

SPRING 2023

# FORUM

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MID-SOUTH  
SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.



# *Mid-South Sociological Association, Inc.*

## *Organizational Statement*

The Mid-South Sociological Association, Inc. (MSSA, Inc.), founded in 1975, is a 501-C-(3) non-profit organization providing both professional support to, and a forum for sociologists who teach, conduct research and reside in the Mid-South region of the US. Through its publications, annual conference, academic support and collegial networks, MSSA, Inc. promotes the advancement of sociological research, the diffusion of knowledge, innovative service and teaching. From its inception, MSSA, Inc. has been and continues to be committed to mentoring and enabling the growth of the next generation of sociologists in the value of high-quality research and engagement, and ethical, professional service.



## *MSSA, Inc. Inclusion Statement*

The Mid-South Sociological Association Inc. embraces diversity and promotes inclusion by recruiting, including, and valuing people of all races, genders and gender identities, sexualities, ethnicities, religions, economic and employment statuses, abilities, and other dimensions. The MSSA celebrates all expressions of diversity and identity and strives to provide an environment conducive to free expression of ideas without fear of judgment in any way. Moreover, the MSSA does not tolerate any action from any member or conference participant that encourages or promotes hatred and/or intolerance in any form. Further, to the extent that the Board determines that it is not detrimental to the best interests (financial and otherwise) of the association, the MSSA will use the economic power of the annual conferences and other activities to select locations and enter into agreements with businesses that have policies and practices that reflect the values of the MSSA.

# Introducing this edition, and an invitation to New Orleans!

Written by: Andrew Tatch

Welcome to the Spring 2023 edition of Forum, the official bi-annual newsletter of the Mid-South Sociological Association, Inc! I am running a bit behind this year on the newsletter, but as the saying goes, better late than never. In the Spring, I like to use the Forum as a way to recap the recent conference, and this is no exception. We had a great time in Nashville, and I think there was a lot to like and to be encouraged about from the conference. One of the things I thought was interesting was the high turnout we had of undergraduate work. Although we certainly need an increased and sustained membership of graduate students and faculty, several of us expressed optimism that the undergraduate students we are inviting now might stay with our organization and continue to contribute for years to come. In my few years of bringing undergraduate students with me, there is a consensus that Mid-South remains a great place for first time presenters and those who are interested in a more friendly and collegial environment than is often the case at other conferences. I am proud to be involved with an organization with that reputation, and I am so proud of our work in mentoring undergraduate and graduate students.

Another thing that I am really excited about, personally, are our preliminary conversations about our future conferences. Not only does it sound like we will continue with a hybrid format, but we are exploring options for more cost efficient 'non-traditional' sites in which to hold our meetings.



These are my own views, and honestly not as much of an issue I have experienced with MSSA, Inc., but I do think it is important to put our money where our mouth is, at least as sociologists. I have struggled a bit for other conferences paying \$300 per night in a lavish hotel while giving a presentation focused on any number of social problems stemming from social inequality. So, I am excited by this new possibility!

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## From the Desk of the President

MEREDITH DYE



Me with my MTSU/MSSA mentors, Dr. Jackie Eller (left) and Dr. Ron Aday (right), at the annual MSSA awards banquet, Jackson, MS, October, 2019.

Greetings MSSA! It is an honor to serve as MSSA President this year and I appreciate the opportunity to convey my gratitude and aspirations for MSSA in this edition of Forum. I learned so much serving as MSSA President-elect and Program Chair last year. The most important take-away for me was witnessing MSSA participants' dedication to the organization, profession, social justice, and to developing the next generation of sociologists. Indeed, I am a direct beneficiary of MSSA mentorship, coming to the meetings for the first time in 2010 with Dr. Jackie Eller. So, I have always thought of MSSA as welcoming, but working so closely with the program and members cemented my understanding of this truth, and my commitment to the continued success of MSSA. I hope you agree, and will join me in supporting MSSA through conference participation, organization leadership, student and junior faculty mentorship, and financial contributions.



## From the desk of the President, continued

I would like thank Past Presidents, Dr. Shelly McGrath and Dr. Tina Deshotels, for their contributions to the 2022 conference in Nashville and for their MSSA leadership; Dr. Ruth Chananie for the outstanding technology support for all in-person and hybrid sessions as well as the depth of MSSA knowledge, experience, and council brought to the board; Vice-Presidents, Dr. Melencia Johnson and Dr. Nicola Davis-Bivens, for their work on the student paper competitions and awards; Dr. Earl Wright III, our thematic plenary speaker and recipient of the Tom Calhoun Mentoring Award; representatives from Nashville Black Assembly, for leading a racial justice panel and workshop; and all the session organizers, presidors, and presenters who shared their insightful sociological research/activism. I would also like to congratulate once more all of our faculty and student award recipients. We had an incredible time in Nashville!

The 49th Annual MSSA Conference will be held at Dillard University in New Orleans, LA in October 11-14, 2023. Dr. Theresa Davidson, President-Elect and Program Chair is hard at work organizing another amazing conference, with the theme *Unity in Community: Standing Together for Racial Justice*. As usual, the meetings will include paper and panel sessions, roundtables, a plenary address, receptions, along with our annual banquet, awards, and business meeting. While this is a different type of conference meeting site than what we have been accustomed to, we are not strangers to success in trying new meeting formats including an entirely virtual meeting in 2020 and hybrid meetings in 2021 and 2022.

