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## Mississippi Historical Society Awards Prizes at the 2023 Annual Meeting

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## Mississippi Historical Society Awards Prizes at the 2023 Annual Meeting



*Leslie-Burl McLemore received the Lifetime Achievement Award. Due to illness, Leslie II accepted the award from Daphne Chamberlain, MHS president.*

The Mississippi Historical Society held its annual meeting March 2-3 in Jackson to honor its 2023 award winners, including the best Mississippi History Book of 2022, the Lifetime Achievement Award, