Flannery O'Connor's Cartoons at Georgia College* (Georgia College) and co-edited *At Home with Flannery O'Connor: An Oral History* (Andalusia) and *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Flannery O'Connor* (MLA). He recently co-directed his third NEH Summer Institute. He has been editing the *FLOCR* since 2003.

**Ranjini George**, U of Toronto, holds a PhD in English from Northern Illinois U, an MA in English from St. Stephens College, New Delhi, and an MFA in Creative Writing from the U of British Columbia. She was an Associate Professor of English at Zayed U, Dubai, the United Arab Emirates. She teaches in the Creative Writing and Arts & Humanities programs at the School of Continuing Studies, U of Toronto, where she received an Excellence in Teaching Award. She won the Arnold B. Fox Award for Research Writing, a Canada Council of the Arts grant for her novel-in-progress *Blue Flowers*, and Ontario Arts Council Recommender grants for her memoirs. Her book, *Through My Mother's Window*, was published in Dubai.

**William Gonch**, Ave Maria U, is Assistant Professor of literature and director of the literature program. A scholar of 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century American literature, he conducts research that addresses the creative exchange—the "translation"—between secular and religious styles and modes of imagination. He holds a PhD in Literature from the U of Maryland and has served as the Cornerstone Fellow in English at The Catholic U of America. He participated in the NEH Summer Institute "Reconsidering Flannery O'Connor" in June 2023.

**Sarah Gordon**, Georgia College, is Founding Editor of the *Flannery O'Connor Review*. She is the author of *Flannery O'Connor: The Obedient Imagination* and *A Literary Guide to Flannery O'Connor's Georgia* (both Georgia). Her poetry has been published in such journals as *Sewanee Review*, *Georgia Review*, *Southeast Review*, *Salt*, *Christianity and Literature*, and *The Christian Century*. Her second collection of poetry, *The Lost Thing*, was published by Mercer, which will also publish her third collection, *Six White Horses*, in 2025. She lives in Athens, GA.

**Karen M. Gravel**, Lord Aeck Sargent Planning and Design, Inc. is a historic preservation architect practicing in Atlanta. She serves as a principal, the Director of Historic Preservation and chair of the governing board for the company. She is a Kentucky native, having graduated with a degree in History from Centre College in Danville, KY, in 1993, before earning a Master of Architecture from Georgia Tech in 1999. She has been working on old buildings for the past 25 years, including several projects for Georgia College—the GCSU Campus Preservation Plan (2005), Hill House (2012), Ennis Hall (2014), Terrell Hall (2020), and exterior improvements to the Old Governor's Mansion. She is now researching and writing a historic structure report for the Gordon/Cline/O'Connor home for GCSU. She loves the intersection of history, architecture, and the stories they tell.

**Mary Graw Leary**, Catholic U of America, is a Professor of Law. A former federal prosecutor, Graw Leary's scholarship examines the intersection of criminal law, technology, and contemporary victimization. She focuses on the exploitation and abuse of women, children, and the marginalized. She is an expert in the areas of criminal law, exploitation, human trafficking, missing persons, victimization, and victim rights. Founder of both the Bakhita Initiative for the Study and Disruption of Modern Day Slavery and the Modern Prosecution Program, Graw Leary is actively engaged in policy development. She is the Chair of the United States Sentencing Commission's Victim Advocacy Group and the former co-chair of the Victims Group of the ABA's Criminal Justice Section. She has testified before Congressional committees and addressed audiences internationally. Her works have appeared in numerous law reviews and peer-reviewed journals.

**John J. Han**, Missouri Baptist U, is Professor of English and Creative Writing and Associate Dean of the School of Humanities and Theology. Han is the author, editor, co-editor, or translator of 35 books, including *Wise Blood: A Re-Consideration* (Rodopi), *The Final Crossing: Death and Dying in Literature* (Peter Lang), *Worlds Gone Awry: Essays on Dystopian Fiction* (McFarland), *Harold Bell Wright's Ozarks: Photos with Notes* (Cyberwit), *To the Hills and Hollows: Haibun and Tanka Prose* (Cyberwit), and *Certainty and Ambiguity in Global Mystery Fiction: Essays on the Moral Imagination* (Bloomsbury).

**Carole K. Harris**, New York City C of Technology (CUNY), is Associate Professor of English. She teaches writing and literature. Her articles on O'Connor, James Baldwin, and the ritualized nature of clichés and small talk have appeared in the *FLOOR*; *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*; and *Renascence: Essays on Values in Literature*. Her article in *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Flannery*

O'Connor is on teaching O'Connor's stories alongside the works of Junot Díaz. She is writing *Talking Back: Maryat Lee and Flannery O'Connor on the Southern Code of Manners*.