Dillard University is an excellent choice for our conference site. Located in close proximity to the New Orleans, French Quarter, there is no shortage of options for food, entertainment, or things to see. Outside of these attractions, we know that the first MSSA meetings were held on university campuses, so this is not unprecedented. Operating outside pricey hotel contracts makes fiscal sense for the organization, and the academic facilities, space, and resources available at Dillard are ideal for our needs. Dillard is an HBCU and is home to the Center for Racial Justice (CRJ), directed by Dr. Ashraf Esmail. I want to offer a special thank you to Dr. Esmail, who has committed many hours to the logistics and planning of the MSSA conference at Dillard, and has agreed to help support the conference with grant funds and CRJ affiliation. I am excited to meet at Dillard University this year, and I would love to see everyone there!

A successful organization and conference depends on the work of all its members. I would like to welcome the new MSSA board members and committee chairs – Dr. Theresa Davidson, President-elect and Program Chair; Dr. Jessica Pardee, Vice-President-Elect; Dr. Marcus Brooks (Technology); Dr. Adam Veitch (Nominations); Dr. Matthew Schneider (Profession); Dr. Matthew West (Small and Community Colleges); and Dr. Andrea Hunt (Women, Gender, and Sexualities). I also acknowledge my sincere appreciation to the continuing board members.

## From the desk of the President, continued

As we move closer to time for this year's conference, you can expect much more information via the MSSA email listserv, website, and social media, regarding the call for conference participants, announcements about travel scholarships from WGS and CREM committees, student paper competitions, and annual awards. Once again, it is an honor to serve as MSSA President, and I hope to see you all at Dillard University this October!





MID-SOUTH SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION  
49TH ANNUAL MEETING

UNITY IN COMMUNITY: STANDING TOGETHER  
FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION  
DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS **MAY 1, 2023**

The Mid-South Sociological Association is excited to announce that the submission portal for the annual meeting is NOW OPEN! The MSSA Annual Meeting will be in **New Orleans, LA, October 11-14, 2023, at the historic Dillard University**. We are accepting in-person and virtual presentations. We invite research papers from any and all disciplines, including those with an interdisciplinary focus. Please consider submitting your papers/abstracts early, to help ensure a spot in the session of your choice. The final deadline is **September 1, 2023**.

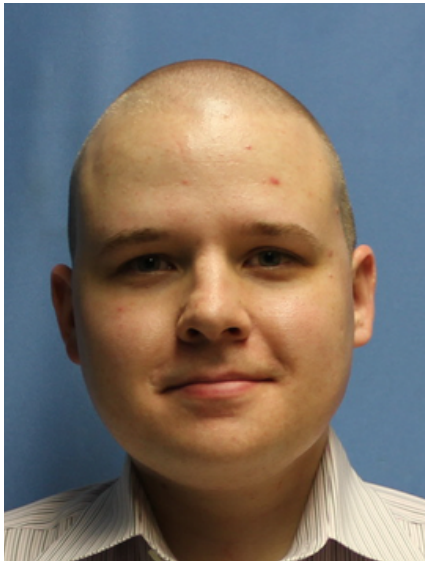
We have some very exciting paper session topics! If you are unsure of where your paper might best fit or if it does not fit in any of the listed sessions, please select two – four keywords that fit your topic. Also, consider participation in one of our panels, roundtables, poster sessions, or workshops that will be included in the program this fall.

Submit your paper title and abstract through our online submission system [here](#). Indicate whether you will present in-person or virtually. If you have any questions/concerns and/or suggestions please contact me, MSSA President-Elect and Program Chair, [tcdaids@samford.edu](mailto:tcdaids@samford.edu). Please, click [here](#) for step-by-step submission instructions.

# Congratulations to newly elected officers and committee chairs!



Committee on the  
Profession:  
Matthew Schneider,  
University of North  
Carolina at Pembroke



Committee on Small  
and Community  
Colleges: Matthew  
West, Lawson State  
Community College



Committee on Women,  
Gender, and  
Sexualities: Andrea  
Hunt, University of  
North Alabama



Technology Committee  
Chair: Marcus Brooks,  
Western Kentucky  
University



Committee on  
Nominations: Adam  
Veitch, Central State  
University



# Remembering Hugh Floyd

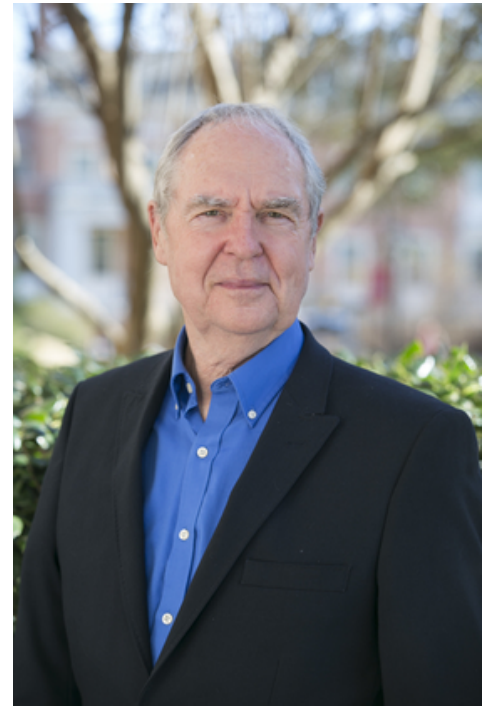
Written by: Theresa Davidson

Our dear friend, colleague, and one of the founding members of MSSA, Hugh Floyd, passed away unexpectedly on January 10, 2023.

