

Georgia Council for the Arts Arts Education Program Grant FY25 Grant Panelist Biographies

Arts Education Program Grant - Panel 1

Jessica Lynch-Oliver

Assistant Professor, Brenau University

Gainesville, GA

Jessica Lynch-Oliver, MFA, is an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary choreographer, performing artist, educator, and activist. Jessica Lynch-Oliver is currently the new Assistant Professor in Dance at Brenau University. She received her Master of Fine Arts Degree in Dance at Mason Gross School of The Arts, Rutgers University. Attending Professional Performing Arts School, in affiliation with The Ailey School, she then moved on to receive her BFA degree in Performance and Choreography at The College at Brockport. She has studied in Kingston, Jamaica at the Edna Manley School of Visual and Performing Arts, where she studied African and Jamaican folk dance. Lynch has choreographed several works that have been performed at SUNY Brockport, America College Dance Association, Edna Manley School, The Apollo Theater, The Walt Whitman Theater, and Rutgers University.

As a woman of color of African American and Native American descent, she has shaped her work as an artist and choreographer around the issue of race, gender, social justice, and community engagement. Her thesis and research work, titled “ReVeil” performed in 2021, utilized the Africanist movement aesthetic and incorporated both a collaborative and immersive approach to deliver embodied movements based on the dancers' lived experiences. She served as a Part-Time Lecturer at Rutgers University from 2019-2022, where she taught Modern, Jazz, African Diasporic Movement Practices, and online Dance Appreciation courses. Her teaching philosophy utilizes a fusion of Africanist Aesthetic practices and theories. Jessica’s main objective is to present challenges within a safe and positive teaching/learning environment, offer students opportunities for new perspectives, design lessons and courses that foreground student-led/self-discoveries, and express my dedication and commitment to their learning as a leader and educator in this field. Her interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach in both her classroom as well as her creative practice will provide artists with new methods of thinking that will create self-reflective individuals that will be dedicated to critical inquiry across all disciplines.

Dr. Scott A. Stewart

Director, Atlanta Youth Wind Symphony

Atlanta, GA

Dr. Scott Stewart is Music Director and Conductor of the Atlanta Youth Wind Symphony. He holds Bachelor and Doctoral degrees from the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University and

a Masters from the University of Texas at Austin. He has taught in the Austin Independent School District, Emory University, and the Westminster Schools in Atlanta. He specializes in wind band/ensemble, orchestra, chamber music, saxophone, conducting, wind band history and repertoire, and film music.

Dr. Stewart is an active guest conductor, teacher, clinician, author, speaker, and saxophonist. Stewart is the founder and on-air host of Atlanta National Public Radio affiliate 90.1 WABE's "Strike Up the Band" radio program.

Candace Haynes

CEO of Consulting 4 Creatives

Atlanta, GA

Candace Haynes is an experienced Creative Director, Choreographer and Production Coordinator with a demonstrated history of working in Nonprofit, STEM and Entertainment industries. Haynes is detail-oriented professionally skilled in Communication, Leadership, Project Direction and Creative Problem Solving.

Kate Driscoll

Curator, Exhibitions and Collections, Hudgens Center for Art & Learning

Duluth, GA

I have been working in nonprofit art centers for over 12 years in various positions. I have sold and managed venue rentals, negotiated exhibition contracts, coordinated fund raising events, managed loan agreements and artwork insurance, as well as my main role of curating and installation of exhibitions. In leadership roles I have hired and managed interns and assistants, as well as volunteers.

Jonathan S.E. Perkins

Teaching Artist

Columbus, GA

For nearly fifteen years, I have led creative workshops across the nation. A graduate of Georgia Southern University, I pull from several years of training and experience as a performance artist and community activist when developing my workshops. I work closely with my clients in tailoring workshops that meet the needs of their students. I offer one-of-a-kind insights on using creativity as a means for emotional health and personal growth. My philosophy of teaching is anchored in being a lifelong learner, consistently adapting and evolving, all while being an attentive listener. I use poetry as a vehicle for accessing acceptance and understanding of differences among peoples, cultures, and backgrounds. This holistic approach works students positively from the inside out, as they chart the poems being realized from their thoughts to their bodies. Language is an enthralling and malleable asset that fosters a sense of confidence and capacity.