**John Hayes**, Augusta U, is Associate Professor of History. His first book, *Hard, Hard Religion: Interracial Faith in the Poor South* (North Carolina), explored the real-world folk Christianity that appears often in O'Connor's fiction. Over the years, he's been inspired by O'Connor in various ways. His first visit to Andalusia was an act of trespassing, and he's since returned legally many times. He once made a bootleg film of "Good Country People" and had the gall to play Manley Pointer himself. And for two decades now he's been restoring an old family farm, thirty miles up the road from Milledgeville.

**Jill Hernandez**, Texas Tech U, is Dean of the College of Honors. As a scholar in the field of Philosophy and student leader in faculty advancement, she has obtained numerous grants, garnered awards, and advanced policy and curriculum. An ethicist by training, Hernandez won the 2013 Robert B. Papazian International Prize in Ethics for "The Integrity Objection, Reloaded," and she was awarded a 2018 Sawtelle Foundation Teaching Innovation Award for meeting the diverse needs of students through lab-based, humanist pedagogy.

**Lisa Hinrichsen**, U of Arkansas, is Associate Professor of English. She teaches modern and contemporary southern literature, transatlantic modernism, contemporary multicultural writing, and ecocriticism. She is the author of *Possessing the Past: Trauma, Imagination, and Memory in Post-Plantation Southern Literature* (LSU) and co-editor, along with Gina Caison and Stephanie Rountree, of *Small-Screen Souths: Region, Identity, and the Cultural Politics of Television* (LSU), *Remediating Region: New Media and the US South* (LSU), and the forthcoming *Record, Document, Archive: Constructing the South Out of Region* (LSU). Her service to the profession includes time as the President of the Society for the Study of Southern Literature (2018-2020) and the Arkansas Philological Association (2011-2012). Current projects include an essay for the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of the Southern Gothic* and the completion of a book manuscript, *Subterranean Souths: Deep Time and Space 1970-2020*.

**Jimmy Holder**, Georgia College, has written plays recognized by Heartland Theatre Festival, Centre Stage New Play Festival, Ohio State U New Play Contest, Labute New Theatre Festival, Crafton Hills New Works Festival, Little Theatre of Alexandria National Playwriting Competition, Central PA Theatre Fest, and The Landing Theatre Company New American Voices. His play *Divinely Futile* is published in *Best Ten-Minute Plays 2022* by Smith & Krauss. His acting credits include Roundabout Theatre, Syracuse Stage, Virginia Stage Company, The Producer's Club NYC, Woodruff Arts Center, and Orlando Fringe Festival. For years he was an instructor of Scriptwriting, Theatre History, and English at Georgia College and an Irene Ryan Faculty Respondent for the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Fest (Region IV). He and Iona Sun own Blackbird Coffee and Birdhouse Theatre & Film.

**Eric Hughes**, Middle Tennessee State U, is a lecturer in the English department and a faculty member in the women's and gender studies program. His BA is from the U of Tennessee-Southern, his MA from the U of North Alabama, and his PhD from MTSU. His specializations are 20<sup>th</sup>-century American literature, modern British literature, Beat Generation literature, queer and gender studies, and rural queer studies.

**Mark Jarman**, Vanderbilt U, is the author, most recently, of *Zeno's Eternity*, from Paul Dry Books. He has also published three books of essays about poetry, *The Secret of Poetry* (Story Line), *Body and Soul: Essays on Poetry*, and also from Paul Dry Books, *Dailiness: Essays on Poetry*. His honors include the Lenore Marshall Prize, the Poets' Prize, the Balcones Poetry Prize, three grants in poetry from the National Endowment for the Arts, and a Guggenheim fellowship in poetry. He is Centennial Professor of English, Emeritus, having taught at Vanderbilt from 1983 until his retirement in 2020. He lives in Nashville, TN with his wife, the soprano Amy Jarman.

**Heidi Johnson**, C of St. Scholastica, holds M.L.I.S. and M.A. degrees. She has been an Assistant Professor serving as a librarian and archivist at St. Scholastica, sponsored by the Benedictine Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, in Duluth, MN, for 20 years. Previously Johnson was a high school English and German teacher and received a Fulbright Scholarship to teach English in Germany. Regarding O'Connor, Johnson was especially captivated by O'Connor's letters in Johnson's freshman year of college, and she has read and researched O'Connor ever since. Highlights of Johnson's research include assisting William Sessions with several reference questions as well as meeting Flossie on her first trip to Andalusia.

**Marc Jolley**, Mercer U, is Senior Lecturer of Philosophy. He has a PhD in Hebrew and Jewish Wisdom Literature. His teaching areas include ethics, religion, film and literature. His focus is on character, and he reads extensively in Thoreau, Emerson, Plato, Dante, and Kierkegaard. He has assisted in study abroad trips to Athens, Greece, and Florence, Italy. He is also the Director of Mercer UP in Macon, located just half a block from the Macon house used in the movie *Wise Blood* to represent the boarding house where Hazel Motes, Asa and Sabbath Lily Hawks, and Mrs. Flood live.

