

Revise This!

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WILKES UNIVERSITY CREATIVE WRITING NEWSLETTER

February 2020

January 2020 Residency Scholarship Recipients

The Maslow Family Graduate Creative Writing Program presented three scholarships to five students during the closing residency banquet on January 10, 2020.

The Wilkes University Faculty and Alumni Scholarship was awarded to Frances Reilly of Beacon, N.Y. She is currently working on her creative nonfiction thesis with memoirist Beverly Donofrio.



January 2020 Scholarship Awards. Left to right: Frances Reilly; Monique Franz; Jasmine

The Faculty and Alumni Scholarship is

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awarded annually to one or more incoming students at the M.A.

**Griffin; Justin Sciandra; and Taylor Polites
(MFA '10 and Wilkes Creative Writing faculty member)**

level of the Wilkes creative writing program based on financial need and a writing sample submitted as part of the application materials. The scholarship recipient(s) will be determined by a three-member faculty committee who will recommend the student(s) to the program director. This scholarship was started to offer a scholarship opportunity to students who are new to the program and was funded through tax-deductible gifts from faculty and alumni.

The Bergman Family Foundation Scholarship was awarded to both Jasmine Griffin of Amelia, OH, and Justin Sciandra of Exeter, Pa.

Griffin completed her master of arts fiction thesis with Lenore Hart. Sciandra is currently working on his poetry thesis with Phil Brady.

The Bergman Family Foundation Award is awarded annually to students who demonstrate great need and ability. Students may nominate themselves for this award by writing a letter to the Bergman family when called for by the program director.



Hiscox Scholarship: Left to right: Harry Hiscox; Monique Franz; Juliette Dunn; and Beverly Hiscox

The Beverly Hiscox Scholarship was awarded to both Juliette Dunn of King of Prussia, Pa., and Monique Franz of Rochester, N.Y.

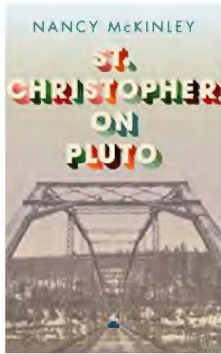
Dunn is working on her playwriting thesis with Juanita

Rockwell, while Franz is working on her fiction thesis with Taylor Polites.

The Beverly Hiscox Scholarship is awarded annually to a non-traditional student who is returning to school while supporting a family. The award is based upon need and demonstrated writing talent. It is given in honor of Beverly Hiscox, a Wilkes University Board of Trustees member and long-time supporter of our program. Awarded annually, faculty members nominate students who are already in the Creative Writing program.

We offer our condolences to the Hiscox family over the passing of David Hiscox, son of Beverly and Harry Hiscox. Donations in memory of David can be made at <https://www.donationline.com/multiplemyelomaresearch/>

An Interview with Founding Faculty Member Nancy McKinley



Read the [News@Wilkes story](#) about our very own Nancy McKinley, her career at Wilkes University and the ways she makes time to write.

[Read More →](#)

Year of the Vote



To celebrate the Year of the Vote, the Sordoni Art Gallery will bring art and activism to the Wilkes community. Facilitated by alum Karley Stasko, M.F.A. '19, an Open Mic night will honor the literary arts. All writers, actors, and audiences are invited. The event will be held on the last Thursday of each month beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Sordoni Art Gallery in the Karembeles Media Center. The first Open Mic event will be held on February 27.

The Sordoni Art Gallery staff will provide some event-themed texts for those who prefer oral interpretation. There is a 10-minute maximum time limit for all readings.

[More information→](#)

Marlon James to Host Literary Podcast

Marlon James, M.A.'06 and winner of several awards, including The Man Booker Prize, is hosting a new podcast with his editor, Jake Morrissey. The podcast is titled “Marlon and Jake Read Dead People.”

[More information \(via the New York Times\) →](#)

Spring Creative Writing Community Workshops

The Maslow Family Graduate Creative Writing Program will be offering two Community Workshops to interested community participants in the spring. Both workshops will be offered through the Wilkes University Center of Continued Learning, and each workshop series is \$65.

Nonfiction Essentials from Personal Essays to Book Reviewing

This workshop will help adult writers of any age develop ways to write themselves as characters in their own personal essays, craft characters closest to the writer, and promote works the writer admires (including their own work) through review writing. This workshop will help writers develop an understanding of generating and revising new work.

Meetings: Wednesdays – 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 and May 6

Instructor: Sara Pisak

[Register](#)

Intro to Screenwriting

This six-week workshop for adults of any age will explore writing for the big screen, with an introduction to the tools and techniques screenwriters use to tell effective stories. We'll cover screenplay genre, format and structure. Students will write a short or begin a feature-length screenplay. The workshop will end with a table read of each writer's work during the final session.

Meetings: Thursdays – 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 and May 7

Instructor: Kelly Clisham

[Register](#)

Announcements

Faculty

- **Jean Klein** recently published three blog posts on her publishing site that reference material by Wilkes faculty and alums recently published by *Blue Moon Plays*.
 - The New Role of Poetry in Contemporary Theatre:
 - <https://havescripts.com/verse-on-stage-poets-fight-back/>
 - <https://havescripts.com/what-in-the-heck-is-a-poem-play/>
 - The need for Playwrights to write diverse casts rather than relying on color-blind casting to create diversity on stage:
 - <https://havescripts.com/crossing-the-racial-divide-on-the-great-white-way/>
- **David Poyer** noted that the new *Northern Appalachia Review* is accepting submissions for its first issue. He serves on its advisory board. Deadline is April 1. (No, this is not an April Fool's joke.) Guidelines below:
 - <https://northernappalachiareview.wpcomstaging.com/home/submissions/>

Alumni

- **Amye Archer**, M.F.A.'11, will host a reading of her new book, *If I Don't Make It, I Love You: Survivors in the Aftermath of School Shootings*, and a Q&A with parents and survivors from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, to commemorate the anniversary of the shooting. Amye will also be presenting a panel at AWP 2020 titled "Documenting Trauma Narratives: Survivors in the Aftermath of Gun Violence."
- **Austin Bennett**, M.F.A.'15, is the recipient of a \$100,000 National Endowment for the Humanities Community College Initiatives Grant (2019) to strengthen the humanities within the general education core at Montana State University Billings City College. His 2015 internship with Etruscan Press was critical in providing him with the tools and courage to pursue grant writing. Austen also Reviewed: 2019 High Plains Book Award non-fiction award winner, *An African in Imperial London: The Indomitable Life of A.B.C. Merriman-Labor* by Danell Jones, for the *Billings Gazette*, October 2, Print. And finally, Bennett presented "Identities in Flux: The Fiction of Alistair MacLeod" (presentation), Fall 2019 International Language Week Conference, Billings, MT; and "The Book Review: Where Writers, Critics, and Readers Unite" (panel), Fall 2019 Montana Book Festival, Missoula, MT.
- **Lauren Carey**, M.F.A.'11, was nominated for the Outstanding Adjunct Teaching Award at the University of North Florida as a member of the English Department and Writing Program faculty. The award winner(s) will be announced at the Spring Convocation in April 2020.
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Craig Czury, M.F.A.'18, received a 2020 Fulbright Fellowship to Chile. His new book, *Postcards & Ancient Texts*, is forthcoming from FootHills Publishing this spring.

- **Gerald Gurka**, M.F.A.'07, wrote and directed his latest Christmas play, *Two Babies in a Manger*, performed on Christmas Eve in 2019 at St. John the Baptist Church, Larksville, PA. He is currently writing and casting a new Easter play, *Witness Portraits of the Passion*, to be presented on Friday, April 3, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. at St. John the Baptist Church, Larksville, PA. Gurka is nearing completion on a Young Adult novel for Northampton House Press entitled *Freddie Foodmore's Menu of Unsavory Events*.
- **Mark Levy**, M.A.'08 has published the humorous essays he had written and broadcast on the public radio show, *Weekend Radio*. The set of essays appeared in *Trophy Envy* and *They're Only Words*, available on his web site, www.trophyenvy.net and from Amazon respectively at:
 - <https://www.amazon.com/Trophy-Heard-Public-Radio-Weekend/dp/1717235751/>
 - <https://www.amazon.com/Theyre-Only-Words-Public-Weekend-ebook/dp/B081LJB521/>
- **Lori A. May**, M.F.A.'13, has a new lyric essay published in the latest issue of *untethered*. She was a featured reader during the January 2020 launch party in Toronto for *untethered*. Lori also read during the recent Seattle Lit Crawl series and will make an appearance at the Bloomsbury booth during AWP20 in San Antonio. She has an upcoming craft article in *The Write Life*, and a travel piece forthcoming in *The Seattle Times*.
- **Tara Marta**, M.A.'18, hosted a discussion at Lackawanna College about her upcoming debut novel, *Look Back to Yesterday*, and her path to becoming a writer.
- **Josh Penzone**, M.A.'13, had a story collection, *The Court of Vintage Woods*, published by Brown Posey Press.
- **Sara Pisak**, M.A.'19, reviewed Kai Coggin's poetry collection, *Wingspan* which appeared in the December issue of *Glass Poetry*. Sara's list of the top five books she read in 2019 was featured in *The Poetry Question's* "Top Five" on January 20, 2020. Two of Sara's poems, "Pulse of the Nation" and "Mercury," are slated to be published this spring in the *Northeast Poetry Review*.
- **Ronnie K. Stephens**, M.F.A.'18, wrote a [guest blog for Dyslexia Awareness Month](#) published by *Teen Librarian Toolbox*, a School Library Journal blog. He also recently presented an essay, "Professional Distance: Maintaining an Active Presence in Creative Disciplines as a Community College Professor," at the Midwest Modern Language Association Conference. In March, he will present "Who Put This Song On?: How Playing it Safe Norms the Conservative White Experience" at the Conference for College Teachers of English and "Ebony Stewart: Transforming Lived Experiences into Award-Winning Literature" at the Texas College

English Association Conference. In December 2019, Stephens reviewed *How We Fight for Our Lives* for *Hippocampus Magazine*, as well as several titles for *The Poetry Question*.

🌟 **Douglas James Troxell**, M.A.'13, is tickled pink to announce that his debut novel, *Trumptopia! The United States of Walmart*, will be released in March 2020. This dystopian comedy started as one of his thesis projects during his time at Wilkes.

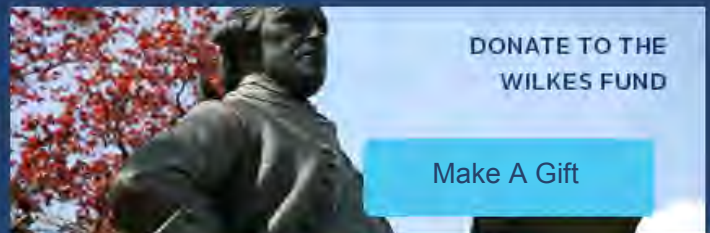
Current Students

🌟 **Juliette Dunn** wrote a play called *The Puzzle*. The play is being developed by Shiner and Rowe in partnership with National Disability Theater. [More information.](#)

🌟 **Jason Miller** has been accepted to Binghamton University's English Literature Ph.D. program starting in the fall.

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