Maureen Monaghan
Visual Artist and Teaching Artist
Atlanta, GA

Maureen Monaghan is a multi-discipline visual artist with almost two decades of experience in the art industry. After graduating from Old Dominion University with a B.F.A. in drawing and design and a minor in art history in 2004, she worked as a book designer and soon realized her desire to work in an industry where her various interests, intellectual and visual, could merge. In search of a new career, she returned to school to pursue a graduate degree in animation and completed an M.F.A. at the Savannah College of Art and Design (Atlanta) in 2015. A recent addition to the Georgia Council for the Arts Teaching Artist Registry, Maureen is passionate about using her diverse proficiencies to both create and teach.

Arts Education Program Grant - Panel 2

Angela Harris
Executive Director, Dance Canvas, Inc
Atlanta, GA

Angela Harris is a choreographer, Director and the Executive Artistic Director of Dance Canvas, Inc., a career development organization for emerging professional choreographers and youth. Angela is originally from Baltimore, MD and a graduate of The Baltimore School for the Arts. She trained at Dance Theater of Harlem, School of the Hartford Ballet & Eglevsky Ballet. She attended Mercyhurst College and City College of New York, earning a B.A. in Journalism, while dancing on a full ballet scholarship at Steps on Broadway in NYC. Angela danced professionally with The Georgia Ballet, Columbia City Ballet and Urban Ballet Theater. She has choreographed for companies and academies, including The Georgia Ballet, Steps on Broadway, Ballet Lubbock and Oklahoma Summer Arts Institute. Her theater choreographic credits include Frankenstein's Funeral (Found Stage); the Southeastern premiere of Andrew Lloyd Webber's 'Song & Dance' (Aurora Theatre); 110 in the Shade (Theatrical Outfit); The First Noel (True Colors Theater Company); Bridges of Madison County (Aurora Theatre). Angela was one of five Inaugural National Visiting Fellows at the School of American Ballet. In 2017, she received a SDCF Observership and worked with Tony Award winning director/choreographer, Susan Stroman, on the new musical, Little Dancer, during its Broadway Lab. As a Director and through Dance Canvas, Angela has been a catalyst, consultant, and resource for numerous new dance organizations and artists. Angela has developed programs for the City of Atlanta's Office of Cultural Affairs, Usher's New Look Foundation, and the Tupac Amaru Shakur Foundation. Angela served on the national Emerging Leaders Council for Americans for the Arts and was a member of the 2014 class of Arts Leaders of Metro Atlanta. She received the National Emerging Leader Award from Americans for the Arts and American Express and was a 2021 Women in the Arts and Business Honoree through Synchronicity Theater. Most recently, Angela was recognized with the 2022 Suzi Bass Award for Outstanding Choreography for her work on 'Song & Dance' at the Aurora Theatre. Angela is currently on faculty at Emory University, Spelman College, Brenau University and is a ballet instructor at Dekalb School for the Arts & Academy of Ballet.

Hope T. Brown**Studio Manager, Director of the Studio Company, Competition Team, & Pre Company****The Studio Athens****Athens, GA**

Hope started dancing at 3 years old at Dan & Company studios and continued her training there by joining The Atlanta Jazz Theatre. She was a member of the Atlanta Jazz Theatre for 10 years. She has studied under Kenneth Green, Dan Youmans, Mia Michaels, Lori Ann Gibson, and more. She received her bachelor's degree in English from the University of Georgia. During her time at UGA, she danced in Pamoja Dance Company and is also one of the Co-Founders of Counterpoint Dance Company residing at The University of Georgia and served as the Company Director from 2015 to 2017. Hope has been teaching and taking classes since she graduated from college, and she is very excited to be a part of The Studio Athens team!

Dr. Richard Bell**Associate Professor, Clayton State University****Morrow, GA**

Richard Bell is currently Professor Emeritus at Clayton State University in Morrow, Georgia where he taught orchestra, double bass, music education, music composition, and music theory during his 10 years as a full-time faculty member. He currently conducts the CSU orchestra and the Southern Crescent Symphony. Prior to joining the faculty at Clayton State, he taught middle school and high school orchestra in the Clayton and Henry County schools for 29 years. Groups under his direction have performed for the Georgia Music Educators Association In-Service conference and the MENC Southern Division Conference. A strong advocate for music education throughout Georgia, Richard is a graduate of the Arts Leaders of Metropolitan Atlanta class of 2018 and was a member of the steering committee for the Atlanta Regional Commission's Arts and Culture Strategic Plan. He holds Bachelors and Master's degrees from Florida State University and a Doctorate from the University of Georgia. He has served as president of both the Georgia Music Educators Association and the Georgia Chapter of the American String Teachers Association. Dr. Bell has presented sessions at the GMEA In-Service Conference, the American String Teachers Association National Conference, the Music Educators National Conference, and the National Association for Music Education in Ireland. As a composer he has numerous published and commissioned works for school orchestra. Awards received during his career include the Georgia Music Educators Association Distinguished Career Award, the Georgia String Teachers Association Lifetime Achievement Award, the Georgia String Teachers Association Advocacy Award, the Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation Award, the Wal-Mart Foundation Teacher of the Year Award, the STAR Teacher Award, and the Clayton State University College of Arts and Sciences Gene Hatfield Service Award.

Michael McFalls**Professor of Art, Director of Pasaquan and the Bartlett Center, Columbus State University****Columbus, GA**

Michael McFalls is a practicing artist who received his B.F.A. in Fine Arts from The Columbus College of Art and Design (OH) and his M.F.A. from The University of California at Davis. Before

joining CSU, he served as the Art Program Coordinator and Assistant Professor of Art at The University of Maine at Farmington. He recently completed a six-month Fulbright Fellowship in Sweden at the University of Gothenburg, HDK Steneby and has received numerous scholarships and awards, including; the Pitzerker Foundation Endowed Fellowship, the College of the Arts Teaching Award, College of the Arts Faculty Research Award, as well as being nominated for the University Regents' Excellence in Teaching Award. Mike has been a resident at Sculpture Space, Inc., The Djerassi Resident Artists Program, and Australia National University, and a visiting artist at Dartmouth College and Furman University. McFalls has had numerous exhibitions at national and international venues.

Nichole Potzauf

Director of Development and Outreach, CERF+ (Craft: Emergency Relief Fund)

Blue Ridge, GA

Nichole joined CERF+(Craft Emergency Relief Fund) as the Director of Development & Outreach in June 2023. Prior to joining CERF+, she served for 10 years as the Executive Director of the Blue Ridge Mountains Arts Association (BRMAA) in Blue Ridge, Georgia. Her tenure at BRMAA highlighted her experience in advocating for arts accessibility, economic development through a creative economy, grant and development management, and the cultivation of community and artistic engagement and partnerships. Prior to BRMAA, she served as Assessment Manager for Dalton State College School of Education, and while living in Los Angeles, California, served as Production Manager and Coordinator for several television and film production companies such as E! Networks, NBC/Universal, and Paramount Pictures.

Arts Education Program Grant - Panel 3

Lisa Yaconelli

**Community arts advocate, dance teacher, performer and co-owner of Clocked! Restaurant
Athens, GA**

Lisa Yaconelli has lived in Athens for over twenty years as a performer, dance teacher, community arts advocate, and co-owner of Clocked! restaurant. She holds a BFA degree in dance from Temple University and is certified in Pilates and Social Emotional Arts. She also curates Small Box Series, a multi art quarterly performance series. Her experience as a performing artist in Athens, Ga has given her the perspective that Athens is a great place for artists to create and live, and providing a space for artists to create and generate income is necessary if Athens wants to grow its artist community. The best way to do this is to make sure it's affordable and easily accessible. That's the mission of workshop, to push more art making in Athens by providing an affordable space to create and generate income from one's creations and talent.

Sarah Hillmer
Executive Director, Staibdance
Atlanta, GA

Sarah Hillmer has dedicated over 17 years to the professional dance world as a dancer, assistant to choreographers, ballet master, stager, educator and creator. Her company credits include the Atlanta Ballet, glo-as a founding member, and staibdance. Her 8 years as a Ballet Master at the Atlanta Ballet had her work alongside world-renowned choreographers. Sarah's work as a stager and assistant have taken her to Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, Oklahoma City Ballet, Smuin Ballet, New York Theatre Ballet, UNCSA, UArts, Pennsylvania Ballet, Scottish Ballet, Alberta Ballet and Boston Ballet.