**Katheryn Krotzer Laborde**, Xavier U of Louisiana, is a writer of nonfiction, both literary and general. A Professor of English at Xavier, she has published in *South Writ Large*, *Poets & Writers*, and other journals and sites (including the *FLOCR*). She is the author of books whose subject matter consumed her. The first book is about the marked and messaged refrigerators that populated the post-Katrina New Orleans landscape (McFarland); the second is about an enormous painting by late American Expressionist Frederick J. Brown (Xavier Review Press). Her latest is *Flannery O'Connor's Manhattan* (Fordham); and yes, the title says it all.

**Martin Lammon**, Georgia College, founded the Creative Writing Program at Georgia College, where he held the Fuller E. Callaway endowed Flannery O'Connor Chair in Creative Writing from 1997 to 2018. In 2005-2006, he partnered with the new GC Early College to establish the Creative Writing mentoring project. Lammon's books include two poetry collections, *News from Where I Live* and *The Long Road Home*. His poems and essays have been published in such publications as *The AWP Writer's Chronicle*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Poets and Writers*, *Poet Lore*, and *The Southern Review*. Since 2018, he has been an active Professor Emeritus at Georgia College, supporting a new generation of Creative Writing faculty and students. He and his wife, Libby Davis, live in Atlanta.

**Nina Laville**, Great Hearts Northern Oaks, San Antonio, grew up near Kansas City and graduated from Ave Maria U this May with a BA in Literature and a minor in chemistry. While at Ave Maria, Nina played soccer on scholarship, was a resident assistant, and finished summa cum laude. In her last semester, she did an independent study about O'Connor under the direction of William Gonch. It was here that she grew inordinately attached to Enoch Emery. She teaches 7<sup>th</sup>-grade literature and composition at Great Hearts and intends to go to graduate school to learn more about 20<sup>th</sup>-century southern literature.

**Kathleen Lipovski-Helal**, U of Texas, Austin, holds a PhD in English Literature from Indiana U in Bloomington. She has taught college literature and writing courses for over twenty years and has published work on twentieth and twenty-first century authors, including articles on "The Displaced Person" and *A Memoir of Mary Ann*. She currently serves as an academic docent at the Harry Ransom Center, where she writes critically and creatively, drawing inspiration from the collections.

**Juliann Mackiewicz**, Georgia College, is a senior History and Philosophy double major. She is a student assistant at the John E. Sallstrom Honors College and editor for *Hello Honors*, the weekly newsletter for Honors students. She is also a docent at Georgia's Old Governor's Mansion. Mackiewicz's love for Milledgeville local history began when she started performing individual research on the history of Central State Hospital. She has presented her findings at several conferences including the Southern Regional Honors Conference and the Georgia Collegiate Honors Conference. Her interest in Milledgeville's history only grows.

**Jeffrey H. MacLachlan**, Georgia College, is a Senior Lecturer in English. He has recent work in *The Penn Review*, *New York Quarterly*, and *The William & Mary Review*, among others. He has been nominated twice for a Pushcart Prize.

**Rosemary Magee**, Emory U, served for four decades in wide-ranging roles at Emory as a faculty member, dean, vice president and secretary of the university, and director of the Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, & Rare Book Library. She also convened a series of Creativity Conversations with artists and public intellectuals—including, most recently, Ethan and Maya Hawke (with Amy Alznauer). Her publications include two edited volumes, *Conversations with Flannery O'Connor* and *Friendship and Sympathy: Communities of Southern Writers*, and a collection of short stories, *Family Impromptu*. She was part of the creative curatorial team for the Emory exhibition “At the Crossroads with Benny Andrews, Flannery O'Connor, and Alice Walker.”

**Craig Martell**, Osher Institute—UW-Milwaukee, is a retired businessman from Milwaukee. He has a BA in English and a MS in Accounting. He has curated a total of ten Osher Lifelong Learning Institute’s five-part series “Introducing Flannery O’Connor,” each session graced by a well-known “O’Connor Guest Scholar.” Martell attended the 2023 NEH Summer Institute on O’Connor. He is assisting the virtual team coordinating the Fall 2024 tour of *Everything That Rises Must Converge* by Compagnia de Colombari. As a Discalced Secular Carmelite, his key interest is in how the mystical and contemplative dimensions of her life appear in her fiction.

**Ashley Massey**, U of North Alabama, currently works for the Tennessee Higher Education in Prison Initiative assisting students reentering from prison. She is also an instructor in North Alabama’s Restorative Justice program held at Limestone Correctional Facility. She has additionally taught a correspondence course to men on Alabama’s Death Row. Her academic research primarily focuses on carceral representations in Southern literature. Her poetry has appeared in numerous small presses, and she recently released a gothic farm-themed poetry book, *Keep the gate open*. She holds an MA in American Literature from North Alabama and is the former Critical Prison Studies graduate assistant. She is also a small business owner, farmer, and founder of a menstrual equity organization.

