

Georgia Council for the Arts

FY26 Project Grant

Panelist Biographies

Panel 1

Amy Mutarelli

Columbus State University

Columbus, Muscogee County

Amy Mutarelli earned her Master of Fine Arts in Dance from the Florida State University, and a Bachelor of Science from Auburn University. While at FSU, Amy studied with Anjali Austin, Lynda Davis, Suzanne Farrell, Tim Glenn, Gerri Houlihan, Sheila Humphreys, Rick McCullough, Anthony Morgan, Dan Wagoner, and Jawole Willa Jo Zollar. Additionally, she created work that was selected for the concert series, Days of Dance, for two successive years and performed as a member of the Dance Repertory Theatre. Amy has enriched her training through summer intensive programs at the Orlando Ballet (Fernando Bujones & Peter Stark), The Washington School of Ballet, the Florida Dance Festival, American Dance Festival (ADF) Dance Professionals Program, The Alvin Ailey School Horton Dance Professionals Program, and the Nederlands Dans Theatre summer dance intensive (The Hague, Netherlands). Her choreographic work has been accepted into Dumbo Dance Festival (NYC) and has been presented at New Grounds Emerging Artists Festival (Tampa), and internationally at the Contemporary Choreographers Collective (COCO) Dance Festival (Trinidad & Tobago).

Before relocating to Columbus, Amy taught dance at Darton State College (Albany, GA) and was the Director of Dance at Louisburg College (Louisburg, NC). She has been overseeing the dance program at Columbus State University since Fall 2018.

Annie Moya

Pasaquan Preservation Society

Buena Vista, Marion County

A rural southwest Georgia native, Annie Moya holds a master's degree in American Studies and has served as chair of the Pasaquan Preservation Society, a small nonprofit dedicated to the stewardship and preservation of St. EOM's psychedelic art environment, since 2016. She is a freelance art critic and grant writer in the metro Atlanta area.

Bethany Strickland

Main Street Blackshear

Blackshear, Pierce County

Hired as the Better Hometown Blackshear Manager with the City of Blackshear Main Street Program in 2017. Strickland's previous work included sales and print production for Syndistar Inc. in New Orleans, LA

and real estate sales for First Management Inc in Knoxville, TN. Additionally, Strickland has maintained the self-appointed Chief Operations Officer title for the Strickland Family, where she performs a myriad of duties, to include: mother, taxi driver, logistics coordinator, supervisor of household sanitation, chef, former PTO president, and Vacation Bible School Director, to name a few. As the Better Hometown Blackshear Manager, Strickland reestablished the Main Street program by integrating new events and creating a passion within the community to continue to improve Blackshear.

Darius Williams

*Professional Learning Specialist, Apple
Atlanta, Fulton County*

Darius J. Williams is a native of Warrenton, GA, where he graduated from Warren County Schools in 2011. There, he discovered his love of the arts as a proud captain of the Marching Band and organizer of the community's HOPE and PRIDE Gospel Explosion, which brought together members of the CSRA community annually.

Darius's thirst for knowledge led him to Morehouse College, where he sang in the world-renowned Morehouse College Glee Club as he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Early Childhood Education. He then pursued a Master of Education in Learning, Design, and Technology from the University of Georgia.

Having dedicated his life to the field of education, Darius has served as an elementary school teacher in Fulton County and an Education Specialist at Kennesaw State University. He now serves as a Worldwide Education Specialist at Apple, leading his organization's mission to inspire 1.4 million educators across the globe annually.

As a result of his advocacy for equity in education and commitment to providing the youth of his city with high-quality learning experiences, Darius has been named to the prestigious LEAD Atlanta Class of 2024.

His creative talents now find expression through the Focused Brand, his business focusing on photography, graphic design, and book publishing. He has authored three children's books: "DJ's Favorite Day!" "Twinkle, Little Star!" and his newest book, "DJ Stands on Business."

Darius is grateful for the strong foundation he received as a kid growing up in rural Georgia with limited resources but an endless opportunity to express creativity in many ways. For these reasons, he continuously strives to be a beacon of leadership, an advocate for instructional technology, and a champion for creative expression through the arts.