In 2017 Sarah formed ImmerseATL, a professional training program designed to serve as a bridge between the pre-professional and professional world of contemporary dance. ImmerseATL provides classes, mentorships, performance opportunities, and professional connections for its artists.

In August 2018 Sarah stepped into the role of Managing Director for staibdance.

Sea Stachura
Public Radio Journalist and Author, Freelance Writer and Editor
Instructor at Jessye Norman School for the Arts
Augusta, GA

As a Freelance Writer and Editor, I collaborate with clients across media platforms to create engaging, informative, and compelling content. I have over 20 years of experience in journalism and editing, and I hold an MFA in Creative Writing from Warren Wilson College.

I have led remote and in-person teams for production houses and public media, such as WDET 101.9 FM Detroit's NPR Station and Gannett | USA TODAY NETWORK. I excel at turning a concept into innovative, narrative-driven, and accessible media, and I have received multiple grants and national awards for my work. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to my work, and I aim to help reporters tell nuanced and contextualized web and audio journalism with humanity and narrative. I have received rave reviews from my editing and coaching clients and students for my skills, approach, and depth of knowledge.

Bryan Brooks
Georgia Council for the Arts Council Member
Atlanta, GA

Bryan Brooks is a retired human resources professional and current museum docent at the High Museum of Art, where he provides guided tours and special programs to audiences ranging in age from kindergartners to seniors. Since being at the High, Brooks has served as Chair of the Docent Board and Chair of the Docent Enrichment Committee, and he received the 2019 Docent Service Award for his volunteer efforts. He also served nationally as the Southeast Regional Director of the National Docent Council of North America, where he helped develop docent training programs for museums throughout the region. He now co-chairs the National

Docent Symposium and serves as a member of the Arts Council Ministry at First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta. Before his involvement in the arts, Brooks worked for 35 years in human resources, with most of that time spent in the banking industry. He lives in Atlanta with his husband, John.

Violet Crawford

**Atlanta Black Theatre Festival Board of Advisors - Fundraising
Atlanta, GA**

Ms. Crawford has worked in both government and the private sector, administering contracts and grants. She has a Bachelor's degree in Policy Studies from Georgia State University.

DB Woolbright

**Director of Education, Springer Theatre Academy
Columbus, GA**

DB is a Columbus native who first came to the Springer in 1996 as a student in the Springer Theatre Academy. After graduating from the program, he began his journey as a teaching artist. He has gained diverse experience working with Rose of Athens, State College Community Theatre and Brookstone School. In 2016, DB and his colleague, Wesley Forlines, completed a sculptural installation along the BeltLine in Atlanta named The Service Station. As a musician, DB tours throughout the year with Katie Deal and Jason Petty in the Classic Nashville Roadshow series.

Arts Education Program Grant - Panel 4

Eileen Edwards

**Dance Educator Cobb County Schools
Vice-President, Advocacy Representative for Dance Educators of Georgia Society
Atlanta, GA**

Eileen Edwards is an educator, artist, and advocate with twenty-five years of experience in arts education in the Atlanta metro area. She holds a B.S.Ed. in Dance Education from the University of Georgia and a MA in Arts Administration from Goucher College. She has taught in the public-school system for twenty years in magnet performing arts programs as well as local theaters, studios, and recreational programs. She serves as a board member for Dance Educators of Georgia Society, Georgians for the Arts, and Cobb County Association of Educators and is heavily involved in advocacy work across the state.

Casey Hall

**Fine Arts Education Program Specialist, Georgia Department of Education
Atlanta, GA**

Mr. Casey Hall is a Fine Arts Education Program Specialist at the Georgia Department of Education where he helps fulfill the organization's mission to create the next generation of fine artists and foster a deep appreciation of the arts for students and fine arts patrons in the State of Georgia. In Georgia, GaDOE Fine Arts believes this occurs with a world-class fine arts

education, fine arts experiences in the arts community, and fine arts extensions of learning after school.

Before joining the GaDOE Fine Arts Department team Casey was in the Fulton County Schools as a Fine Arts Support Teacher (FAST) and the Music Specialist at Wolf Creek Elementary School in Atlanta, Georgia. On the FAST Team, he coached and provided support for elementary music teachers across the district. He was a member of Fulton County's Vanguard Team and worked with educators across all grade levels and disciplines to support a personalized learning environment in their classrooms, build capacity, and seamlessly integrate technology. He was selected to be a member of the Working Committee to revise the Georgia Performance Standards for Music in 2017. Most recently, he was awarded the title of 2019-2020 South Learning Community Teacher of the Year for Fulton County Schools.