**Ann McCutchan**, Independent Scholar, is the author of six books, including, most recently, *The Life She Wished to Live: A Biography of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings*, author of *The Yearling* (Norton), a finalist for the Marfield Prize in Arts Writing. She has received fellowships and residencies from the Rockefeller Foundation, Cornell U, the MacDowell Colony, and others. She was the founding director of the U of Wyoming MFA program and Associate Professor of English/Creative Writing at the U of North Texas, where she was Editor of the *American Literary Review*. She holds degrees from Florida State U, the U of Michigan, and the U of Houston. Website: [www.annmccutchan.com](http://www.annmccutchan.com).

**Jessica “Jess” McQuain** (she/her/hers), Georgia College, is Programming Coordinator for the Flannery O’Connor Institute for the Humanities. Her scholarship focuses on ecofeminism, memory, and trauma in women’s writing in the American South. Her work has appeared in the *FLOCR* and *The AWP Writer’s Chronicle* and is forthcoming in the *Mississippi Quarterly* special issue “Hurricane Katrina at 20: Rethinking the Literary and Cultural Legacies of the Storm.”

**Monica Carol Miller**, Middle Georgia State U, is Associate Professor of English and the coordinator of graduate writing programs. She is the author of *Being Ugly: Southern Women Writers and Social Rebellion* (LSU), editor of *Dear Regina: Flannery O'Connor's Letters from Iowa* (Georgia), and co-editor of *The Tacky South* (LSU).

**William F. “Bill” Monroe**, U of St. Thomas, was a participant in the 2007 NEH Summer Institute at Georgia College. He is the author of *Power to Hurt: The Virtues of Alienation* (Illinois), which was selected as an outstanding academic book of the year by *Choice*. Among his other publications are the play *Primary*



*Care*, about end-of-life issues relating to Alzheimer's, and articles on Cather, Eliot, Nabokov, and O'Connor. He served as dean of the Honors College, founding president of the Phi Beta Kappa Chapter, and professor of English at the U of Houston until his retirement in 2022.

**Cassie Munnell**, Georgia College, is the curator of *Andalusia: The Home of Flannery O'Connor*. She has an MA in Museum Science and Heritage Management from Texas Tech U and a BA in History from Agnes Scott C.

**Lily Murphy**, Georgia College, is a Mass Communications Major with a concentration in Film and TV. Her journey with the Writing for Success grant started when she was a practicum student creating a virtual field trip to be used in 5th grade classrooms. Afterwards she worked on the O'Connor Institute podcast season 1 as the post-production intern and as a student worker. She is eager to see how resources created through the Writing for Success grant can be used in the classroom.

**Kerry Neville**, Georgia College, is Associate Professor and Coordinator of the MFA and Undergraduate Creative Writing Program, and she is acting co-chair of the Georgia College English Department. She is the author of two collections of stories, *Necessary Lies*, which received the G. S. Sharat Chandra Prize in Fiction and was named a ForeWord Magazine Short Story Book of the Year, and *Remember to Forget Me*. Her memoir, *Momma May Be Mad*, is forthcoming in Fall 2025. Her work has appeared in *The Gettysburg Review*, *Epoch*, *Triquarterly*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Irish Times*. Her fiction and nonfiction have been named Notables in *Best American Short Stories* and *Best American Essays*. In 2018, she was a Fulbright Fellow at U of Limerick in Ireland, where she was Visiting Faculty in the MA in Creative Writing Program.

**Georgia Newman-Powell**, Georgia College, began her interest in O'Connor at The Woman's College of Georgia (1964-67) where she first met O'Connor's mother and close faculty friends. Her MA thesis was the first comprehensive annotated bibliography of O'Connor criticism, and her doctoral dissertation explored the "contrary kinship" of O'Connor and Maryat Lee. Newman's 31-year academic career at Polk Community C (FL), her professional engagement at state, regional, and national levels, and a two-year post-retirement faculty appointment at Georgia College were capped by an invitation from Brigham Young U-Idaho to be a visiting professor of O'Connor studies. Newman-Powell says with a wink that Dom Augustine Moore, Cistercian Trappist abbot who administered O'Connor's last rites, influenced her second vocation as a hospital chaplain and guides her creative writing "from above."

**Mahailey Oliver**, Stephen F. Austin State University, Corsicana, TX, holds an English MA from Stephen F. Austin State U. For the last five years, she has taught English 2 and honors English 2 at Corsicana High, a Title I school district. In the 2022-2023 school year, she was named Corsicana High's Distinguished Teacher of the Year, and she received a Recognized-level designation for the Teacher Incentive Allotment.