Dr. Kimberly Sellars-Bates

*KSTB Enterprises
Atlanta, Fulton County*

I am a dedicated and results-driven professional with extensive expertise in grant writing, prospect research, and strategic fundraising. I have a proven track record of successfully securing funding from individuals, foundations, and corporations to support a diverse array of programs, including HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development), CDBG (Community Development Block Grant), Choice

Neighborhood Initiatives, CHDO (Community Housing Development Organization), HOPE VI, CDC (Community Development Corporations), and various community and educational initiatives. I excel in evaluating grant proposals to ensure their quality, feasibility, and alignment with funding priorities, maximizing their impact on organizational missions and objectives. My skills in comprehensive data mapping and research enable me to identify philanthropic opportunities and build strong relationships with key stakeholders. I am adept at developing and implementing strategic plans that drive organizational growth and impact.

With strong leadership abilities, I have experience training boards, corporate governance teams, development staff, and supervising support teams and volunteers. I am proud of my 100% success rate in securing nonprofit status and an 85% success rate in obtaining private, city, county, state, and federal grants.

Panel 2

Amy Gresens

*Spruill Center for the Arts
Dunwoody, DeKalb County*

Amy Gresens is an Atlanta-based artist who has spent the last 25 years at the Spruill Center for the Arts. She first came to Spruill as a student in the jewelry & metalsmithing department and transitioned to instructor in 2010. At the same time, Amy launched her own jewelry design business, element47. Prior to that, she spent over 15 years in marketing & advertising. In 2017, Amy brought her marketing experience to Spruill and joined the staff full-time as Marketing Director. She managed all of Spruill's marketing, communications, social media and fundraising events in this role. In 2021 she transitioned into the role of Education Director and helped oversee the 8,300 square foot facility expansion which led to 7 new classrooms and an event studio space. Today, Amy works with over 80 instructors to offer 250+ classes every quarter to our growing arts community.

Courtney Heath

*Andrew College
Cuthbert, Randolph County*

Courtney Heath is the Coordinator of Development at Andrew College in Cuthbert, Georgia. She is an Andrew College alumna and has worked in the Development Office there since 2014. This is her first time serving as a panelist for the GCA, and she looks forward to seeing how others are cultivating the Arts in their communities and learning from this process.

David Tahere

*John Hamm Performing Arts Series at Covenant College
Lookout Mountain, Walker County*

David Tahere has been on the Music Faculty at Covenant College since 2012. His areas of interest include vocal pedagogy, vocal literature, directing, and Māori instruments. He has performed with the

Indiana University Opera Theatre, Chattanooga Symphony, Opera Tennessee, and Delaware Valley Opera Company. He was a finalist in the Joy in Singing International Art Song Competition. He has a BM from Lee University, MM from Temple University, and DM from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.

Jillian Baxter

Albany State University

Albany, Dougherty County

Dr. Jillian Baxter is Chair of Arts and Humanities and Associate Professor of Music at Albany State University. Founded in 1903, Albany State University continues to provide leadership in academic excellence, social change, and economic impact. A nationally top-ranked HBCU, ASU serves an increasingly diverse student body and community by offering a uniquely comprehensive array of programs, from associate to graduate degrees.

Panel 3

Jim Rutland

RiverCenter

Columbus, Muscogee County

Jim has been with RiverCenter for twenty years and has served in various capacities including education programming, event management, box office supervision, and marketing. He is currently RiverCenter's programming director, a position he has held since 2010. His responsibilities include contract negotiation and budgeting for approximately 25 performances presented by RiverCenter each season. Jim also works with external promoters both local and national on scheduling, contracting, and coordinating their events. Jim is active with the Georgia Presenters Network and was the lead staff member for the first Georgia Presents! regional showcase and conference held at RiverCenter in 2022. When RiverCenter opened in 2002 Jim returned to his hometown, Columbus, GA, to join the staff. Prior to that he spent 8 years touring nationally and internationally as a singer with an a cappella quintet based in New York City. Tour management and agent interaction were also among his duties as a member of the group. Jim is an arts generalist with interests that extend to literature, visual arts, architecture, and other genres.

Julia Curiel

Averitt Center for the Arts

Statesboro, Bulloch County

Julia Curiel has over a decade of administration leadership experience and education to date, serving the community through administrative roles at leading organizations in which she has worked to develop pilot programs, and plan and manage large-scale projects, including nationally recognized art fairs, education workshops and outreach programming. She believes the arts to be catalysts for positive social change, and is grateful for the personal impact they have had on her life.