He holds a bachelor's degree in music education from the Schwob School of Music at Columbus State University and a master's degree in music education from Georgia State's School of Music. While at GSU, he studied and developed the term, culturally driven pedagogy (a comprehensive term that uses students' culture to drive instructional practices) as well as developed a songwriting curriculum for the Johnny Mercer Foundation. Mr. Hall has presented at various conferences on topics such as Project-Based Learning, Personalized Learning, App Smashing, and Behavior and Classroom Management at international, national, state, and local school district professional development sessions.

John McBrayer-Howe
Curator of Education, Morris Museum of Art
Augusta, GA

John McBrayer-Howe is curator of education at The Morris Museum. Raised on his family's farm in the Wrightsboro community in Thomson, Georgia, John earned three degrees at the University of Georgia; a bachelor of science in political science, a bachelor of fine arts in painting and a master of historic preservation. John has worked for and volunteered with numerous nonprofits, including the Phillips Collection in Washington, DC, Meadow Garden in Augusta, and Historic Augusta Inc. among others. John, his husband Rich, and their basset hound, Meadow, currently divide their time between their home in West Augusta and their farm in Thomson.

Damon Young
Teaching Artist
Atlanta, GA

Damon Young is a teaching artist and performer specializing in collaborative theatre arts and shadow puppet performance. As puppetry strengthens cooperation, creativity and empathy, it's a perfect vehicle through which participants in Damon's programs can celebrate the hands-on magic of storytelling and learning. Teachers and children are active creators in these educational programs, working with Damon to create interactive and unique community performance that synthesizes puppetry, music, voice and music. Dive in, play, create—be a part of the magic!

Connie Fritz**Community Theater, former director of Moultrie Art
Moultrie, GA**

Connie Fritz has over 40 years of experience in program management and arts programming. She is the Founder of the Children and Youth Theater Program at The Arts Center of Moultrie having started the program in 1992. Mrs. Fritz has served the Arts Center in several capacities including Instructor, Program Manager, Theater Director, Marketing and Executive Director. In her years of experience, she has written grants accumulating over a half million dollars for the organization. Currently, Mrs. Fritz serves as the Community Engagement Coordinator for the Moultrie Colquitt-County Parks and Recreation Authority where she continues to write award winning grants. In addition, she is still active with programming and theater for the Arts Center.

Meagan Cascone**PAIR Director, Springer Theatre
Columbus, GA**

Meagan is a part of the Springer Education Team as the director of the PAIR Program, Academy Teacher, and Theatre for the Very Young Director. She has her Bachelors of Arts Degree in Theatre Performance from Lagrange College. She has been working with the Springer Opera House since 2018 as an Academy teacher, performer, stage manager, and PAIR specialist. Meagan has also worked as a tour director/actor with Missoula Children's Theatre and has also spent some time as a preschool teacher. She is so grateful to be working in this historic building, surrounded by people who are good at what they do and love what they do.

Arts Education Program Grant - Panel 5**Lindsey Giedl****Director at The Studio Athens, Joffrey South
Athens, GA**

Lindsay Giedl is a choreographer, teacher, and dancer. She was a founding member of CADE:NCE – Contemporary African Dance Ensemble: New Conscious Explorations under the direction of Tamara Thomas. A graduate of The University of Georgia with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance she can be seen in the indie film “The Last of Robin Hood”, “Honey 4” as well as Corey Smith’s music video “Honky Tonkin’ in My Blood”. Lindsay is also currently on faculty with Ignite Dance Competition as well as is a 200 Registered Yoga Teacher.

Lindsay’s work was the 2020 recipient for the PANDEMIC ATLANTA Choreographer search with the City of Atlanta – Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs and was selected to present new work for the Fall for Fall Dance Festival, a new socially distanced dance festival in 2020 and 2022. Lindsay was also the 2020-2021 recipient of the Kristel Rose Tedesco Residency with Mathematics-in-Motion.