**Stephanie Opperman**, Georgia College, is a Professor of History. As the Principal Investigator and Co-Program Director for the NEH grant, "Flannery O'Connor and Milledgeville: Collecting the Past," she is working with undergraduate students to interview community members who lived in Milledgeville during the heart of O'Connor's writing career (1951-1964). Her work has been published in the *Journal of Women's History*, *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, the *Latin Americanist*, and *Endeavour*. Her book, *Cold War Anthropologist: Isabel Kelly and Rural Development in Mexico*, will be published by the U of Arizona Press in Nov. 2024.

**Clarke W. Owens**, Independent scholar, has a BA in English from California State U, Sacramento, a master's degree in English/Creative Writing from U of California, Davis, a PhD in English from Ohio State U, and a law degree from the U of Akron. He taught English at universities in Ohio and St. Anselm College in New Hampshire before changing careers to practice law, a profession from which he is now retired. He is the author of a novel called *The Veteran* (Adelaide Books), which was a category finalist for the Eric Hoffer award; of *Son of Yahweh* (Collective Ink Books); and of other books and articles.

**James S. Owens**, Georgia College, first delved into O'Connor when assigned 3 by Flannery O'Connor in a sophomore-level Southern Literature class. An MFA scholarship placed him at Georgia College, then into a world of O'Connor's Milledgeville beyond anything he'd imagined. Bruce Gentry introduced him to much better paginated publications of O'Connor's with far friendlier fonts and page layouts while instructing him. Owens is a graduate of Auburn U, U of Alabama at Birmingham, and Georgia College. His mixed-genre creative and critical work has appeared in the *FLOCR*.

**Carmine Palumbo**, East Georgia State College, is a Professor of English. A native of Fredericksburg, Virginia, he has taught and served as an academic administrator for nearly two decades. He was previously Chair of Humanities at Middle Georgia College in Cochran. He holds a PhD in American Literature and Folklore from the U of Louisiana, where began his interest in the late New Orleans author John Kennedy Toole, who taught at UL for several years prior to the posthumous publication of his Pulitzer Prize winning *A Confederacy of Dunces*. Palumbo was a participant in the NEH Summer Institute "Reconsidering Flannery O'Connor" in 2023. He lives in Swainsboro with his wife and two children.

**Martheaus Perkins**, George Mason U, is pursuing an MFA. He is the co-editor of *BRAWL Literature*. His writing has appeared in *West Trade Review*, *PRISM International*, *Obsidian Lit*, *Longleaf Review*, and elsewhere. He is an emerging Black writer originally from Texas who received his Bachelor's in English from Stephen F. Austin State U.

**Blue Profitt**, Georgia College, is a Lecturer of Film Studies. She recently earned her PhD in English from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where she taught courses in academic writing, film history, and popular entertainment. Her research concentrates on gender, sexuality, nostalgia, and youth-centric media. She is developing a project on the "bad boy" archetype in 1980s Hollywood.

**Michaela Reed**, Georgia College, is in the MFA program at Georgia College. She served as an assistant to the directors of the 2023 NEH Summer Institute.

**Ann Ritter**, Georgia State U, is a Clinical Instructor in business communication. She has a doctorate in human and organizational systems, for which she studied O'Connor as an othered southern woman. Ritter's fiction, essays, and poetry appear in *Charleston Magazine*; *Confrontation*; *Earth's Daughters*; *The Southern Poetry Anthology (Georgia)*; *Gathered: An Anthology of Quaker poets*; and *Presence: A Journal of Catholic Poetry*. Ritter has studied in the summer writing intensive at Bennington C and received an artist-initiated grant from the Georgia Council for the Arts in fiction and poetry. She was a fellow in the 2023 NEH Summer Institute at Georgia College, and a presenter for "Flannery O'Connor, Poetry and Us," a Zoom sponsored by the Flannery O'Connor Institute for the Humanities to share results from NEH Summer Institutes. Her background includes corporate writing and publishing, stage performance/dance, and storytelling.

**Lucy Robertson**, Florida State U, is a PhD student of English at FSU. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees from the U of Georgia, in Comparative Literature/History and Comparative Literature respectively. Robertson also completed research abroad at the U of Nottingham and Yonsei U. Her current studies focus on subjects of speculative, gothic, and pre-modern American fiction with an emphasis on horror, the abject, and grotesque realism. Her authors of interest include Irving, Poe, O'Connor, and Shirley Jackson.

**Simon Ross**, U of Mississippi, is a second-year PhD student. His main interests are Gothic literature, southern literature, religious literature, and representations of violence in literature. He can be reached at spross1@go.olemiss.edu.

