

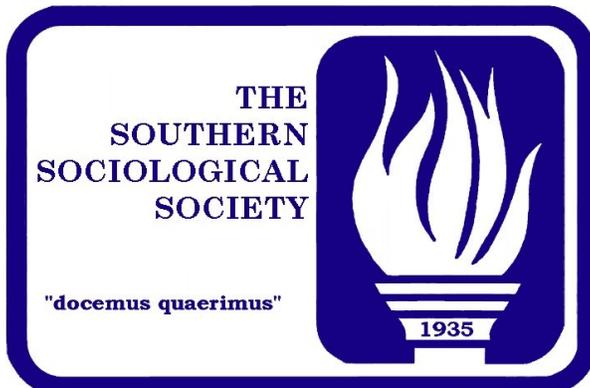
# The Southern Sociologist

The Newsletter of the Southern Sociological Society

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## From Society President Dr. Gayle Kaufman

Dear SSS friends,

I am eager for us to meet for the first time or once again as we come together for #SSS2024 in New Orleans. I have spent the last several months deep in all things Southern. Our Program Committee has created a fantastic program around the theme “Disrupting Binaries,” and our Local Arrangements Committee has provided lots of recommendations for exploring New Orleans (check out the Google map in our app). There are so many reasons to come to SSS 2024, but here are my top six reasons:

- *Plenaries.* On Thursday, S.L. Crawley will talk about “Resisting Sociology’s Binaries—and Why It Matters.” On Friday, Tressie McMillan Cottom will talk about “Troubling the Public During Troubled Times: A Sociological Challenge.” On Friday, Kristen Schilt will moderate a panel on “The Utility of Categorizing Genders” with D’Lane Compton, Michelle Johns, and Danya Lagos.
- *AMCR sessions.* We all love books, and you’ll want to put these books on your reading list after these curious reader sessions, featuring *Stacked Decks* by Robin Bartram, *Vibe* by Corey J. Miles, *Thinking Cis* by Alithia Zaman-takis, *Gratuitous Angst in White America* by Deena A. Isom, *The Not So Outrageous Idea of a Christian Sociology* by Joseph A. Scimec-

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# From Society President Dr. Gayle Kaufman, continued

(Continued from page 1)



Gayle Kaufman, PhD

ca, and *The Sociology of Cardi B* by Aaryn Green, Maretta McDonald, Veronica Newton, Candice Robinson, and Shantee Rosado.

- *Mini-conferences.* Diasporic Womanisms and Indigenous Women's Movements of the Global South, organized by Sancha Medwinter, Tannuja Rozario, and Monisha Jackson, will focus on the framework, methodologies, navigating academic exclusions, life-death ecologies, and decolonizing identity, sexuality, and self-care. Disrupting Dichotomies in the Context of Hazards/Disasters, organized by Adam Straub, Kevin Smiley, and Liesel A. Ritchie, will focus on community, institution, and organization (in)actions and ways for moving forward.
- *Workshops and Panels.* Are you trying to figure out research and writing? Check out sessions on crafting a research agenda, pursuing academic publishing, and a conversation with journal editors. Are you trying to get a grant? Check out sessions on demystifying research grants, NSF funding opportunities, and grant-seeking from private foundations. Do you need some tips on teaching? Check out sessions on pedagogical wisdom for graduate students, experiential learning, teaching theory, teaching applied sociology, student-guided research, and more. Are you looking for a job? Check out sessions on finding a job that matters to you and CV review.
- *Receptions.* Start off the conference by meeting candidates and finding out what SSS committees do (and how you can get involved) at the welcome reception on Wednesday night. Rise and shine by helping welcome first-time attendees at the Coffee with the President event on Thursday morning. All students should join us at Felipe's French Quarter for the student mixer on Thursday night. Help celebrate the SSS award winners (and my ability to get through my talk) at the presidential and awards reception on Friday night. Bonus: There will be a drag show featuring Tuffy Love Andrews, Justin B-tweener, Qween Quan, and Amanda Rose Andrews!
- *Community.* The absolute top reason to come to SSS 2024 is to meet up with other sociologists! It's a great time to make new friends and catch up with old friends. Please come up to me and introduce yourself!