Lindsay currently resides as the Dance Director at The Studio Athens, as well as is a guest teacher for Roswell Dance Theater, and Ballet Hispanico's Professional Studies Program. Lindsay is in her seventh season with the Joffrey Ballet School and is currently the Administrative Director/Faculty of the Summer Programs – Joffrey South and Joffrey Colorado.

Olivia Ponder-Wallace

**Program and Education Director, Colquitt County Arts Center
Moultrie, GA**

As Education and Program Director, I have been tasked with the duty of making sure all sectors of our community are equally exposed to diverse media of art such as painting, sculpture, printmaking, drawing, decorative arts, photography, and installation. I do so in various ways including but definitely not limited to initiating new programs, directing stage plays, conducting literacy workshops, author's night, grant writing, etc... just to name a few. The arts have been a major part of my life even before my position here at the Arts Center. I have also initiated a gamut of theatrical presentations at my church (and a few previous jobs). Much of my art experience can be attributed to the Arts Center long before I began working here. While working with Communities in Schools for ten years we partnered with the Arts Center of Moultrie to be able to incorporate the arts into the lives of the youth in our community. My name is Olivia Ponder-Wallace and I view myself as a very dependable and reliable person who happens to be a wife, a mother, a minister of the gospel, a business owner, and an author. I feel that I have definitely exemplified my abilities and aptitudes through various dimensions of life.

I was born and raised and still reside in Moultrie, Georgia. I am the wife of George Wallace, III, and the mother of four (4) beautiful children. I was pleased to graduate twice from the "Unsinkable" Albany State University (ASU). In 1998, I received my Bachelor of Science in Business Management, and in 2014, I received my Master of Public Administration degree.

Aligning with the legacy of my father, my husband and I started our own business, Perfect Parties, in 2010 and it has shown to be self-sufficient from the start. Also, following my father's footsteps, I became a Minister of the Gospel in 2013, under the tutelage of Ambassador Cornelius Ponder, III of Greater Newton Grove Cathedral where I currently serve and operate as an Executive Administrator of the Women Ministry.

Lastly, I published my first book, entitled "From C.H.A.O.S. to C.H.A.R.M." in 2014 which is a depiction of my marriage and some of the trials and hurdles my husband and I had to face and cross in order to get where we are today. Realizing that God is the KEY to true happiness actually saved our marriage and our testimonies are now serving as pillars of strength to other couples who have purchased my book. The book is available as a paperback or on Audible.

Tony Aaron Hambrick

**Executive Director, Jessye Norman School for the Arts – East Side
Atlanta, GA**

Hailing from the picturesque city of Augusta, Georgia, born to Mr. Tony W. Hambrick and Rev. Vivian T. Hambrick, in the Gracewood community. Tony Aaron Hambrick serves as worship

leader and youth minister at Live River Baptist Church, Augusta, Ga, educator in the Aiken County Public School District, and Jessye Norman School of the Arts. He is a loving husband to Sharla C. Hambrick and proud father of Israel David Hambrick.

With brilliant vocalization, poetic lyrics, and exhilarating performances, Tony Aaron continuously draws masses to enrich lives through music. In 2016, Tony Aaron released his debut single and EP entitled Fresh Fire. He has received five awards for his project and was recognized among Who's Who in Atlanta, Ga. He has appeared on numerous television programs across the southeast region and toured the country sharing his gift. Tony Aaron, a Christian and Soul recording artist, was a contestant on NBC's hit show "The Voice" season 21. Currently, he is a co-host on the longest running gospel television show, Parade of Quartets.

Rebecca Pogue

Head of Elementary School Programs, Alliance Theatre Education

Atlanta, GA

Rebecca Pogue serves as Head of Elementary School Programs at the Alliance Theatre, Woodruff Arts Center in Atlanta, Georgia. She facilitates the design, administration, and efficient delivery of arts integrated in-school residency programs in over 300 classrooms annually. Rebecca previously worked with Arts for Learning (Young Audiences) and the Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta. She graduated from the University of Kentucky with a Masters in Arts Administration and from the University of Georgia with honors with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance and a minor in Spanish. In her free time, Rebecca enjoys taking dance classes in the Atlanta community, playing board games with her husband, Cody, and cheering on her beloved Georgia Bulldogs in Sanford Stadium.