**Jessica Schnepf**, Ave Maria U, is Assistant Professor of Literature. She teaches courses in literature, writing, and rhetoric, and she specializes in modern and contemporary American and British fiction, narrative theory,

and theological aesthetics. She also teaches for the MFA program at the U of St. Thomas in Houston, leads seminars in literature and the Catholic imagination for Loyola Chicago's Hank Center for Catholic Intellectual Heritage, and is a faculty scholar with the Catholic U of America's Institute for Human Ecology. Her peer-reviewed work includes "The Catholic Grotesque: Antoni Gaudí's Sagrada Familia and Flannery O'Connor's *Wise Blood*" (*English Studies*).

**Mab Segrest**, Connecticut C, is the former Fuller Matthai Professor of Gender and Women's Studies, She is the author of *Memoir of a Race Traitor: Fighting Racism in the American South*, an Outstanding Book on Human Rights in North America and Editor's Choice for the Lambda Literary Awards, and *Administrations of Lunacy: Racism and the Haunting of American Psychiatry at the Milledgeville Asylum* (both published by The New Press), as well as of *Born to Belonging: Writings on Spirit and Justice* (Rutgers). In 2015, she served as the Martha Daniel Newell Scholar at Georgia College, A past fellow at the National Humanities Center, she lives in Durham, NC.

**Peter Selgin**, Georgia College, is the author of *Drowning Lessons*, winner of the 2007 Flannery O'Connor Award for Fiction, two children's books, three books on the writer's craft, and two essay collections. His memoir, *The Inventors*, won the Housatonic Book Award. His novel *Duplicity* won the Best Indie Book Award and the Indie Excellence Book Award. His full-length drama, *A God in the House*, based on Dr. Jack Kevorkian and his "suicide machine," won the Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference. His novel *A Boy's Guide to Outer Space* is forthcoming from Regal House in Nov. 2024.

**Sidonia Serafini**, Georgia College, is Assistant Professor of English. With Barbara McCaskill, she co-edited *The Magnificent Reverend Peter Thomas Stanford: Transatlantic Reformer and Race Man* (Georgia). Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Southern Quarterly*, *Women's Studies*, *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, *American Periodicals*, and *American Literature*. She serves as Co-Director of *Black Activism: A Transatlantic Legacy*, a website that examines the imprint of Black activism in the US and the UK, past and present.

**Carol Loeb Shloss**, U of Pennsylvania, is a former Professor of English and Irish Literature at Stanford U. Her books include *Flannery O'Connor's Dark Comedies* (LSU); *In Visible Light: Photography and the American Writer* (Oxford); *Lucia Joyce: To Dance in the Wake* (Farrar), and "Let the Wind Speak": *Mary de Rachewiltz and Ezra Pound* (Pennsylvania). *Lucia Joyce: To Dance in the Wake* was a finalist for The National Book Critics Circle Award and was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. She was involved in the NEH Summer Institutes held at Georgia College in 2014 and 2023. She is at work on a double biography, *Flannery and Regina: The Andalusia Chronicles*.

**Katie Simon**, Georgia College, is Associate Professor of English and Interim Executive Director of the Flannery O'Connor Institute for the Humanities. She has formerly coordinated the Program in Women's and Gender Studies and the MA Program in English. She is an Assistant Editor of the *FLOCR*. She earned her PhD and her BA in English from UC-Berkeley, and her MA in English from Mills College. Her teaching and research interests examine the intersections between American literature, social justice, and the environment. Her work on Thoreau appears in *ESQ*, her work on O'Connor in *Women's Studies*, and she's published pedagogy pieces in *Bad Subjects: Political Education for Everyday Life*. She is co-editing a collection of essays, *Forgotten Spaces: Environment and Social Justice in the U.S. South*.

**Olivia Simoni**, Duke U, is currently a third-year PhD student in the Graduate Program in English at Duke U, and she holds a BA in English Literature from Cornell U. Her principal research focuses on American literature and religious culture in the nineteenth and twentieth century, specializing in the Southern Gothic. Having spent most of her life in France, Dubai, and Zambia respectively, Simoni is an international academic at heart, bringing her global perspective into her study of Western literature.

**Jim Sisson**, Middle Georgia State U, was raised in the woods just north of Milledgeville and completed his undergraduate degree (English) at nearby Mercer. After his first stint in Macon, Jim completed graduate degrees in theology from Mercer Atlanta, then Chicago Theological Seminary, with coursework along the way from Emory, U of Chicago, and St. John's Annapolis. After additional graduate work in English, Jim resumed teaching in Macon after a brief rodeo in Texas. A proud alum of "Camp Flannery" (NEH's "Reconsidering Flannery O'Connor," 2023), he's happy to be home to talk more about Flannery

**Shannon Skelton**, Georgia College, is a limited-term lecturer in English. She holds an MFA in fiction from Georgia College and an MAE in English education from the U of Alabama at Birmingham. She has written a collection of short stories, and her writing has been published in the *Flannery O'Connor Review*, *Image Journal*, and *Ruminate Magazine*. She teaches composition, literature, and creative writing. Recent research and teaching interests include writing toward health and healing, grief in literature, the essay, and the intersection of creative writing and composition pedagogies.