Hugh was scheduled to retire in May 2023, after 30 years of service to Samford University and just three months before his 80th birthday.

Hugh Floyd began his academic career at the University of New Orleans in 1970, eventually becoming Department Chair. He then moved to Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama in 1993 as Professor and Chair of the Sociology department, a position he held for 21 years, ultimately returning to full-time teaching and scholarship. In line with his passion for helping and supporting others, he served as a Licensed Professional Counselor and clinical professor at Tulane and LSU School of Medicine. He continued to work in an advisor role in Alabama mentoring many therapists over the years.

He played a pivotal role in establishing the Mid-South Sociological Association, serving in multiple leadership roles over the years. Indeed, in 2017, this organization honored him with a Distinguished Career Award.



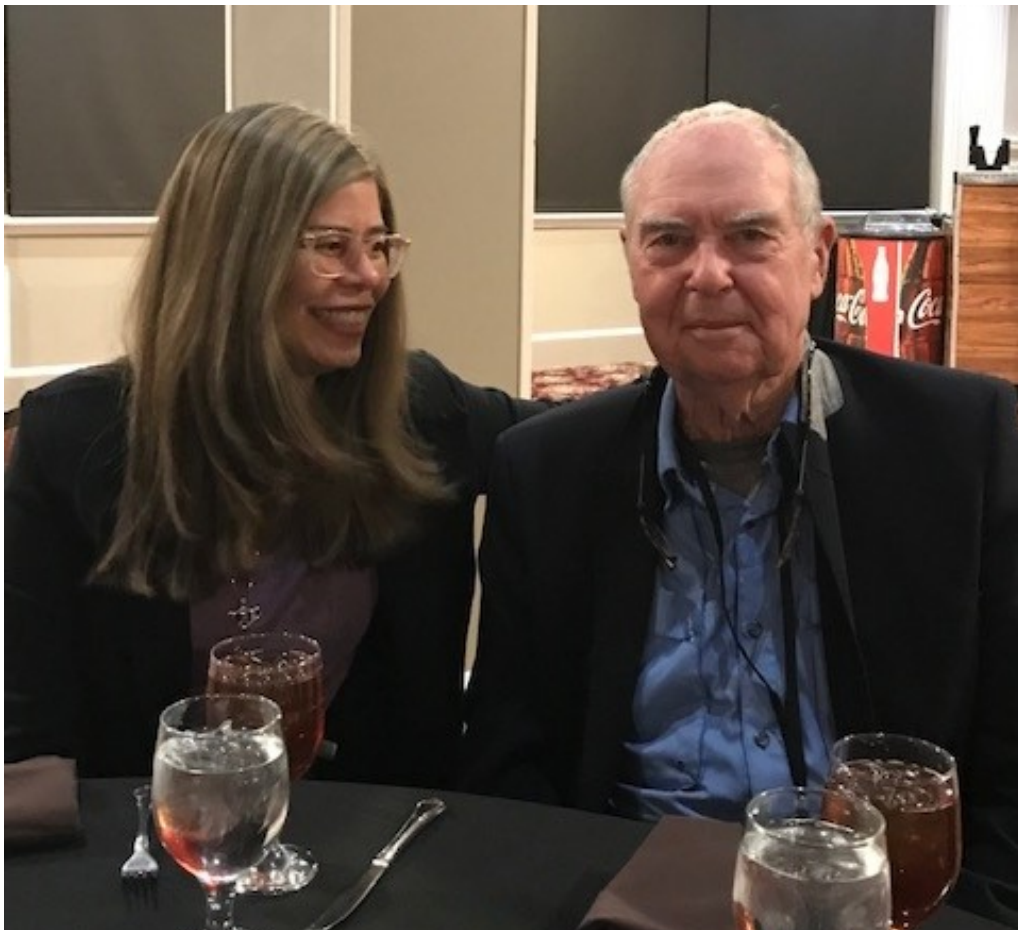
Hugh was a prolific scholar with nearly 40 publications including his 1997 book, *Bodies in Protest: Environmental Illness and the Struggle over Medical Knowledge* (NYU Press, 1997). Hugh's most recent research and publications explored the sociological intersections between health and the environment. In 2018, he produced and directed the documentary, *Fontana Lake: Broken Promises, Delayed Resolutions*, which told the story of a community's efforts to correct social and environmental injustices following the construction of the Fontana Dam in Swain County, North Carolina. Indeed, he screened this important documentary at the most recent Mid-South Sociological Association meeting in October 2022. Members of the audience were moved by the poignant stories of the families featured in the documentary and Hugh led an animated conversation about environmental justice, an issue always close to his heart.

# Remembering Hugh Floyd... continued

Written by: Theresa Davidson

Hugh was an extraordinary colleague, a generous collaborator, a committed teacher, and a compassionate human being. He loved the MSSA and everything it stands for: collaboration, inclusion, diversity, student-centeredness, and social justice.

There is much more I could say, and I hope some of you will share your memories as well. I think I speak for so many when I say we will miss so many things about Hugh, including his “glass half full” optimism, his mentorship and hard-earned wisdom, and most of all, his friendship. This Mid-South Sociological Association owes much to Hugh and we will not be the same without him. We must, however, carry on his legacy of justice and compassion.