See you soon!

**Gayle Kaufman**  
**SSS President**  
[gakaufman@davidson.edu](mailto:gakaufman@davidson.edu)

## From TSS Editor **Nadya Vera**

Dear TSS Readers,

I am thrilled that our annual meeting is upon us. However, in all honesty, I also feel a bit shocked by how quickly this semester is passing by, for I truly feel as if it just started! I suspect some (if not most) of my time dissonance stems from the way that I chose to spend my spring break this year.

You see, I am the type of person who *loves* to work on campus during breaks. However, this year, because my 3-year-old likes watching Mickey Mouse cartoons, I convinced myself and my husband that we should go to the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida during that time. Overall, I can share that the trip was nice, but my 3-year-old was *not* interested in meeting Mickey Mouse. Furthermore, upon returning to Knoxville, my husband and I were both *exhausted* from our so-called vacation.

I realized that I have been using my school breaks to catch up on work so that I can have less stress about not having enough time to keep up with the work load that goes with being a full-time parent and spouse while working on a dissertation and teaching a class (not to mention service commitments). I feel a great deal of guilt about having taken the trip, but I tell myself that I made a choice, which allowed my kids to experience the sort of trip that I never got to go on as a kid...or perhaps it's just what I did to allay my guilt from frequently working evenings and weekends instead of spending quality time with my family. I do not have a solution for this time crunch conundrum, and all I can do is keep at it, but if any of you have any wisdom to share with me, please do at [nvera@vols.utk.edu](mailto:nvera@vols.utk.edu)—I'm all eyes *and* ears!

Speaking of wisdom, the overarching theme of this edition of TSS—in both the Teaching Corner and Sociological Impact—is the enduring importance and multiplying value of earnest mentorship. I don't know if by the time we all meet in New Orleans I will feel more caught up, but at least I know that I typically leave “Southerns” feeling inspired and revitalized. Frankly, having the opportunity to witness numerous passion-filled, dedicated researchers present their work to their peers energizes me. If you are willing to consider that all of those particularly inspiring presenters likely benefitted from genuinely caring mentors along the way, that can even help restore some faith in humanity—I hope it does for you as it did for me.

I close this letter by pointing you to Dr. Ashley Stone's interview of Dr. Earl Wright II in Sociological Impact. Dr. Wright's deeply earnest, beautifully heartfelt description of the impact that good mentors have had in his life—especially the way in which he makes a point of paying the favor forward through his own mentorship—made me choke up as I read it.

Inspired by Dr. Wright, I take this moment to say thank you to the mentors who—as far back as 28 years ago—have directly helped me. Each one of them not just held me to high standards but also inspired me with demonstrations of the beauty that individuals can impart upon others by choosing to treat subordinates with kindness, empathy, compassion, and respect. To Perry Fraind, Gloria Lima-Palma, Andrew Chiles, Susan O'Mahoney Holtzman, and Linda Childers Hon in Florida, to Jon Kawaguchi in Oregon, and to Cherry Cable, Stephanie Bohon, Christina Ergas, and Harry Dahms in Tennessee: I personally cannot ever thank you enough, but will continue to dedicate my life to paying your gifts forward.

**Nadya Vera**  
**University of Tennessee**



While having lunch at Disney's Magic Kingdom, Nadya's sons, Wesley (9) and Andrew (3), surprised her with a group hug—a moment that she will forever remember as truly magical.

# SSS 2024 | NEW ORLEANS

April 3-6, 2024

## Let's Geaux Louisiana!

We are very much looking forward to hosting the upcoming annual meeting in New Orleans. We don't have to tell you how much fun it is to visit Louisiana, but we're going to anyway.



Let's start with the food. New Orleans is known for its seafood and Creole dishes (not to be confused with the Cajun cuisine of elsewhere in Louisiana). There is no shortage of those options on the list



we've curated, but rest assured there are a range of options close to the conference hotel. You can start searching the interactive google [map](#) now to make your game plan.