**Dorian Speed**, U of St. Thomas, is a writer and educator in Houston who recently graduated from St. Thomas with her MFA in Creative Writing. Dorian has spoken at the inaugural Walker Percy Conference at Loyola U in New Orleans and at the annual Center for Ethics and Culture conference at the U of Notre Dame. She contributed a chapter about Muriel Spark to the recent collection *Women of the Catholic Imagination: Twelve Inspired Novelists You Should Know*. Speed is working on her first novel, as well as a book comparing the lives and work of Flannery O'Connor and Muriel Spark.

**Susan Srigley**, Nipissing U, is Professor of Religions and Cultures. Her research focuses on ethics, imagination, and literature. She has published two books (*Flannery O'Connor's Sacramental Art* and *Dark Faith: New Essays on Flannery O'Connor's The Violent Bear It Away*) and several articles on O'Connor. She has co-organized three international Flannery O'Connor conferences (Dublin, Seville, Toronto-online), with a fourth in the works for 2025 in London. Her teaching/research has expanded into death studies; she has presented her pedagogy on death awareness for postsecondary students at the Garrison Institute, NY, and for the *Contemplative Care Symposium*, and she has presented with her students at the international death festival, *Lifting the Lid*. She is working on a book about O'Connor and death.

**Roger Stanley**, Union U, is a recent retiree, though he continues as peer evaluator and book reviewer for the *FLOCR*. In 2007 he was an NEH participant in Milledgeville. Among his published articles through the years are pieces comparing O'Connor's work with the prose of Willa Cather and the lyrics of Lucinda Williams.

**Jordyn Street**, Georgia College, earned a BA in History with a minor in Museum Studies at Georgia College. She is working towards gaining her MA in Museum Studies at the U of Oklahoma. While studying at GCSU, Street worked at Special Collections in the library and, after graduation, became an Archives Assistant.

**Irwin H. Streight**, Royal Military College of Canada, is a full professor in the Department of English, Culture, and Communication. He is co-editor, with R. Neil Scott, of *Flannery O'Connor: The Contemporary Reviews* and coeditor, with Roxanne Harde, of *Reading the Boss: Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Works of Bruce Springsteen*. His monograph *Flannery at the Grammys* was recently published by Mississippi.

**Matthew D. Sutton**, Morehead State U, is Assistant Professor of English. His work on southern literature, music and soundscape has appeared in *Mississippi Quarterly*, *A/B: Autobiography Studies*, *Studies in Popular Culture*, and several edited collections. His ongoing book project, *Storyville*, is an analysis of 20th-century southern musicians' autobiographies.

**Jesse Swan**, U of Northern Iowa, is Professor of English and Coordinator of Women's and Gender Studies. He has taught at UNI since the last century. Being captivated by O'Connor his entire academic career—indeed, his first academic publication was on O'Connor—Swan is working on an extended study of O'Connor and the first woman to write a published play in English, Elizabeth Cary. Both women are devout Catholics writing to

express their faith in anti-Catholic and anti-feminist cultural environments, albeit one is modern and the other is early modern. His paper for the conference draws from the examination of the uses of concupiscent feelings and actions, often violent, in the two women's imaginative work.

**Joelle Troiano**, Duke U, is a PhD student in English. Her work on nineteenth and twentieth century American literature is shaped by questions about the divide between the material and the immaterial and how such a division changes the ways we speak and write. She is currently feeding a growing fascination with the humorous and the grotesque and probing the ways hilarity, violence, and vulgarity may offer an antidote to the speechlessness surrounding the Holy and a new way into (or through) studies of interpretation.

**Richard Utz**, Georgia Tech, is Interim Dean in Tech's Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts and Professor in the School of Literature, Media, and Communication. His scholarship and teaching focus on medievalism, medieval culture and literature, the integration of humanistic inquiry and science/technology, reception study, and cross-temporal cultural memories and identities.

**Jason Anthony Walker**, U of Texas, Dallas, is on the English faculty at Bishop Dunne Catholic School in Dallas and is a Lecturer in Composition and Literature at UT-Dallas. In addition to his O'Connor studies, his research interests include representations of masculinity in American Literature and rhetorical comparisons of early- to mid-nineteenth-century American authors' works with biblical and other sacred texts.

**Rachel Wall**, Georgia Highlands C, earned her PhD in literary studies from Georgia State U. Her dissertation covered Georgia writers Tina McElroy Ansa, Melissa Fay Greene, Mary Hood, and Janisse Ray. She is a professor of English at Georgia Highlands. She and her husband have two children in their twenties, so they have just recently become empty nesters except for all their pets. Rachel was honored to have been one of the participants at last summer's NEH summer institute in Milledgeville. She enjoyed all the great lectures, her classmates, and working in the archives reading O'Connor's story drafts and letters.