# MSSA, INC. 2022 AWARD WINNERS

AS ANNOUNCED DURING THE 2022 CONFERENCE  
BANQUET



## **Stanford Lyman Distinguished Book Award**

- Baker A. Rogers: King of Hearts: Drag Kings in the American South

## **Sociological Spectrum Award**

- Michael Friendly: The Life and Works of Andre-Michel Guerry, Revisited

## **Graduate paper competition**

- Nithila Ramesh: You Can't Know Any Better': The Perceptions of Black Healthcare Practices in Hospital Patient-Provider Relationships

## **Undergraduate paper competition**

- Lauren Molander: The Influence of Individualism and Meritocracy on Preferences for Freedom



# 2022 MID-SOUTH SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION KEYNOTE TALK

LOOKING BACK, LEADING FORWARD:  
MSSA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

EARL WRIGHT II

PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY, RHODES  
COLLEGE



I will begin tonight's talk as I always do ... paying homage to those who came before me. Without their strength to endure the troubled waters of their day and courage to take on the task of joining academia when many considered their lives barely more worthy than that of an animal, I would not be here today. For these reasons I honor the first African American to earn the PhD with a specialty in sociology, James Robert Lincoln Diggs; the first African American to earn a PhD from a Department of Sociology, Richard R. Wright; and the first African American woman to earn a PhD in the United States, Anna Johnson Julian. More personally, I recognize Elizabeth Higginbotham for leading a young kid from North Memphis into the world of academia and sociology. And last, I recognize my late mentor and friend Thomas C. Calhoun for teaching me what it means to not only be a scholar ... but a professional.

I want to thank the leadership of the Mid-South Sociological Association (MSSA) for inviting me to deliver this year's keynote. This is one of the high points of my career ... and for that I thank President Meredith Dye for the invitation. This talk is grounded primarily on two publications - "A History of the Mid-South Sociological Association" by Marc Matre and Kevin Breault and *Jim Crow Sociology: The Black and Southern Roots of American Sociology* by me.



In 1975 a small group of southern based sociologists came together to establish the Mid-South Sociological Association. While other professional sociology organizations like the American Sociological Association and Southern Sociological Society existed, opportunities for visibility for faculty at non-research intensive, small and junior colleges, and historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) were limited. Opportunities for visibility and participation in leadership positions were especially limited in those spaces if you were a woman or Black. Within this void people like Julian Roebuck, Marsha McGhee, and Emory G. Davis emerged to help establish and develop a professional sociology organization to serve the needs of those rendered invisible in the academy and located in the American South. Almost immediately, MSSA became a space where scholars, regardless of race, gender, orientation, and institution type were platformed and their labor, whether teaching, service, or research centered, was not only appreciated and respected ... it was valued.

I share a kinship with the spiritual forces that breathed life into MSSA. When I began my journey in academia I, too, was intentional in making the previously invisible, not only visible but integral to the American sociological consciousness. Many people have made substantive contributions to this discipline ... but for type of institution ... they did not receive invitations from elite institutions, that serve as gatekeepers, to spread their message to large and privileged audiences. But for gender ... they were not lauded as central characters in theoretical and methodological advances and re-imaginings of the field. And, but for race, their contributions were ignored or attributed to others. For those who found traditional professional sociology spaces a lil too stuffy, a little too “let me look at your name tag and not your facish,” or unwelcoming in general, I say ... when you came to MSSA you knew that we saw you, we appreciated you, and we embraced each and every aspect of what you brought to this profession. These are values I have carried since my first MSSA meeting in 1996, in Little Rock, and the values that I have expressed in my research program emphasizing the contributions of Black sociologists at HBCUs over the past twenty-five years.

Like MSSA, my work champions the underdog ... those who often go unseen ... those who, in many ways, are the “little engine” of the profession that supplies our future leaders. I’m speaking of those from small and community colleges.

For example, let’s look briefly at the first American school of sociology. No, not the much-heralded program at the University of Chicago. But the actual first American school of sociology that predated Chicago by nearly twenty years. I’m talking about an HBCU. W. E. B. Du Bois’ Atlanta Sociological Laboratory. In 1998 I presented my groundbreaking work first here at MSSA. My work was not met with skepticism and scorn at MSSA as it later would be at meetings including the American Sociological Association and Southern Sociological Society. Instead, MSSA members like Thomas C. Calhoun, Harold “Jay” Corzine, Lena Wright Myers, and John Moland Jr. supported the scholarly endeavors of a young, brash new sociologist who dared to speak unglowingly of the hallowed texts and scholars from the Midwest, but instead championed works by Black folk at Black schools. My work, similar to the upstart MSSA, shined a light on male and female sociologists from Atlanta University, now Clark Atlanta University, who had, for one hundred years been ignored by mainstream sociologists.

What did I find? I won’t talk about this school too long because a long record on its accomplishments exists. I uncovered that not only did W. E. B. Du Bois establish the first American school of sociology, in an article I published in 2002 in *Sociological Spectrum*, but that this school was the first American sociological unit to include theory triangulation in its findings. It was the first American sociological unit to employ mixed methods in its research. It was the first American sociological unit to use what we now call, insider researchers, by nearly one hundred years. It was the first American sociological unit to include a methods section in its research publications. And it was the first American sociological unit to include a limitations section in its research publications. Each of these advances predated the embrace by White sociologists and institutions by as few as twenty and as much as nearly one hundred years. To be transparent, I sent this paper to the *American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, and *Social Forces*. The top three journals in the discipline. Two journals desk rejected the paper and the reviews of the other were disconcerting. The common theme between the rejections was their stern belief that THIS, my research, was not sociology.