A native of Kentucky, Julia attended Lexington Catholic High School and graduated with highest honors from the School for the Creative and Performing Arts, specializing in vocal performance, in Lexington, KY. While in school, she studied voice and piano with nationally-renowned vocalists Sue Henry and Jacqueline Roberts. After attending two semesters at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ, Julia returned home to Kentucky to earn a Bachelor of Arts in Arts Administration at the University of Kentucky, graduating cum laude in 2006. During school, Julia interned at Lexington's respected live music hall, The Dame, and booked artists such as Jolie Holland and other national talent for shows. She helped to publicize and organize the shows at The Dame throughout an entire summer. In addition, she worked at The Headley-Whitney Museum, giving tours of Mr. Headley's famous jewelry design collection and working the museum admissions desk.

In her personal life, Julia was the lead singer for several local bands and music projects with other local musicians, and continued to write music and poetry. She self-published a poetry chapbook while still in college as well as a CD of original electronic music years later. She performed multi-media shows incorporating original music, music performance, and poetry at art exhibition openings, nightclubs and other venues throughout the years.

Following graduation, Julia worked as Communications Intern in the Marketing Department at Actors Theatre of Louisville for one year, before accepting a position at The Lexington Art League as Program Coordinator. While there, she was promoted to Program Manager, and oversaw coordination and implementation of the annual award-winning Woodland Art Fair and Francisco's Farm Arts Festival, as well as serving to coordinate and execute several pilot initiatives with community partners from around the state, such as the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association and the Department of Veteran Affairs. She built a thriving internship program and a successful volunteer program to aid in execution of events, community engagement and education programs. Also, Julia assisted with organizing and aided in executing the Kentucky Women Writers Conference in 2007 and 2008.

While working at The Lexington Art League, Julia passionately strove to make the arts accessible to everyone in the community. Through programs with at-risk youth and adults, she helped to diversify the audience that came through the front doors and aided in educating those in visual art who would not otherwise have been able to learn about it. Her excitement for her work garnered her an invitation to join the Board of Directors for citizensCREATE!, a non-profit dedicated to providing collaborative visual arts opportunities to the public, whereupon adult citizens added their unique voices to public works of art while passing by the creative site in pursuit of their daily lives.

After 5 years at the Lexington Art League, Julia accepted a promotional opportunity with the Kentucky Department of Environmental Protection and moved to the Highlands of Louisville, KY to partake in the arts scene there. She was deeply inspired by the creative visions of the thriving artists living in her neighborhood, who foresaw a deeply profound future for humanity. She attended spoken word, art and music shows, and saw theater that changed her perception of what was possible in the world. After accepting her dream job to work as Senior Event Manager at the Kentucky International Convention Center in downtown Louisville, she worked to produce conferences, festivals, galas, trade shows and other events with her capable and highly productive team members.

While working for the Kentucky Cabinet for Arts, Tourism and Heritage, Julia was diagnosed and treated for an illness that impeded her ability to work. After two and a half years at the job, she left Kentucky in 2017 to live with her family in South Carolina. While there, she volunteered with the Pawleys Island Music and Arts Festival by helping to promote and execute the annual Garden Party; conducted art

exhibition tours at Brookgreen Gardens; sang in the church choir; walked dogs at the animal shelter; and, worked full-time as the Receptionist at a skilled nursing facility.

After two years of living peacefully on the Coast, Julia experienced more medical difficulties upon ending a course of treatment under a doctor's supervision. As a result, she was brought to Statesboro, GA for intensive treatment for over a year. After successfully graduating from her treatment program, she accepted the position of Recovery Coach at Freedom Through Recovery, the Recovery Community Organization in Statesboro, GA. In addition to providing peer support for those in recovery in an effort to combat the opioid overdose epidemic, she works part-time at the Averitt Center for the Arts, participates in productions by singing and performing in ensembles and small roles, and attends recovery advocacy events around the state.

Today, Julia is grateful to be working to combat stigma for those living with mental health and substance use disorders, as well as spearheading visual art programs at Freedom Through Recovery in partnership with Averitt Center for the Arts to make art accessible for everyone, particularly those in the recovery community. She firmly believes that the arts give voice to our experiences to make us stronger, more compassionate, more authentic versions of ourselves as human beings. Today, Julia believes God led her through the fire so that she could attest to the fact that the vision she saw years ago, communicated to her through the many talented writers and artists she has met, could be fully realized: a new world is not only possible, but here. We need only have the faith to see it through the new, God-given eyes provided us.