The map above also includes entertainment recommendations. Most attractions are within walking distance. However, one fun thing to try is the trolley, which is affordable and can help you get around to other activities. For those with children in tow, you might be particularly interested in checking out the Audubon Aquarium and Insectarium.



Our last recommendation is to just get out and experience what the city has to offer. The parks, the architecture, the weather—all enjoyable hallmarks of the New Orleans experience. We have even included markers with descriptions on the above map to facilitate independent walking tours of all the public monuments near the hotel. There's just too much to enjoy to not come.

### Local Arrangements Committee Co-Chairs Heather A. O'Connell and Kevin T. Smiley



Heather A. O'Connell, PhD



Kevin T. Smiley, PhD

### Local Arrangements Committee at LSU:

**Yoon J. Jeong, KayLynn Larrison, Jazmin Robinson-Smith, Nunnally Zou**

*All images of the city are provided courtesy of New Orleans & Company.*

## The Fairy Godmother Approach to Teaching

Shelley Grant | Assistant Professor of Sociology | Jacksonville University

This past semester, one of my students wrote in my course evaluation that they considered me the “fairy godmother” of the university where I teach. Although I do not assume that all my students would agree with this statement (that I believe was meant as a compliment), it did give me pause and allowed me to reflect on what that designation might mean and decide if it is a title I want to embrace.

To be honest, as a woman struggling somewhat with the realities of aging, my first thought was that fairy godmothers are old. But then I decided to get over myself and past the physical description long enough to consider the inner characteristics of this mythical mentor. Fairy godmother was the term my student used, and even though I realize that it is not gender neutral and that all faculty who possess the characteristics I discuss here are not only women, in the end, I kept it for multiple reasons (e.g., I have been a criminologist for almost 30 years and my colleagues would likely not take kindly to me encouraging male faculty members to embrace the title of “The Godfather” to their students).

In my pondering, I tried to answer two questions about the potential fairy godmother/college professor antithesis. First, as I already mentioned, what is a fairy godmother, and is this a label that a university professor should strive for? Second, if the answer to question one is yes, how does a faculty member become worthy of being deemed a fairy godmother to students?

The reason I struggled with the first question is a little bit personal experience mixed with listening to student conversations over the years about their perceptions of professors, and probably also the influence of media. Many people picture professors wearing dark robes at graduation and entering classrooms

with stern expressions and scary expectations of excellence—not whimsical creatures in pastel gowns bearing wands and magical dust. I ventured down a shallow rabbit hole momentarily while considering this depiction (I realize that the rabbit hole was in *Alice in Wonderland* and not *Cinderella*). I wondered if the comment inferred that I am too easy going, lighthearted, or that my classes weren’t “tough enough” or intellectually stimulating. I mean, the mental image of me flying around a classroom bestowing gifts upon my students was somewhat disturbing.

However, I shifted thought to reflecting about my purpose and the goals I have for myself and for my students. My job is certainly to impart knowledge, but also to provide opportunities for my students outside of the classroom. I want my students to learn and grow so that when they go out into the world after college they are genuinely prepared for a career in their chosen profession. If I am successful in my job, they will likely possess the tools to be successful in theirs.

The question then became, is the “Fairy Godmother Approach” an effective teaching strategy? I love being a teacher, but I believe that I should be so much more than that to my students if I want them to reach their goals during and after college. Aside from the person who imparts knowledge in the classroom (which is very important), I also need to be available in other capacities when needed and requested. Some of those other—equally important—roles are advisor, mentor, cheerleader, rule enforcer, and advocate. I have the power to help them build not only their social capital, but also their self-esteem, self-worth, and resiliency.

The Oxford Language Dictionary says that a fairy godmother is “a female character in

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some fairy tales who has magical powers and brings unexpected good fortune to the hero or heroine.” I am certainly not magical, and college is often not a fairy tale. Yet, I absolutely consider my students to be heroes and heroines for working hard for their college degree despite the fact that many of them have abundant obstacles and “villains” to overcome. Furthermore, I genuinely believe that I have the power to sometimes bring unexpected good fortune into their lives:

- I can meet them during office hours to review material they do not understand.
- I can provide opportunities in the form of internships, volunteering, and service so they have work experience before graduating.
- I can advise students on their schedules, career goals and graduate opportunities.
- I can support them when they are struggling with personal issues at home or at school and lift them up when they are feeling less than successful as students and as human beings.