**William Walsh**, Reinhardt U, is the Director of Creative Writing. He teaches such subjects as Southern Literature, Irish Literature, American Novel, contemporary American poetry, Banned Books in America, poetry and fiction writing, and screenplay and TV writing. He is the author of eleven books, including the novel *Lakewood*. In addition to his forthcoming O'Connor book, in 2025 his second novel, *Haircuts for the Dead*, will be published by Mercer. He is the editor of the *James Dickey Review*.

**Nagueyalti Warren**, Emory U, is Professor of Pedagogy emerita in African American Studies. She is a poet, Cave Canem graduate fellow, and author of five poetry collections, among them *Margaret*, winner of the Naomi Long Madgett Poetry Award, and *Braided Memory*, which won the Violet Reed Hass poetry prize. Author of two monographs, *Grandfather of Black Studies: W.E.B. Du Bois*, and *Alice Walker's Metaphysics: Literature of Spirit*, she is editor of *Temba Tupu! (Walking Naked) The Africana Woman's Poetic Self Portrait* and *Critical Insights: Alice Walker*. Warren co-curated "At the Crossroads with Benny Andrews, Flannery O'Connor, and Alice Walker."

**Patricia Ann West**, Savannah State U, is a retired/part-time Assistant Professor of English. She earned a Masters of English Education from Georgia Southern U and completed doctoral coursework and candidacy in English Literature and Criticism at Indiana U of Pennsylvania before family illness ended her studies. Since 2005, she has presented at conferences from Beaufort, SC, to Belize, Central America. In 2020, she published *Still Water Words: Poems and Stories from Ancestral Places*, and in 2022 she co-authored *Great Works of African American Literature* through a grant from the University System of Georgia. Besides creative writing, West has published critical and cultural essays, including "Ev'ry Shut Eye Ain' Sleep: A Critical Race Awakening of Flannery O'Connor's Artificial and Converged Characters in Crisis" in *Women's Studies*.

**Sue Whatley**, Stephen F. Austin U, has a master's degree in Rhetoric/Composition/Creative Writing and a PhD in American Literature. She has spent years engaging with the work of many of her favorite authors, most

especially twentieth-century southerners. Her early work on O'Connor focused on the cultural issue of mother blame, and that topic remains one of her interests. She was a recipient of a 2014 NEH summer institute grant, where she joined with O'Connor scholars to consider how O'Connor's works would be engaged in the new millennium. Recently she has considered competing economies, eco-critical issues, feminist theodicy, and O'Connor's continued relevance in connection with the legacy of Teilhard de Chardin.

**Margaret Earley Whitt**, U of Denver, taught for almost 30 years before retiring as Professor Emerita and moving to western North Carolina. For the past fifteen years, she has taught various favorite books in the McCall Program at Montreat College, led book groups, been a tour guide to civil rights spots in Alabama, and written op eds for the *Asheville Citizen-Times*. Since discovering O'Connor in 1974, she finds no other author quite so compelling and considers *Wise Blood* still her favorite novel. She is the author of *Understanding Flannery O'Connor* (South Carolina).

**Randall S. Wilhelm**, Independent Scholar, is editor of *The Ron Rash Reader* and *Summoning the Dead: Essays on Ron Rash*, both from South Carolina; co-editor of *Conversations with Robert Morgan* (Mississippi); and co-editor of a special issue of *The Journal of the Short Story in English* on "The Short Stories of Ron Rash." Wilhelm holds degrees in visual art and literature, and has published book chapters and essays on American, southern, and Appalachian writers and artists in publications such as *The Faulkner Journal*, *Mississippi Quarterly*, *The Cormac McCarthy Journal*, *Southern Quarterly*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, *The Hemingway Review*, *Philip Roth Studies*, and *North Carolina Literary Review*. He is working on an edited collection, *The Dead Alive and Busy: Selected Essays of Robert Morgan*.

**Sandra Worsham**, Georgia College, has stories in *Memphis Magazine*, *Carolina Quarterly*, *Western Humanities Review*, *Ascent*, *Chattahoochee Review*, etc. She won First in Fiction in the Red Hen Press competition, and her story "Pinnacle" was published in the *Los Angeles Review*. Two of her stories were Finalists at *Glimmer Train*. After she retired from teaching writing to high school students for thirty years, her book on teaching writing, *Essential Ingredients: Recipes for Teaching Writing*, was published by ASCD. She was Georgia's 1982 Teacher of the Year and a 1992 Milken Award Winner. She edited a collection of stories gathered by her high school students who interviewed local senior citizens: *Everybody Has a Story to Tell: Stories from Flannery O'Connor's Milledgeville*. She was awarded a Governor's Award in the Humanities and was inducted into the National Teachers Hall of Fame. She received her MFA in Fiction from Bennington. Her memoir, *Going to Wings*, was followed by a story collection called *Patterns*, both at Third Lung Press.