Kathleen Ewing (Peters)

South Georgia Ballet

Thomasville, Thomas County

Kathleen Ewing is originally from Valdosta, Georgia where she studied ballet, modern, and jazz dance for 15 years, under the direction of Linda C. Chase at Dance Arts, Inc. Kathleen began demonstrating and teaching at an early age and quickly found an interest in sharing her love of dance. Kathleen graduated from Florida State University with her B.F.A in Dance in 2016. While attending Florida State, Kathleen studied abroad in Paris, France, attended Perry Mansfield Performing Arts Intensive on scholarship, continued teaching, and became interested in Arts Administration. She interned at the American Dance Festival and later returned as summer staff for two summers working in hospitality, event planning, and operations for the ADF School. Kathleen has a passion for education, engagement, and development in the arts. Kathleen received an arts advocacy award from the Florida Department of Cultural Affairs in Spring 2019 due to her work during graduate school. She most recently received her M.A in Arts Administration from Florida State University in May 2019.

Marsha Barsky

Kennesaw State University

Kennesaw, Cobb County

Marsha Barsky is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Dance at KSU. She has 20 years of experience fostering and implementing creative and educational programs for both the public and private sectors. She is a lifelong learner, who continues to hone her craft by engaging widely with contemporary approaches to dance, somatics, and holistic wellness for dancers and non-dancers. She

brings insights from her ongoing research to awaken creative well-being and enliven mindful movement practices.

From 2008-2018, she served as director and choreographer for Nashville-based Company Rose. The company presented works at the Frist Art Museum and performed in venues throughout the Southeastern region. In 2019, she received a Tennessee Arts Commission Individual Fellowship Award for her choreography. As a dancer, she has performed with the Desert Dance Theatre and Shelter Repertory Dance Theatre and in works by Isadora Duncan, Stefanie Batton-Bland, Sean Curren, Bill Evans Pat Graney, Gabriel Masson, Ana Baer, Kim Neal Nofsinger, Ivan Pulinkala and Katherine Duke.

Previously, Marsha was an Associate Professor and Director of Dance at Middle Tennessee State University, where she developed Tennessee's first bachelor's degree in Dance, and prior to that, she was the Director of the Vanderbilt University Dance Program. She has taught at numerous venues, festivals, and conferences throughout the US, and in Canada, France, Switzerland, and Spain. In 2017, she was named Foreign Expert in Dance at Chengdu University, China, and in May 2020 she served as a visiting scholar at the Kroeger College of Public Affairs at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.

Marsha received her BFA in Dance from Arizona State University and her MFA in Performance, Choreography, and Somatics from the University of Colorado at Boulder. In 2002, she was certified at the Shambhavi Ananda Eldorado yoga teacher training in Boulder, Colorado. In 2011, she graduated from the North Carolina Alexander Technique Program (under the direction of Robin Gilmore), and in 2019 she completed her Gyrokinesis certification in Munster, Germany.

Panel 4

Joseph Crawford

South Arts

Atlanta, Fulton County

Joseph Crawford, Assistant Director of Programs at South Arts, is a native of Union Springs, Alabama. After falling in love with theatre at a young age he participated in as many community theatre productions as possible before graduating high school. Joseph attended Troy University where he got his Bachelor of Science in Communications/Theatre. On top of Theatre and Performing Arts, Joseph is an accomplished sculptor artist and barista. For the past few years, he has worked at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival as the Head of Stage Operations and as a freelance Actor and Lighting Designer working at theatres all across the US.

Monica Mitchell

Cordele Main Street

Cordele, Crisp County

Monica Rentfrow is approaching 20 years as the Director of Downtown Cordele/Cordele Main Street. The Cordele Main Street Program and Downtown Development Authority work as two organizations in one. Our organization is committed to the economic development, historic preservation, and beautification of Cordele's downtown.

Sasikala Penumarthy

*Academy of Kuchipudi Dance
Suwanee, Gwinnett County*

Sasikala (Say-SEE-ka-lah) Penumarthy is one of the foremost practitioners of classical Indian Kuchipudi dance in the world. Sasikala traveled extensively and performed her craft all over India, America, Canada, Europe, and Russia. Sasikala established a non-profit organization, Academy of Kuchipudi Dance in Atlanta, and continues her pursuits by training her own students, performing, and producing dance dramas, such as Swapna Vijayam (adaptation of Nutcracker into Kuchipudi Style of Dance.)

Shannon Evans

*GEM Theatre
Calhoun, Gordon County*

Shannon Evans is the Communications Manager at The GEM Theatre. The GEM Theatre was established in a former furniture warehouse and mercantile building in downtown Calhoun in 1929 and expanded to its current size in 1937 when it partnered with the Alabama-based Martin Theatre chain. The theatre was Calhoun's only movie house until it closed in the late 1970's. Many throughout the community still endearingly refer to The GEM as the "old GEM-Martin Theatre" or "old Martin Theatre."

Shelton Land

*Douglass Theatre
Macon, Bibb County*

As the Douglass Theatre presses forward into a new horizon, The Friends of the Douglass Theatre Board of Directors are pleased to announce that Dr. Shelton Land, PhD has been named the new Executive Director. With more than 15-years of leadership experience in the nonprofit and performing arts fields, Dr. Land brings his purpose-driven work ethic and vision to his role at the Douglass Theatre. A native of Virginia, Dr. Land earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Mass Communication from Norfolk State University (NSU), a Master of Social Work Degree from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), and a PhD in Public Policy & Administration with a concentration in Nonprofit Leadership and Management from Walden University.

Before joining the Douglass Theatre, Dr. Land served as Vice President of Education with United Way of Central Georgia (UWCG) and was responsible for leading the organization's birth-through-eight educational initiatives across 14-counties, with Macon-Bibb as one of the primary counties. During his tenure, he helped build and lead Read United, a key initiative that supports students with grade-level reading challenges. He increased this initiative to currently serve six school districts within UWCG's service area. He also helped launch and advance the AARP Foundation's Experience Corps intergenerational tutoring program in Central Georgia. Dr. Land is a Leadership Macon alumnus and has served as Artistic Director with the annual Atlanta Black Theatre Festival.

He has received various awards and accolades for his leadership and service in the nonprofit and theatre sector. He credits his natural talent of making people laugh and his spiritual faith with helping him thrive as a leader while utilizing art as an educational tool to serve and help advance the community.

Taylor Smith

City of Thomaston

Thomaston, Upson County

Taylor Smith, a native of Thomaston, has been serving as the Economic Development Director for his hometown since June of 2021. After volunteering with the local Thomaston Main Street Program in High School, Taylor found his passions lied in the ability to impact people's lives through positive change and growth. Upon graduating high school, Taylor attended Gordon State College and worked in the private sector for several years. Taylor returned to school in 2015 and earned a B.B.A. in Management & Marketing from the University of West Georgia in 2018. In 2021, Taylor completed his Master's in Public Administration (MPA), from his Alma Mater West Georgia. After serving with the Department of Planning and Urban Development in Monroe, Louisiana, Taylor had the opportunity to return to Thomaston and serve the community that served him throughout his youth. In his capacity, Taylor directs the Thomaston Main Street Program, Downtown Development Authority, Historic Preservation Commission, and all City of Thomaston Events. Taylor also oversees national chain recruitment, neighborhood revitalization, and housing initiatives within the city. Taylor serves on the Board of Directors for the Georgia Downtown Association, University of West Georgia Alumni Association, and Southern Crescent Technical College Foundation Board. Taylor lives in Silvertown with his fiancé, Jennifer Nguyen and their three dogs.

Panel 5

Charles Scavullo

The Imperial Theatre

Augusta, Richmond County

Chareles Scavuloo is Executive Director of The Imperial Theatre in Augusta, Georgia. The theatre's mission is "to enrich our community and promote cultural growth by facilitating the best artistic experiences and by fostering collaborative partnerships in the Augusta region."

Esohe Galbreath

African Diaspora Art Museum of Atlanta

Atlanta, Fulton County

Esohe Galbreath is the founder and principal of Sohé Solutions, where she supports small businesses and creatives of accounting, finance, and organization.