In some ways, I have decided that I can create “magic” both inside and outside of the classroom and grant “wishes” to my students that

can lead to future success—all key attributes of a fairy godmother.

In the end I decided to embrace my student’s comment as a high compliment. I don’t think my revelations will change the way I teach or interact with my students, but I want to make every attempt to help all students feel the magical power that comes with higher education and learning.

I want them to recognize their own special characteristics and phenomenal potential. I want them to have no doubt that I am there to help them succeed, and that if they are willing to work hard, then I will always be there to support them and try help make their dreams come true. I want them to know that am willing to be their fairy godmother.

My new motto: Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo!

**Shelley Grant** is an assistant professor of sociology at Jacksonville University in Jacksonville, Florida.



## Welcome to our New Teaching Corner Editor



**KC V. Cunningham** is a fourth-year doctoral candidate in sociology at the University of Kentucky. Her current research examines socio-sexual relationships and behaviors among wildland firefighting communities in the United States, placing intimate social interactions in context of evolving human-environment relationships. She teaches undergraduate courses in the sociology of health, sexualities, and inequalities.

To make a submission to TSS’s Teaching Corner, reach out to KC at [kc.vick@uky.edu](mailto:kc.vick@uky.edu).

# SOCIOLOGICAL IMPACT



Earl Wright II, PhD

For this issue of Sociological Impact, I was honored to speak with Southern Sociological Society (SSS) Past President Dr. Earl Wright, II.

In our conversation, Dr. Wright discussed his unique journey to sociology and how he developed his mentorship style.

**Ashley Stone (AYS):** Thank you, Dr. Wright, for agreeing to be interviewed for Sociological Impact. I really appreciate this. So, many people know you and your scholarship, but for those who are not, can you tell us in your own words, who is Dr. Earl Wright, II?

**Earl Wright II (EWII):** Well, thank you for the kind words. Very simply, Dr. Earl Wright II is just a young man from North Memphis, Tennessee, who never expected to be in this profession, and who happened to stumble all along the way to get to where I am today. Primarily, my research has centered on my early life experiences of wanting to understand the world of the South, why the South was misunderstood and misrepresented, and really, in many cases, not taken seriously. So, in terms of knowing who I am, I am a native Memphian—born and raised—a native Southerner, proud of both. In my research, and in my works in general, I'm always focused on uplifting and highlighting both of those spaces.

**AYS:** That totally comes across in your work! I read your book *Jim Crow Sociology*, and I read a little bit about your background, your journey as a graduate student, and how you arrived at your research areas. When did you first become interested in sociology? When was that moment that you thought *I want to*

*pursue studying society?*

**EWII:** Exactly. Well, let me just go back a step before that to talk about my academic experience. I was someone who barely graduated high school. I only graduated high school because you had to have a “C” average to play sports, and I loved football and I wanted to go to college—but the only reason I wanted to go to college was to play football. I saw that as a stepping stone to the NFL, because I was like Jerry Rice of that day, or Randy Moss—I thought I was one of the best wide receivers ever. I barely graduated high school, so I get a scholarship to an HBCU, Kentucky State University. For two years, I was the starting wide receiver and I majored in football and minored in partying [*laughs*].

After two years, however, I was asked to leave Kentucky State University because I had a glowing 0.7 GPA. That's when I came home to Memphis. Fortunately, the University of Memphis accepted me, but on probation. That's when I began to take school seriously. I began to delve into Black Studies because that was the first area that I found any interest within academia. My desire was simply to become a high school teacher and coach football at my old high school in Memphis.

Here is where sociology becomes intertwined. I only took one course in sociology as an undergrad; It was with Dr. Elizabeth Higginbotham. That was the first class in which I really engaged in discussion, where there were topics being discussed that I thought not only did I want to contribute but that I knew something about.

