

2016

Awards Presented at the 2016 Mississippi Historical Society Annual Meeting

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Recommended Citation

(2016) "Awards Presented at the 2016 Mississippi Historical Society Annual Meeting," *Journal of Mississippi History*. Vol. 78: No. 3, Article 7.

Available at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/jmh/vol78/iss3/7>

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Awards Presented at the 2016 Mississippi Historical Society Annual Meeting



Charles Gray (left) of Bay St. Louis receives the Dunbar Rowland Award from MHS board member Marco Giardino (right).

The Mississippi Historical Society held its annual meeting March 3–5, 2016, in Jackson to honor its award winners and offer presentations on preserving and interpreting Mississippi history from the points of view of representatives of two professions—archivists and historians. Topics included the Civil War and civil rights, twentieth century Mississippi, and research in the digital age. The society’s award for the best Mississippi history book of 2015 went to Justin Behrend, State University of New York at Geneseo, for his work *Reconstructing Democracy: Grassroots Black Politics in the Deep South After the Civil War* published by the University of Georgia Press. The McLemore Prize includes a \$700 cash award. “Justin Behrend’s *Reconstructing Democracy* is a deeply researched and original examination of an important topic: the biracial and bipartisan politics of the Natchez District in the decade after the Civil War,” said Charles Bolton, University of North Carolina at Greensboro history professor and chair of the McLemore Prize committee. Bolton further stated, “Bringing to life the stories of unknown or little-known black men who held political office in this area during Reconstruction, Behrend brilliantly demonstrates both the promise of black emancipation and the white backlash to black freedom.”

Charles Gray of Bay St. Louis received the Dunbar Rowland Award for

his lifelong contributions to the preservation, study, and interpretation of Mississippi history. Gray is the longtime executive director of the Hancock County Historical Society (HCHS) and has been a member of the society since the early 1980s. He has also served on the Hancock County Historic Preservation Board and the Mississippi Historical Society's board of directors. Gray was instrumental in the acquisition of the Lobrano House, the documentation of local cemeteries and historic properties in Hancock County, and the digitization of the HCHS photograph collection. Gray was named Citizen of the Year for Hancock County by the local Chamber of Commerce in 1999, and as a result of his leadership, HCHS received the Mississippi Historical Society's Frank E. Everett, Jr. Award in 2010 for its outstanding contributions to the preservation and interpretation of local history.

Ocean Springs High School teacher Lamenda Hase received the John K. Bettersworth Award that is presented to an outstanding middle or high school history teacher. Hase has taught U.S. history, world geography, and advanced placement courses. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Southern Mississippi. The Bettersworth Award includes a \$300 cash award. James C. Giesen, Mississippi State University associate professor of history, received the 2016 Mississippi History Now Prize for his article, "The Truth About the Boll Weevil."

The Elbert R. Hilliard Oral History Award was presented to Mississippi State University Libraries for their exemplary digital oral history project "A Shaky Truce: Starkville Civil Rights Struggles, 1960–1980." The Oral History Award includes a \$300 cash award. The Bolivar County Historical Society received the Frank E. Everett, Jr. Award for its outstanding contributions to the preservation and interpretation of local history. The Everett Award carries a \$300 cash award. Telisha Dionne Bailey won the Franklin L. Riley Prize for her doctoral dissertation "Please Don't Forget about Me': African American Women, Mississippi, and the History of Crime and Punishment in Parchman Prison, 1890–1980," which she completed for her Ph.D. in history from the University of Mississippi. The Riley Prize is awarded biennially as merited and carries a \$500 cash award.

Ruth Poe White, a University of Kentucky graduate student, won the Glover Moore Prize for the best master's thesis dealing with a subject related to Mississippi history or biography. Poe completed her thesis, "A Tale of Two Cities: Vicksburg and Natchez, Mississippi, during the American Civil War," for her master's degree at the University of Southern Mississippi. The Moore Prize is awarded biennially as merited and carries a \$300 cash award.



Telisha Dionne Bailey received the Franklin L. Riley Prize from Trent Brown of Missouri S&T for her doctoral dissertation, “‘Please Don’t Forget about Me’: African American Women, Mississippi, and the History of Crime and Punishment in Parchman Prison, 1890–1980,” which she completed for her Ph.D. in history from the University of Mississippi.

Awards of Merit were presented to Wilma Mosley Clopton of Jackson for her documentary film projects highlighting the significant contributions of African Americans in Mississippi; Herb Power of Canton for his volunteer service overseeing the maintenance of the historic Old Madison County Jail and grounds; and William “Brother” Rogers of Starkville for his photographic documentation of historical markers in Mississippi and development of the website www.mississippimarkers.com.

Organizations receiving Awards of Merit included the City of Clinton for its documentation and commemoration of the 1875 Clinton riot and massacre; Department of History, Political Science, and Geography at the Mississippi University for Women for its documentation and commemoration of the 1966 integration of the school; the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and the Southern Documentary Project, an Institute of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi, for their production of the documentary film *50 Years and Forward: The Voting Rights Act in Mississippi*; and the Tupelo Convention and Visitors Bureau for its Heritage Trails historical marker program interpreting the Chickasaw, Civil War, and civil rights history of Lee County.



Wilma Mosley Clopton receives an Award of Merit from MHS board member Marco Giardino for her historical documentaries about African American history in Mississippi.



The Elbert R. Hilliard Oral History Award was presented to Mississippi State University Libraries for their exemplary digital oral history project "A Shaky Truce: Starkville Civil Rights Struggles, 1960–1980."