Esohe completed her collegiate studies in Electrical Engineering at the University of Kentucky. In 2004, she began her career at UPS and held management roles in Distribution Solutions, Implementations, Operations, Engineering, and Transportation Solutions, and in her free time assisted small businesses

with planning, financial documentation, and tax preparation. In 2012, Esohe merged her corporate experience with her passion for the arts and working with creatives to form Sohé Solutions – Boutique Small Business Consulting.

In early 2015, Esohe decided to dedicate 100% of her time to her entrepreneurial endeavors. Through consulting clients, Esohe discovered a love and passion for working with creatives, artists, and visionaries and was inspired to co-found Urban Art Expression – a company dedicated to encouraging individual art expression and building the individual art experience; ARTiculate ATL – an annual art social featuring 30+ artists with 1,000 art enthusiast attendees; and UAE Youth Artists Program – a 501c3 non-profit bridging the exposure gap of some of Atlanta’s most visually talented youth.

As Esohe continues to immerse herself in Atlanta’s rising artist economy, she recently served as President of the Castleberry Hill Neighborhood Association and finds inspiration living in the historic arts district with her husband George. Esohe is a New Leaders Council (NLC) 2016 Fellow and served as 2018-2020 Co-Director for NLC-Atlanta. She also serves as treasurer for College AIM and on the board for the African Diaspora Art Museum of Atlanta (ADAMA.) Esohe and George are members of the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Kristin Norton Green

Canton Theatre

Canton, Cherokee County

Kristin Norton Green has served as the City of Canton’s Theatre Events and Facilities Director since 2019. She supports the Canton Cultural Arts Commission (CCAC) as Staff Liaison, and facilitated the development of the Canton’s Public Art Master Plan. In 2022, Atlanta Regional Commission named her as an Arts Leader of Metro Atlanta.

Rachelle Norton

Conyers Rockdale Council for the Arts

Conyers, Rockdale County

Rachelle Norton is a member of Conyers Rockdale Council for the Arts. Their mission is to connect neighbors, cultivate artistic expression, and celebrate our community’s stories through the power of creativity and the arts.

Tami Mayhugh

Historic Ritz Theatre

Toccoa, Stephens County

Tami is the General Manager of the Historic Ritz Theatre. Her goal is to continue to elevate the experience offered by the Ritz. High-quality. Great diversity. It's all here, and Tami is looking forward to promoting this year's event schedule. Tami graduated from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga with a degree in Journalism and Public Relations.

Vickie Spivey

The Plaza Arts Center

Eatonton, Putnam County

Vickie Spivey is the Director of Programming and Theater Productions at The Plaza Arts Center. Her career and personal interests have always circled the non-profit, fine art, and performing arts world. She would say that her customer service, creative, technical, and programming talents were honed while working for top-rated service-centric companies like Blackbaud and The Ritz Carlton.

Vickie is a native of Eatonton, GA, attended Putnam County Schools, and holds a BS in Exercise Science/Kinesiology and Minor in Communications from Georgia College and State University. Her roots are local, but she enjoys traveling and spending time with her family and friends. Her love for the Arts continues to grow as she is influenced by the richness and depth of artistic talent that lives here in the Lake Country of Georgia.

Panel 6**Hattie Diaz**

City of Sugar Hill

Sugar Hill, Gwinnett County

As the Eagle Theatre and Events Manager for the City of Sugar Hill, I have the privilege of curating and overseeing a wide range of community-driven arts and cultural programming. From large-scale events like the annual Sugar Rush Arts Festival to intimate gatherings such as Paint and Sip nights, my goal is to foster connection, creativity, and celebration through the arts.

One of the highlights of my work is producing our city's three-day Broad St. Film Festival, a growing event that celebrates filmmakers from all walks of life. This festival is particularly meaningful as it not only showcases diverse storytelling but also provides a scholarship and an additional monetary prize to support emerging talent.

I truly love my job and the people I have the opportunity to engage with every day. Helping grow our creative community and create lasting memories for our residents is both a joy and an incredible honor.

Jerry G. White

Teaching Artist

Atlanta, Fulton County

An Author, Music Producer, Percussionist, Performer, Storyteller and Teaching Artist, Jerry G. White fuses all of those elements into his passion and love for performing and being an arts educator. His debut bilingual children's book Anansi and the colorful kente cloth Illustrated by Courtney Strickland was published by 1010 Publishing can be found on 1010publishing.com and Amazon.com. He is a Cultural Program Coordinator with The Office of Culture and Community at The Lovett School in Atlanta.