Ta'Varis Wilson

Theatre Professor/Chair - Albany State University

Albany, GA

Ta'Varis Wilson is a native of Augusta, Ga. Mr. Wilson received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Speech and Theatre from Albany State University and furthered his education at Regent University in Virginia Beach, VA where he obtained a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Acting. Ta'Varis is an Assistant Professor and Director of Theatre at Albany State University where he serves as advisor for The Albany State University Theatre Ensemble and Alpha Psi Omega National Theatre Honor Society. In his community, he is an active member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., and serves on The Board of Directors for Theatre Albany. Along with his community involvement, he is also a professional actor and director. He directed and produced Black Nativity at The Historic Liberty Theatre in Columbus, GA and has performed at the Springer Opera House in Columbus, GA in the musicals Dreamgirls and The Color Purple, He spent a summer working in Indiana where he portrayed El Gallo in The Fantasticks, Mike Talman in Wait Until Dark and Roger in Grease. He also has numerous television and film credits such as WGN's hit show Underground, Things Don't Stay Fixed and The Delilah Project (Postproduction).

Cathy Kaemmerlen

Teaching Artist

Atlanta, GA

With her unique approach to storytelling/storytheatre, Cathy Kaemmerlen (MFA) uses her theatre, dance, education, and writing backgrounds to create story pieces and programs for all audiences and performing spaces. From tricksters to noodleheads, from heroes to fools, from folktales to historical tales, she brings a variety of characters to life. Known for her one-woman shows (Abigail Adams: Dear Heart; New Manchester Girl, the story of Synthia Catherine Stewart; Sacajawea Speaks; Turn Homeward Hannalee; Anne Frank: A Patch of Blue; Pilgrim Courage and many others) and her extensive school, family and community programs (So You Want To Be a Hero: America's Riproaring Tall Tales; Ms. Noodlehead Has Georgia on Her Mind; World Class Tales; Remembering the Classics; Trickster Tales; Rachel Carson: A Sense of Wonder; Buttons for General Washington; Tales of Japan; Big Saurus/Little Saurus and many others) Kaemmerlen has stories to fit every occasion and audience age. She compellingly pulls audiences into the life of her characters and stories.

Now the author of five non-fiction regional history books: General Sherman and the Georgia Belles; The Historic Oakland Cemetery of Atlanta; Georgia Place Names from Jot Em Down to Doctortown; The Buzz on Honeybees; and Ms Noodlehead, Georgia Traveler and creator of shows for Columbus and Newnan schools, she has performed for 40 plus years, for literally thousands of audiences coast to coast (she averages 300 yearly performances), she is available for performances at schools, community centers, arts centers, family nights, mother-daughter events, father-son events, festivals, performing series, and more. She is equally at home with formal and informal performance settings.

Arts Education Program Grant - Panel 6

Kerry Lee

Co-Artistic Director, Atlanta Chinese Dance Company

Atlanta, GA

Kerry Lee is the Co-Artistic Director of Atlanta Chinese Dance Company, where she began her dance journey under the direction of her mother Hwee-Eng Lee while also immersing herself in the pre-professional ballet world. After graduating from Stanford University with an engineering degree and working for a top-ranked economic consulting firm, she followed her heart into the professional dance world in New York City. As a traditional Chinese and modern/contemporary dancer, she toured nationally and internationally with Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, H.T. Chen & Dancers, Dance China NY, and glo before returning home to co-lead Atlanta Chinese Dance Company with her mother. The multigenerational troupe has enchanted diverse audiences via original full-evening productions and numerous community performances throughout metro Atlanta and beyond. Among other honors, Kerry was the only Chinese dancer among the finalists who received a ticket on "So You Think You Can Dance" Season 11 and was a recipient of the Louis Sudler Prize in the Performing and Creative Arts. For many years Kerry worked at the intersection of the arts and activism on staff at Alternate

ROOTS, where she is still a longtime member. She has also been politically active in the Asian American community in Georgia. These life-changing experiences have been instrumental in propelling her toward addressing social justice issues and sharing rarely told Chinese American stories through Chinese dance choreography. Her work has been discussed in China's prestigious Beijing Dance Academy Forum as an example of innovative Chinese dance choreography reflecting Chinese diaspora communities and performed at the national Dance/USA conference. Kerry enjoys sharing Chinese dance and Chinese American stories in spaces traditionally dominated by western aesthetics. She has created dances, set work, and taught workshops/residencies for university dance programs, performing arts high schools, and ballet schools in Georgia, South Carolina, and Virginia.