During my last semester of my senior year Dr. Higginbotham asked me if I had thought about graduate school. I said, “Well, yeah, I'm gonna go get this teaching certification so I can go back to North Memphis and be a history teacher and football coach.” To which she

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replied, "Well, just consider going into sociology in grad school."

At that time my overarching thought was "okay, whatever lady." I felt I had to say what I needed to get her out of my space. Fortunately for me she was persistent. I submitted applications to the education program for certification and sociology. I was admitted to both. The only reason that I even went into the sociology direction is because they offered a fellowship—education did not. That's why I say that I stumbled upon this profession—thankfully—through Elizabeth Higginbotham.

When I entered into the sociology program as a master's student at the University of Memphis it did not take long for me to shake the notion that I was just pursuing sociology because I got free money. I really became entrenched in what the discipline was and where I saw some of the gaps, especially as it related to Black people.

As I was ending the master's program, my thesis was on African American barbershops and at the time there was only one scholarly study on Black barbershops that existed in the literature, so I thought that I had a goldmine.

Carol Ronai, my advisor, pointed me to the urban sociology literature. So, I began to look at that, and I see all these pioneering attributions to Chicago. For example, Chicago was the first to do things in urban sociology, or the first to do all these other wonderful things. Something about that was bothering me.

I was uncomfortable with what I was hearing because of something that I recalled from my childhood. You see, I was raised in multiple households as a child and my grandmother's home was one of them. My grandmother had this bookshelf, and it seemed like it held a thousand books, but there were three in particular most stood out to me: (1) *The King James Bible*, (2) *Roots*, and (3) *The Philadelphia Negro* by W.E.B. DuBois. For some reason, as a young child, I was attracted to the latter. So, I would read as much as I could understand at that age, maybe eight or nine years old.

As I was researching urban sociology in Chicago, I just couldn't shake this feeling that this was not accurate and something was not right.

Then one day I was able to understand what was bothering me. I thought, what about *The Philadelphia Negro* and DuBois? Once that light bulb went off, so to speak, that is when I became fully invested in sociology. So, although the long story of how I became interested in sociology includes some stumbling, when I found the world of W.E.B. DuBois—that's when everything came into clear focus for me.

**AYS:** That's a dynamic story. As you have mentioned a couple of people in your journey to sociology, how did your mentors shape your development as an emerging scholar?

**EWII:** Primarily, the two people whom I largely credit are Elizabeth Higginbotham, who introduced me to the discipline and gave me the confidence to know that even though my background included traditional stereotypes and tropes about Black families (e.g., single-parenthood, living below the poverty line, and coming from a fatherless household), I could have access to a world beyond North Memphis.

The other person whom I give the most credit to is Tom Calhoun. Whereas Elizabeth introduced me to the discipline, Tom taught me how to *be* a sociologist, both professionally and personally.

His mantra was that most sociologists, we don't live the discipline. We talk about these theories, and how we see the world working, but we do not incorporate that into our daily lives to better manipulate how we move and navigate certain spaces. Tom was someone who stood up for me in terms of the dissertation, and research in general. Historical sociology is popular now, as of, let's say around 2015 or 2016. However, when I was publishing these works on Atlanta University and W.E.B. DuBois—challenging [the Chicago School]—historical sociology wasn't a thing in 1999 and

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2000. I remember getting letters from the *American Sociological Review*, *American Journal of Sociology*, and *Social Forces*, rejecting my papers—outright desk rejections—saying that this was not sociology and I should instead submit to the *American Historical Association*.

So, for 10 to 15 years, I'm battling against all these institutional forces. Tom was the one behind me saying, first of all, it's quality work—because he pushed me to be the best at all times. He told me that I would be acknowledged for what I do at some point.

Initially however, I was not always the dutiful student. He recruited me at a conference in Little Rock, Arkansas (my first conference presentation at the Mid-South Sociological Association). When I first arrived in Nebraska, after being recruited, I felt perhaps a bit too confident that I had already proven myself enough. I turned in let's just say a less-than-perfect paper. Back then it was not like today where you submit a Word document and have track changes. We used not just ink, but red ink.

When I received that paper back, I could have sworn this man had just bled all over my paper with his comments and feedback [laughter]. We then had a very serious conversation in which he told me that I had two options: an incomplete for the semester, which could negatively affect me, or getting up off my “you know what” and doing the work. He said to me, that if I was serious, I should meet him at his home at 5 a.m. so that we could review my work as he drank his coffee. Well, I was at his door at 4:30 a.m. working, trying to make sure I didn't revert back to my days at Kentucky State, where I just did the bare minimum.

That was the first time that I had been challenged academically. It was heart-wrenching when he passed away in 2020. Since then, the Mid-South Sociological Association created a mentorship award in his honor, and of course, he was the first recipient. I recently awarded the Tom Calhoun Excellence in Mentoring Award, and that has to be the greatest honor of my life.

**AYS:** Thank you for sharing about your mentors, and specifically what they did to support you. I think to have scholars invest in you in that way is such a treasure, particularly when you are a Black student in this discipline. Recently, I was able to attend the Association of Black Sociologists Annual meeting, and I attended an *Author Meets Legacy* session that was dedicated to you. I was able to observe everyone's reactions and I could see your impact as a scholar and as a mentor. It was amazing to watch the positive your mentorship has had on other scholars. Thinking about that session, how would you describe your mentorship style and why do you think you have had such a profound effect on emerging scholars?

**EWII:** Yeah, I have difficulty accepting, internalizing, you know, all of those wonderful words and accolades because, well, they are not solely because of me. What I'm doing is paying it forward on behalf of Elizabeth and Tom. There were a couple of opportunities in which Tom should have been a co-author on a paper early in my career. He would say, “No, I'm not going to do this. I want you to be situated in such a way that when you get on that market, they will see that you are doing this work independently. I'll be okay.” And I would say, “Well, you know, I have to do something for you. Let me take you to dinner.” He would reply by pointing out that I did not have any money—yet. You know, you're a grad student [laughter]. He told me that the only way in which he wanted to be paid back is by me doing for others what he did for me.

So, as an essential part of considering whether I have been impactful in the lives of others consists of being open and honest, I can confidently say that it's all thanks to what Tom primarily and Elizabeth secondarily poured into me.

Tom really read me the riot act so to speak with regard to my paper. By using all that red ink he was being open and honest, basically acknowledging that although our relationship went further than a sterile academic advising role to include a familial-type component, at the end of the day, it did not matter how well we got along or how “cool” we were. If my

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work was not up to par, I would be getting the boot.

To have those kinds of open and honest relationships, while still allowing yourself to be vulnerable, is important in so many ways. I began this interview by sharing that I am just a country boy from Memphis, Tennessee. At my core and essence, that is who I am. I always try to share parts of my story not only with those in the profession, but undergrads as well to break down this wall, this veil, as we'll put it in DuBois's terms. Some students believe we are unapproachable, and we sometimes contribute to those perceptions, but at the end of the day, we're real people.

One of the things I didn't realize or really process as an undergraduate student was the distance between where I sat and the professor sat really was not actually that far. That is precisely the sort of thing that I try to break down for my mentees. For instance, a couple of years ago I had a student assisting me with an edited book project and I was honest with them in letting them know that although the work itself would not be contributing to their CV directly, they would be gaining important relevant experience by looking at contracts, going through the publication process, dealing with editors and acquisitions people, etc.

My whole approach to mentoring—and that, again, came through Calhoun primarily—is rooted in being open about who I am as a person, letting students know that professors are vulnerable, but also being honest about their work and their potential. If their work isn't on point, it would be much better for them to hear it from me as opposed to them going to an ASA or Southern conference and being blind sighted by random questions.

**AYS:** Yeah, I appreciate that. That was the vibe of the *Author Meets Legacy* session. Even at the end of the session, you offered some research ideas, because, as you said, "I can't do them all!" Whereas at times in academia, people harbor ideas or appropriate ideas, your approach was different—like passing the baton. So, thank you for that as well!

**EWII:** Not a problem.

**AYS:** So, people know that you are the Past President of the Southern Sociological Society. Would you care to reflect on what you were able to accomplish during your presidency and your role within the organization's leadership?