He is a Teaching Artist with the Teaching Museum of the Fulton County School System. He is listed on the Georgia Council of the Arts Teaching Artists Registry. He is excited to be working on new music with

Edrinna Marie. You can find their Ep Out the Box Streaming now including Apple Music iTunes, Spotify, and YouTube. You can find him performing throughout the Atlanta metro area with his performance entity A Performance Method. His beloved phrase and mantra is “Bring the words to life!”

Lawrence Larry Dooley

Columbus State University

Columbus, Muscogee County

Dr. Larry Dooley is Chair and Professor of Theatre and Dance at Columbus State University. He previously taught at Weber State University (Ogden, Utah) and Northwestern University (Evanston, Illinois). He holds a Ph.D. in Theatre History, Literature and Criticism from Indiana University--Bloomington, a MA from the University of South Carolina, an M.Div. from the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, and a BA from Newberry College. In addition to teaching Theatre History, Playwriting, Acting, and other courses at CSU, Larry often directs in the theatre season and serves as the Managing Director of Columbus State's Summer Repertory Theatre.

Mandy Underwood

Jenkins County Development Authority

Millen, Jenkins County

Mandy Underwood has served as the Executive Director of the Jenkins County Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce since June 2013. Prior to this role, she led the Jenkins County Family Enrichment Center, Inc. as Executive Director for four years, where she worked to strengthen local families and expand community services.

Mandy earned her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting from Georgia Southern University. Her professional background includes 12 years as a Senior Accountant with Lisa M. Stone, CPA, PC in Rincon, Georgia, where she developed a strong foundation in financial management and organizational leadership.

Deeply committed to her community, Mandy is actively involved in numerous civic and service organizations. She is a longtime member of Millen Baptist Church (27 years), the Millen Woman's Club (16 years), Millen Rotary Club (15 years), and the Jenkins County Athletic Booster Club (12 years). Her leadership includes service as past president of the Millen Rotary Club, treasurer of the Woman's Club for 12 years, and a 14-year tenure on the Children's Committee at Millen Baptist Church.

Currently, Mandy serves on several boards and councils, including Millen Rotary Club (Board Member, 12 years); Jenkins County Athletic Booster Club (Treasurer, 12 years); CSRA Economic Opportunity Authority (Board Member, 2 years); Augusta Regional Development Alliance (Chairman, 5 years); Jenkins County 4-H Council (1 year); Jenkins County High School Improvement Team (2 years) and Jenkins County Council of Churches (Treasurer, 10 years).

Mandy is married to Bryan Underwood, and they are proud parents to two sons, Garrison (25) and Gavin (20). Her dedication to economic growth, community development, and civic engagement continues to make a lasting impact on Jenkins County.

Lisa Nicole Chillemi*Festival Hall Inc**Greensboro, Greene County*

Nicole Chillemi joined Festival Hall as its Executive Director in December 2018. A Greensboro native, Nicole is passionate about Festival Hall's mission and works diligently to preserve the building, plan an exceptional variety of programming, and engage with community leaders.

Prior to Festival Hall, Nicole worked with the city's Main Street Program and Downtown Development Authority as events coordinator. Nicole has been instrumental in helping bring to life annual festivals such as the Southland Jubilee and continually promotes downtown Greensboro businesses. Since 2001, Nicole has performed professionally throughout the southeast as a jazz vocalist. She has recorded two albums produced by Grammy-nominated singer songwriter Shawn Mullins, and continues to perform on occasion.

Nicole holds a B.A. in Vocal Performance from Emory University in Atlanta Georgia.

Olethia Calhoun*Houston County School District**Perry, Houston County*

Olethia Calhoun is the Director of Gifted Education and the Fine Arts Coordinator in Houston County, Georgia. With over 24 years of experience in education, she has positively impacted more than 30,000 students through her work in gifted education, fine arts, and various special programs. Olethia earned her undergraduate degree from Clark Atlanta University, a Master's degree from Georgia State University, and a Specialist degree from Columbus State University. She is currently a doctoral candidate at Liberty University.

Passionate about lifelong learning, Olethia encourages others to pursue continuous education. She strives to inspire a holistic approach to educating children by connecting them with the arts, athletics, community involvement, and more. Olethia enjoys spending time with her family, sharing laughter, and creating new memories when she's not focused on education.