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2017 Mississippi Historical Society Award Winners

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2017 Mississippi Historical Society Award Winners



Elbert R. Hilliard (center) was presented the Dunbar Rowland Award by Ann Abadie and Brother Rogers for lifelong contributions to the study and interpretation of Mississippi history.

The Mississippi Historical Society held its annual meeting March 2–4, 2017, in Gulfport to honor its 2017 award winners and to commemorate the state’s 200th birthday. The society’s award for the best Mississippi history book of 2016 went to Jason Morgan Ward, professor of history, Mississippi State University, for *Hanging Bridge: Racial Violence and America’s Civil Rights Century*, which was published by Oxford University Press.

“Although deeply rooted in a remote corner of an isolated county, Ward’s erudite book has broad implications for our understanding of the Freedom Struggle,” said Max Grivno, University of Southern Mississippi history professor and chair of the McLemore Prize committee. “*Hanging Bridge* opens new windows onto the contours and parameters of the Freedom Struggle and suggests that memory and place were, and are, inextricably tied to the Civil Rights movement.”

The 2017 B. L. C. Wailes Award for national distinction in the field of history was presented to Robert S. McElvaine. McElvaine is Elizabeth Chisholm Professor of Arts and Letters at Millsaps College in Jackson, where he has taught since 1973. McElvaine is the author of ten books, including *Down and Out in the Great Depression*, a *New York Times*

bestseller, and *Eve's Seed: Biology, the Sexes, and the Course of History*, which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in nonfiction. McElvaine has also written *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, an exhaustive study on the life of the thirty-second president of the United States, and *Mario Cuomo: A Biography*. McElvaine is a recipient of the Richard Wright Award for Literary Excellence and has twice won the Distinguished Professor Award at Millsaps College. The Wailes Award is named for B. L. C. Wailes, the founder and first president of the Mississippi Historical Society.

Elbert R. Hilliard of Madison received the Dunbar Rowland Award for his lifelong contributions to the preservation, study, and interpretation of Mississippi history. In 1965, Hilliard joined the staff of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History as curator of history at the State Historical Museum, Old Capitol Restoration. In 1973, he was elected the fifth director of MDAH and served in that capacity for thirty-one years. Hilliard's achievements as director include strengthening Mississippi's laws governing historic preservation, leading the effort to establish records management programs for state and local government records, supporting award-winning exhibits at the Old Capitol Museum, spearheading funding efforts for the construction of the state-of-the-art William F. Winter Archives and History Building, and helping establish the Foundation for Mississippi History and the Federation of Mississippi Historical Societies. Hilliard has served as the secretary-treasurer of the Mississippi Historical Society since 1973. He also serves as editor-in-chief emeritus of the *Journal of Mississippi History* and is a member of the board of editors of the *Heritage of Mississippi Series*. Hilliard continues to serve MDAH as a volunteer, tallying more than 2,000 hours each year since his retirement on December 31, 2004.

Petal Middle School teacher Cathy Lee received the John K. Bettersworth Award, presented to an outstanding history teacher. Although Lee has taught U.S. history for only three years, her teaching career spans a period of thirty years. In 2016, Lee was selected to attend the C-SPAN Educator's Conference to share her professional experiences with other teachers and to explore ways to bring primary resources into the classroom.

Lisa C. Foster and Susannah J. Ural received the 2016 *Mississippi History Now* Prize for their article "Jefferson Davis Soldier-Beauvoir," which was posted in January 2017. Foster is a University of Southern Mississippi student seeking her master's degree in history, and Ural is



Robert McElvaine, professor, Millsaps College, received the B.L.C. Wailes Award from Ann Abadie.

professor of history at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM). The online publication is available at <http://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov>.

The Historical Society of Gulfport received the Frank E. Everett, Jr. Award for its outstanding contributions to the preservation and interpretation of local history. Terrence J. Winschel was awarded the Willie D. Halsell Prize for his *The Journal of Mississippi History* article, “A Soldier’s Legacy: William T. Rigby and the Establishment of Vicksburg National Military Park.” Prior to his retirement, Winschel served for thirty-five years as a historian at Vicksburg National Military Park. H. Grady Howell received the William E. “Bill” Atkinson Award for his outstanding lifelong contributions to the study and interpretation of Mississippi Civil War history.

Awards of merit were presented to Larry L. “Butch” Brown, former mayor of Natchez, for his visionary and dedicated implementation of the outstanding yearlong Natchez Tricentennial Celebration; Stratton Bull for his exemplary oversight as chair of the Natchez Tricentennial Celebration in 2016; Douglas B. Chambers, Department of History, USM, for his exemplary research and scholarly direction of the Documenting Runaway Slaves Project; Jennifer Ogden Combs for her exemplary leadership as executive director of the Natchez Tricentennial Celebration in 2016; Marco Giardino, Bay St. Louis, for his invaluable contribution

to the archival work of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History through his translation of the Caselli Family Letters; Max Grivno, Department of History, USM, for his research and scholarly direction of the Documenting Runaway Slaves Project; Jim Miller of Gulfport for his role in the creation of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Museum of Historical Photography; Randy Randazzo of Arlington, Virginia, for his remarkable documentation of Mississippi Gulf Coast history through his collection of more than 5,000 postcards and negatives and his exceptional generosity in donating his collection to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History; Thomas E. Simmons of Gulfport for his extensive and exemplary research in documenting the distinguished life of John Charles Robinson; Joe Tomasovsky of Bay St. Louis for his role in the creation of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Museum of Historical Photography; and Susannah J. Ural, Department of History, USM, for her exemplary research and scholarly direction of the Beauvoir Veteran Project. The Natchez National Historical Park received an award of merit for its exemplary research and production of the daily "Natchez History Minute" during the yearlong Natchez Tricentennial celebration in 2016.