In fact, one of the journal editors told me my paper was better suited for the Journal of American History than a professional sociology journal. However, they did not know what I knew ... which was there did exist a sociology journal that was receptive to works considered beyond the mainstream because that is where it found itself in its early years. And to this day I am proud that my groundbreaking article was published by Sociological Spectrum in 2002.

Again, I look at the symbiotic relationship between the founding principles of MSSA and its embrace of small and community colleges, with my strong desire to shed a light on the so-called less prestigious and elite units in the American South in an effort to tell the sociological world that, yes, these places not only exist but are important to this discipline.

Another important location in the development of sociology during Jim Crow was, yes, the city hosting us today, Nashville. Specifically, Fisk University. During an era when the idea that sociologists should remove themselves from their arm-chair abstract theorizing on the social condition of Americans, Fisk University, led by George Edmund Haynes, was at the spear's tip of applied sociology. Under Haynes the theologically and social gospel influenced school was intentional in its goal to positively impact this community. The school catalog once read, "the relation of the ministry to the social problems of our times is made a subject of the lectures." This agenda was bolstered by W. E. B. Du Bois who wrote of his time as an undergraduate at Fisk that the faculty, "developed in me, and I am sure the majority of my fellow students, the idea of the Negro problem as being an evangel, a gospel where chosen men were trained and armed, and went out to take the leadership of the mass." The chosen men and women at Fisk would soon put their training to the test.

In 1916, in an East Nashville neighborhood not far from where we now sit, a young white boy was playing with a ball of yarn at his home when, unexpectedly, it caught fire after landing on or near a stove. Unsure of how to put out the fire, he removed the ball and threw it into a nearby vacant lot. The result was a fire that destroyed the homes of over 300 Black and White families over a range of more than thirty blocks.

While the fire was still raging Haynes and his Fisk colleague Paul Mowbray “walked out Jefferson Street to the bridge and saw where the fire had been and place where it was then burning.’ As they returned to campus, Haynes and Mowbray began an informal survey ‘inquiring to the extent of suffering and loss of residents’.” Certainly, dismayed at the destruction he was witnessing, it is quite possible that Haynes viewed this tragic event as an opportunity to not only provide assistance to his fellow Nashvillians, but put into action the training of his cadre of applied sociology students. At the behest of the Nashville Negro Board of Trade, “the accepted voice of black business and professional men in Nashville,” Haynes spearheaded a plan of recovery for fire victims. Students from Fisk participated in activities including establishing a headquarter the day after the fire to assess the needs of the victims, collect data on the affected households (e.g., number, age, and condition of residents, etc.), conduct site visits to the temporary residences of victims for needs assessment, and develop plans for resource allocation and distribution. The students were so efficient in their assignments that “observers noted that many of the black students and teachers obviously had been trained for ‘scientific work.” They were correct. The training they received at Fisk included a two-semester sociology course titled, Social Problems. During the first semester they learned sociological theory and in the second they conducted fieldwork in Nashville’s Black community. One of the fieldwork sites was Bethlehem House.

In 1907 Fisk graduate Sallie Hill Sawyer began her efforts to establish a settlement home in Nashville like Hull House opened by Jane Addams in Chicago, Illinois. Instead of directing its attentions to the needs of immigrants, Sawyer instead focused her settlement home on providing assistance and opportunities for Black women in Nashville. Her efforts resulted in the establishment of Bethlehem House in 1910. In 1913, Fisk entered into a formal relationship with Bethlehem House. Consistent with the desires of Fisk’s founders to actively engage in positive and cooperative relationships with the city’s White residents, Bethlehem House exemplified racial cooperation of the highest degree as its board of governance, staff, and volunteers from local colleges included Blacks and Whites. It was in this space and with a like minded vision that the school’s students engaged in applied sociology.



George Edmund Haynes, and countless other early Black sociologists, were more concerned with engagement in (Black) sociology as a tool to improve the lives of the masses rather than a venue for abstract pursuits of theoretical interests. Whether it was called applied sociology or social work (it is called applied sociology here), the objective of the scientific endeavor was to make a direct impact on the least of these. In so doing, Haynes and the women and men of the applied sociology program at Fisk were successful. Not only were they successful, this collective of scholars from the Nashville-based HBCU were among the first to actively practice and promote applied sociology in this nation.

When the name Booker T. Washington is discussed in academic spaces it is almost always in contrast to W. E. B. Du Bois' thoughts on the type of education Blacks should pursue immediately after emancipation. This juxtaposition is one of the biggest misconceptions in academia today. Most of us believe Du Bois was staunchly anti-technical education and Washington was staunchly anti-liberal arts. I won't go into much detail here, you can read my book *Jim Crow Sociology* for specifics, but Du Bois did not oppose vocational education. His argument was simply that a liberal arts education must come first. Washington, on the other hand, was not a staunch supporter of liberal arts. His primary argument against liberal arts education was, "who's gonna hire a college educated Black man?" It is true that Washington opposed liberal arts ... EXCEPT ... when it could help him accomplish his personal or political goals.

Despite the effectiveness of his school's vocational program, Black Americans living in the American South in the late 1800s remained a vulnerable population whether they possessed a college education or not. Often simply having some sort of education was sufficient cause to justify attacks by Whites on Black. By 1881 Washington was well aware of such attacks on Black Americans by their White neighbors. Seeking to better understand the condition of rural Blacks, develop strategies to improve their condition, and improve relations between the races, Washington called for a conference to be held at Tuskegee in 1882 on the condition of rural Blacks in America.