Amanda Brown
Executive Director, Creative Arts Guild
Dalton, GA

Amanda CM Brown, serves as the Executive Director of the Creative Arts Guild, in Dalton, Georgia. Founded in 1963 by a group of community artists and visionaries, the Creative Arts Guild is the state's oldest multidisciplinary community arts organization. Amanda holds a bachelor's degree in Theatre Arts, from the Sewanee: University of the South, a master's degree in Arts Administration and Program Management, from the University of Denver, and a master's degree in Arts in Medicine, from the University of Florida. Prior to her role at the Guild, Amanda worked professionally as an arts educator in the areas of theatre, dance, and visual arts and as a theatre director and choreographer. Utilizing her diverse life experiences in the arts in her role as the Guild's Executive Director, Amanda offers strategic guidance and provides artistic and administrative support for the organization to launch and sustain high quality arts offerings and facilitate growth and new artistic ventures. Amanda has been with the Creative Arts Guild since November 2014 and in that time has enjoyed creating and supporting many new opportunities for arts engagement and using the lens of the arts to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of all community members.

Kimberly Kelsey Epps
Otis Redding Foundation
Macon, GA

Kimberly Kelsey Epps has worked with the Otis Redding Foundation in various capacities over the past 6 years. From coaching to private instruction, programming to production, Kimberly now serves as the Center Director for the Otis Redding Center for the Arts. Over the past few years, she has worked to provide music and arts education in communities across Middle Georgia. Working to support and expand the various classes, workshops and summer camps provided by the Otis Redding Foundation, Kimberly has found a true passion for igniting creativity, critical thinking, and self-empowerment in our young people through the gifts of the arts. With a 30-year background in singing, songwriting and stage performance, Kimberly understands the important impact that music and the arts can have on young minds. As the Otis Redding Foundation breaks ground on a new, state of the art Otis Redding Center for the Arts, Kimberly is eager to expand the reach and impact of all the current and forthcoming programs.

Tori Bell**Education Programs Manager, Morris Museum of Art****Augusta, GA**

Tori Beth Bell is a dynamic educator and arts advocate, currently serving as the Assistant Curator of Education at the Morris Museum of Art. With a Master of Fine Arts and a Bachelor of Fine Arts, Tori brings a wealth of knowledge and creativity to her role, where she designs engaging programs and tours to promote art appreciation among diverse audiences. Her dedication extends beyond the museum, as she shares her passion for art through teaching roles at various institutions and contributes to community outreach initiatives.

Meghan McFerrin**Arts Education Project Manager, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies,****Capstone Academy Atlanta, Teaching Artist for High Museum and STEAM consultant****Atlanta, GA**

Meghan McFerrin joined NASAA in 2023. She coordinates NASAA's professional development services for arts education staff. Working collaboratively with members and the National Endowment for the Arts, Meghan supports the annual Professional Development Institute and organizes NASAA's peer networking programs for state arts agency arts education managers. Meghan is an arts educator with experience teaching in K-12 classrooms as well as in higher education, museum and community arts settings. From 2017 – 2022 she worked for the Georgia Department of Education. In this role, she supervised the state's STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) certification program, helping schools to integrate the arts into their instructional strategies and to develop community arts partnerships. Meghan has also worked for the High Museum of Art as a coordinator of school services and, more recently, as a teaching artist. She has developed numerous programs focused on accessibility, including a museum engagement program designed to support the needs of students with developmental disabilities. Meghan's personal passion for the arts is evident in her work as a visual artist and a potter.

Linda Nicholson**Georgia Council for the Arts Council Member****Canton, GA**

Linda Nicholson is an artist and owner of Red Bird Farm Pottery, a pottery business located in Barnesville, Georgia. Before starting her business, Nicholson spent over 30 years of her career as an art educator, working at Wheeler High School, Kennesaw Mountain High School, and Creekview High School where she was the Department Chair of Fine Arts. During her education career, she had the opportunity to serve as an interview judge for the Governor's Honors Program and she also piloted Advanced Placement Studio Arts classes in Cobb County. She earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts and Education Certificate from the University of Georgia and her Masters of Education from the University of West Georgia. She and her husband, James, live in Canton and have two children.