**EWII:** There is a song by DJ Khaled in which Jay-Z has a guest line and at one point he said his only goal is to make a real brother feel seen. My role as president of the Southern was to make real sociologists feel seen. By real, I mean those who have been overlooked, underlooked, marginalized, forgotten, misunderstood, and whatever other, you know, adjective we can think of, whether by race, orientation, institutional affiliation, and other levels. There is so much sociology in terms of the history that has been misrepresented and that should be credited to Black people, Black women, and Black institutions, that it's almost criminal that we don't even discuss it.

I want to make sure that we can no longer have a reason to not acknowledge early sociological pioneers like Lucy Laney and Georgia Swift King. These are two Atlanta University graduates—now Clark Atlanta University—who were part of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory, the *first* American school of sociology. These names should be on the tongues of every scholar doing work in any area that impacts Black women or early sociology.

I want to make sure that when we talk about rural sociology that we acknowledge, yes, Washington and DuBois had their little ideological battle of which type of education was best, but let's keep in mind, that Washington was all about programs that would improve his particular agenda, and rural sociology did that. He established the first rural sociology program in the U.S. I was invited to speak the keynote to the Rural Sociological Society (RSS) last year, they had no idea that Tuskegee's program started in 1892. I believe the RSS was established as an organization in the 1930s. I know it's roughly 40 years prior. So, when I look at my presidential term, this is what I want to put a spotlight on historically Black

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schools, Black scholars, and to put them on the same playing field in this discipline, at least, as we consider those well-resourced, predominately White institutions.

To sum it up, my vision is to make sure that Black folk and Black sociologists are recognized. The vision in terms of the discipline, that's really encapsulated in the book *Jim Crow Sociology*, that the tenets of Black sociology—which I argued is the real sociology—be practiced. Let's not simply write papers, write books, but let's ask what kind of impact our work having in the streets. That is what true sociology does. That is what Black sociology does, which predates mainstream White contemporary sociology, which really is the

*real* sociology.

I want to see a greater an embrace of Black sociology, which is social policy-oriented, action-oriented, and people-friendly where you engage in research relationships on an equal status level, and not simply because you're a doctor and you're going to look down upon someone as if they are beneath you. Instead, asking how we can help each other.

**AYS:** Thank you, Dr. Wright for sharing so much about yourself. This has been an inspirational conversation for me and I trust that it will be for all TSS readers.

## Share YOUR Sociological Impact

If you or someone you know has an upcoming book being published or is making inroads within public sociology, your work should be featured in *Sociological Impact*. To do so, please provide your contact information and project description to [astone@depaul.edu](mailto:astone@depaul.edu) or [tss@southernsociologicalsociety.org](mailto:tss@southernsociologicalsociety.org).



**Dr. Ashley Stone** is the 2023-2024 Ida B. Wells-Barnett Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow in the Department of African and Black Diaspora Studies at DePaul University in Chicago.

# MEMBER ACCOLADES

## Recent Publications

Michael Hughes, Steven A. Tuch, Debra McCallum, Gabrielle P. A. Smith, Celia C. Lo, Utz McKnight, and Richard Fording. 2023. "Racial Attitudes in the Deep South: Persistence and Change at the University of Alabama, 1963-2013." *Sociological Inquiry* 93 (November): 723-755. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soin.12537>.

## TSS Wants to Celebrate You!

In each edition, we'll list members' recent publications, career updates, and social activism. To do that, we need to hear from you! You can submit your news and publications by using our convenient [online form](#). You can paste the work directly from your CV. TSS is also happy to include write-ups for major events (such as faculty retirements and transitions) from our membership.

**Michaela D. McMillian Jenkins** is a sociology PhD student at Emory University. Her primary research interests are ethnicity, race, citizenship, organizations, and education. Particularly, she considers experiences of intragroup variation, especially when differences are invisible to those outside of the group.



# ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SOCIETY NEWS

## Call for Session Organizers

As president-elect of the Mid-South Sociological Association I am excited to invite you to organize a session for the annual meeting to be held October 16-19, 2024, in Nashville, Tennessee, in-person with an online option for a limited number of participants. This year's theme is Social Change and Resistance: Looking Back to Move Forward. This theme is intended to establish a reflective yet celebratory atmosphere for the meeting as we commemorate our 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. The MSSA was established in 1975 to honor the work of sociologists in the mid-south region and to create a more inclusive space for research and publication, especially for historically marginalized populations. I would like us to rededicate ourselves to the initial organizational goals of the association and revitalize it by focusing on research, advocacy, and praxis that center on social change and various forms of resistance. I encourage you to consider organizing a paper session, poster session, roundtable, workshop, or panel discussion that incorporates this year's theme. You may propose sociological or interdisciplinary panels and sessions—all topics are welcome. I eagerly anticipate collaborating with you to craft a successful and inspiring conference!

Malencia Johnson, PhD

The submission portal opened on March 15. Send an email to [mssaprogramchair@midsouthsoc.org](mailto:mssaprogramchair@midsouthsoc.org) or visit [www.midsouthsoc.org](http://www.midsouthsoc.org) for additional information.

### Types of Sessions:

- Panel Session: A discussion focused on a particular topic guided by a group of panelists.
- Paper Session: 3-5 individuals present their research, followed by a Q&A session.
- Poster Session: Individual presenters display a poster version of their research and provide a brief description to viewers.
- Roundtable: Conducted at a round table, intended to bring together individuals interested in a particular topic to discuss ideas, ongoing research, or ask questions.
- Workshop: Directed sessions with the goal of participatory learning.

## Share Announcements with SSS Members

As TSS is published quarterly, please send announcements at *least three months in advance* of any deadlines for submission. Submit announcements to [sbastow@fsu.edu](mailto:sbastow@fsu.edu).



**Skyler Bastow** is a doctoral candidate in Sociology at Florida State University. His research interests are health, life course outcomes, and LGBTQ+ lives, particularly around the transgender and gender nonconforming community.

**The Southern Sociological Society (SSS)** is a nonprofit organization that seeks to promote the development of sociology as a profession and scientific discipline by the maintenance of high academic professional and ethical standards and by encouraging:

- (a) effective teaching of sociology;
- (b) valid and reliable methods of research in the study of human society;
- (c) diffusion of sociological knowledge and its application to societal problems;
- (d) cooperation with related disciplines and groups;
- (e) recruitment and training of sociologists; and
- (f) development of sociology programs in educational and other agencies.

Members receive online access to *The Southern Sociologist* and *Social Currents: The Official Journal of the Southern Sociological Society*. An annual meeting is held in the spring.

Membership is open to any person who can assist in promoting the objectives of the society. Persons wishing to join SSS may send dues directly

to the executive officer. Please include your name, address, phone number, and institution. The membership year is July 1 through June 30. Membership classes and annual dues are as follows:

Sustaining.....	\$150.00
Regular .....	\$75.00
Emeritus.....	no cost
Student .....	\$30.00
Department.....	varies by institution type

Dues, subscriptions, membership inquiries, and address changes should be addressed to:

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Pay online at [cart.southernsociologicalsociety.org](http://cart.southernsociologicalsociety.org)



**THE SOUTHERN SOCIOLOGIST**

**Nadya Vera**, Editor  
 Doctoral Candidate, Sociology  
 University of Tennessee

*The Southern Sociologist (TSS)* is the official publication of the Southern Sociological Society. It is typically published electronically four times a year in the months of July, October, January, and March. The purpose of *TSS* is to report the news, announcements, and information of interest to the profession and to serve as a medium of record for the SSS membership on issues affecting the profession.

**CONTRIBUTE TO TSS**

To bring you the news, we need your news! Please send any news of your department and/or colleagues for possible publication in *TSS*. Articles pertaining to the state of the profession or the discipline are always welcome.

To appear in *TSS*, submissions should be sent to [tss@southernsociologicalsociety.org](mailto:tss@southernsociologicalsociety.org) by the publication deadlines below.

The editor reserves the right to publish or not to publish any submission. Also, there may be times when submissions need to be edited in conjunction with the author.

**Publication Deadlines**

- Summer—June 10
- Fall—September 10
- Winter—December 10
- Spring—February 10