In his 1901 autobiography, BTW said the goal of the conference was: "First, to find out the actual industrial, moral and educational condition of the masses. Second, to get as much light as possible on what is the most effective way for the young men and women whom the Tuskegee Institute and other institutions are educating, to use their education in helping the masses of the colored people to lift themselves up." In *Jim Crow Sociology* I argue that he is outlining a desire to engage in sociology.

On his first goal, Washington suggested that data be collected on rural communities such that one would be in possession of accurate information from which prescriptions for improving the condition of Blacks and respective communities could be developed. His second goal centered on the application of book learning to the practical data garnered at the annual meeting. Clearly, when both goals are considered collectively, Washington is effectively articulating the school's intention to employ the scientific method to investigate the real-life experiences of rural Blacks and develop strategies to improve their life chances and life outcomes. This is a clear articulation of applied sociology.

At the yearly conference data were solicited from attendees upon whom school officials were dependent to provide data. Washington's attempt to obtain accurate and scientific data on the rural conditions of Blacks in America was discerned from his pronouncement at the 1894 conference that participants should "tell things just as you see them and understand them. These meetings are for you. If you don't get benefits from them they are of no use." In effect, he was calling for participant observers and insider researchers.

The second day of meetings, now called the Worker's Conference, "was appropriately styled a 'one day's school of practical sociology'." Although sociology was not central to the school's curriculum there was awareness within the university community of the utility of the discipline as a tool for improving the condition of the race through applied means. Practical sociology, as evidenced at the Tuskegee Negro Conference, included taking personal accounts from multiple sources on a specific topic (i.e., data collection), teasing out the most salient and viable practices (i.e., analysis), then implementing that best practice in one's local community (i.e., application). Essentially, the Worker's Conference is where Black agricultural workers listened to speakers from every southern state, and some from the North; discussed best practices in the profession; and then learned the methods of implementation.

Washington's commitment to developing a solid applied rural sociology program can be captured in two changes that extended his original idea beyond only holding a yearly conference. It is likely that the success of the meeting's second day of practical sociology inspired the Wizard of Tuskegee to consider additional ways to positively impact farming communities year-round. What emerged was a class titled, "Short Course in Agriculture." This course "was designed to provide the farmers in surrounding counties, at the season when most of them were idle, several weeks of study and observation of the school's farm and Experiment Station." Attendees, including farmer's spouses and children for whom courses were developed, were not charged a fee and received expert instruction from Tuskegee faculty as well as persons from the United States Department of Agriculture, state of Georgia, and Auburn University. In these classes attendees received intensive and consistent instruction on the best practices in agriculture on topics including, but not limited to, "general farming, livestock, dairying, poultry raising, fruit growing, and truck gardening." This course started in 1908 with 11 enrolled students and by the seventh year more than 1,500 were enrolled. The success of his Short Course in Agriculture led Washington to consider additional ways of reaching farmers, resulting in his second addition to the applied rural sociology program.

Washington was fully committed to the idea that his emphasis on agriculture was in the best interests of Blacks and he wanted to make the opportunities at his institution available to as many people as possible. He also understood that, for any number of reasons, many farmers were unable to attend the yearly conference or free agricultural course, both of which took place at Tuskegee. His solution to this challenge was the establishment of a "Movable School." Between 1906 and the start of World War II Washington's Movable School travelled across the South promoting best practices and the latest advances in agriculture. At its peak the school is estimated to have reached at least 2,000 persons per month. "The wagon carried different kinds of plows and planters, a cultivator, a cotton chopper, a variety of seeds, samples of fertilizers, a revolving churn, a butter mold, a cream separator, a milk tester, and other appliances useful in making practical demonstrations, and it had the immense advantage of carrying scientific agriculture directly to the farmers in the fields. After making the rounds of the small and large farms of a community, the "Movable School" located at a central point and conducted an open-air demonstration for a gathering of farmers and their families."

The primary conclusion reached after examining the fragmented records of the Tuskegee Negro Conferences and early history of rural sociology in the United States is that Tuskegee Institute comprised the first applied rural sociology program in the nation. By this, I mean Tuskegee was the first academic entity to engage in an institutionalized and annual research inquiry into the social, economic, and physical condition of rural folk with the objective of developing solutions to address the problems discovered. This was done more than a decade before the American Sociological Association established a rural sociology section and nearly forty years before the Rural Sociological Society was established. Sadly, when I was invited to be the keynote speaker at the 2021 Rural Sociological Society meeting, EVERY person in attendance admitted they were unaware of Booker T. Washington's school and its importance to THEIR discipline.

The theme of my research has always been consistent with a theme found in MSSA - shedding light on scholars who are invisible to the mainstream. However, the strength of MSSA lies not in it being reactive to external forces BUT having foresight and courage to do things differently than others. Whether that is holding meetings on college campuses during our early years, not creating undue obstacles to women and African Americans gaining full participation in leadership positions or holding faculty from teaching institutions in as high a regard as those from research intensive institutions. Moving forward, MSSA leadership must be similarly bold. The changes in today's society, due in large part to the global pandemic and uncertain fiscal outlooks, necessitate that MSSA be bold and creative in a landscape filled with professional organizations looking to poach from others to expand their membership and survive as an entity.

I am challenging the MSSA leadership to rise to the occasion on matters facing the organization whether it is concerns about in-person meetings, cost of attendance, harassment issues, and any number of other items. I am challenging MSSA leadership to double down on who we are and to do so loudly and publicly ... via a media blitz (social or traditional) that places this organization on everyone's mind. I am challenging MSSA leadership to double down on its embrace of teaching institutions.



This means that we can no longer simply send a flyer or random email to a school and hope people attend our meeting. Our committees need to be aggressive in reaching out to every school in our footprint, especially teaching institutions, to let them know that not only are they valued here ... they can help mold this great organization for future sociologists. And last, I am challenging MSSA leadership to continue thinking outside of the box concerning meetings. The global pandemic was awful for many reasons. However, one bright spot for many scholars was the ability to present their research appears remotely. Whether it was because of mobility issues, age, disability or any other number of factors, a large segment of the sociological community yearns for opportunities to present their work in non-traditional ways. It is apparent the larger organizations will not continue remote sessions. As a result, there is a mass of scholars looking for a professional home. MSSA can be a home for them if, moving forward, we embrace this model.

I have been a member of MSSA since 1996 and have witnessed MANY truly great moments and met MANY great people. Also, I witnessed a moment during my presidential term when some wondered aloud if we would survive as an entity. WE DID ... because we "collectively" stood up and together to keep this small but mighty collective intact. It is up to all of us NOW to do what we can to make sure MSSA is around for future scholars just as it has been for us. To not do so would be selfish. To not do so would be shortsighted. But if we continue to work together to strengthen this organization we will soon look around and find MSSA to be one of the major destination organizations for sociologists in the nation. This is what I pray.



## GRADUATE STUDENT PAPER COMPETITION

2023 SUBMISSION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 15

The Mid-South Sociological Association invites the submission of student papers for its annual Graduate Student Paper Competition. The competition is open to students in the Mid-South Region and to other graduate students who are members of the Mid-South Sociological Association. A prize of \$100 will be awarded for the best paper. The authors of the papers selected will be presented with certificates of merit after presentations of their papers at the MSSA annual conference.

### Rules for the Competition

- Each paper must be accompanied by a cover letter requesting participation in the graduate competition session. The letter must include the title of the paper, author(s) of the paper, the school affiliation, the email address and the telephone number of the author(s).
- The maximum length of an eligible paper shall be 25 double-spaced pages of text, not counting abstract, references, tables, and figures.
- Papers may be co-authored with a maximum of three graduate student authors and may not include faculty.
- Papers must not have been submitted for publication prior to submission for this competition.

Each submission will be evaluated by a committee of scholars and members of Mid-South Sociological Association Inc. Evaluation will be based on (1) originality (sociological theory foundation, literature review, research methods, etc.), (2) contribution or potential contribution to the discipline, (3) quality and clarity of arguments, and (4) technical writing (i.e. neatness, use of an appropriate format, grammar, spelling, etc.). To receive full recognition for participation, submissions must meet deadlines and participants must present their papers at the Annual Conference. Winners are also expected to be present at the awards banquet.

Students are strongly encouraged to seek faculty guidance prior to submission of papers.

**Papers (in Word, rtf, or PDF format) should be submitted by email to Dr. Melencia Johnson, MSSA, Inc. Vice-President, at [melenciaj@usca.edu](mailto:melenciaj@usca.edu).**

*It is the responsibility of the submitter to provide a paper that is readable, in one of the formats noted above.*

If you have any questions regarding the competition, please contact Dr. Johnson directly at [melenciaj@usca.edu](mailto:melenciaj@usca.edu).

# FEEDBACK FROM FIRST TIME ATTENDEES



From left to right: Ryan Howard, Katie Watts, Keelie Lindsey, Andrew Tatch, and Daijah Bell

By going to the conference, I gained confidence in public speaking, but also critical thinking skills and research experience. The paper that started my interest in the conference also gave me the opportunity to go to a sporting event and observe from a different perspective. I was also able to attend other people's presentations that grabbed my interest which benefitted me greatly. I was able to link their presentations with my internship and other classes I've taken. Thank you for this opportunity in which I believe helped me grow into a better college student.

--Katie Watts (Troy University)

I had such an amazing experience and learned so much. I was able to network with other students and professors from many different universities. The sessions were so informative, and I came out of this experience feeling more intelligent and thoroughly enjoyed myself. I am so thankful I was able to represent Troy University and to take my learning outside of the classroom.

--Keelie Lindsey (Troy University)



## UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PAPER COMPETITION

2023 SUBMISSION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 15

The Mid-South Sociological Association invites the submission of student papers for its annual Undergraduate Student Paper Competition. The competition is open to students in the Mid-South Region and to other undergraduate students who are members of the Mid-South Sociological Association. A prize of \$100 will be awarded for the best paper. The authors of the papers selected will be presented with certificates of merit after presentations of their papers at the MSSA annual conference.

### Rules for the Competition

- Each paper must be accompanied by a cover letter requesting participation in the undergraduate competition session. The letter must include the title of the paper, author(s) of the paper, the school affiliation, the email address and the telephone number of the author(s).
- The maximum length of an eligible paper shall be 20 double-spaced pages of text, not counting abstract, references, tables, and figures.
- Papers may be co-authored with a maximum of three undergraduate student authors. Papers that list co-authors who are graduate students or faculty will not be considered in this category.
- Papers must not have been submitted for publication prior to submission for this competition.

Each submission will be evaluated by a committee of scholars and members of Mid-South Sociological Association Inc. Evaluation will be based on (1) originality, (2) contribution or potential contribution to the discipline, (3) quality and clarity of arguments, and (4) technical writing (i.e. neatness, use of an appropriate format, grammar, spelling, etc.). To receive full recognition for participation, submissions must meet deadlines and participants must present their papers at the 47th Annual Conference. Winners are also expected to be present at the awards banquet.

Students are strongly encouraged to seek faculty guidance prior to submission of papers.

**Papers (in Word, rtf, or PDF format) should be submitted by email to Dr. Jessica Pardee, MSSA, Inc. Vice-President Elect, at [jwpgss@rit.edu](mailto:jwpgss@rit.edu).**

*It is the responsibility of the submitter to provide a paper that is readable, in one of the formats noted above.*

If you have any questions regarding the competition, please contact Dr. Pardee directly at [jwpgss@rit.edu](mailto:jwpgss@rit.edu).





2023 MID-SOUTH SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION  
COMMITTEE ON WOMEN, GENDER, & SEXUALITIES  
TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP  
DEADLINE: 10/01/2023

**Program Description**

The Mid-South Sociological Association and the Committee on Women, Gender, & Sexualities is pleased to announce the availability of travel scholarships for support in attending the 2023 annual meeting in New Orleans, LA (October 11-14) at Dillard University. These scholarships will be awarded on a competitive basis. Each scholarship recipient will be offered up to \$250.00 to defray expenses associated with travel to the MSSA meeting.

**Eligibility and Application Requirements**

To be eligible for the scholarship, the applicant must:

- Have a demonstrated need for funding (i.e., the applicant receives minimal or no university funding for travel to the conference).
- Be an active participant of the annual meeting by presenting research or participating in a panel on gender and/or sexuality.
- A member of the Mid-South Sociological Association at the time of the award.

Applications can be completed through the Google Form [here](https://forms.gle/QRYP6L1mF7KuWnR6) (or copy and paste the following link into your browser <https://forms.gle/QRYP6L1mF7KuWnR6>). Applications should be submitted completed by October 1, 2023. Email Andrea Hunt at [ahunt3@una.edu](mailto:ahunt3@una.edu) if you have any questions.

Thank you, and we look forward to seeing you in October.

Dr. Andrea Hunt, Chair  
Committee on Women, Gender & Sexualities  
Associate Professor of Sociology  
Executive Director, Mitchell-West Center for Social Inclusion and Center for Women's Studies  
University of North Alabama  
[ahunt@una.edu](mailto:ahunt@una.edu)  
256-765-5158

## Mid-South Sociological Association wins

David Knottnerus, Emeritus Regents Professor of Sociology at Oklahoma State University, had his newest book published! The title is Polar Expeditions: discovering Rituals of Success within Hazardous Ventures. The book is published by Routledge..



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Andrew Tatch, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Troy University, had a manuscript land recently and won an award from his undergraduate institution!

- Crudden, A., McDonnall, M., & Tatch, A. (2022). Unable to Work? Characteristics of People with Blindness and Low Vision who are out of the Labor Force. Disability and Health Journal (forthcoming)
- Recipient of the 2022 Outstanding Graduate Award; Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice: Valdosta State University

## MSSA, Inc wins, continued...

Dr. Matthew Schneider, Assistant Professor of Sociology at UNC Pembroke, has a new journal article, a new book chapter, and a new book review:

- Schneider, Matthew Jerome. 2022. "I don't know what's racist": White invisibility among explicitly color-conscious volunteers." *Qualitative Sociology* 45(4): 557-589. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-022-09511-9>
- Musa Jalal and Matthew Jerome Schneider. 2022. "Bottom-Up Violence Work: Exploring the case of armed racial justice counter-protesters." In Tyler Flockhart, Abigail B. Reiter, and Matthew Hassett (eds.), *The Reproduction and Maintenance of Inequalities in Interpersonal Relationships*: 189-205. <https://www.igi-global.com/gateway/chapter/312311>
- O'Neill, Brian F. and Matthew Jerome Schneider. 2022. Review of *Electric Mountains: Climate, Power, and Justice in an Energy Transition*. *Sociation* 21(2): 52-54. [https://sociation.ncsociologyassoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/bookreview\\_schneider\\_oneill\\_proof\\_2022.pdf](https://sociation.ncsociologyassoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/bookreview_schneider_oneill_proof_2022.pdf).

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Brett Lehman, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work at Auburn University at Montgomery got the following paper published:

- Lehman, B. (2022). Exposure to Aggressors at School and Cyberbullying Victimization. *Youth & Society*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X221122492>

## MSSA, Inc. wins, continued...

Dr. Roger Guy, Professor and Chair of the Department of Criminal Justice at SUNY Oswego, has had three articles published recently:

- Roger Guy, Piotr A. Chomczyński, and Rodrigo Cortina-Cortez (2022) "The Vanishing Independent: Adapting to the Dynamics Drug Trafficking Organizations in Mexico," *Global Crime*. Vol. 24 (4): 392-406. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17440572.2022.2117696>.
  - Roger Guy (2022) "Southern Identity and Serendipitous Opportunity in Qualitative Research Among Appalachians in Chicago," *Humanity and Society*. Vol. 46 (4) 636-651. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01605976221095493>.
  - Piotr A. Chomczyński, Roger Guy, and Rodrigo Cortina-Cortez (2022) "Weed Central: Cannabis Specialists and Polydrug Vendors in Mexico City," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, Vol 52 (1) 52-83. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08912416221085560>.
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## WE MADE IT (to Spring Break)!!

As we near Spring Break, or may already be there, I hope your semester wraps up smoothly! May you have a relaxing and rejuvenating break, spent with those you love! I look forward to seeing you all in New Orleans in October!

*Andrew*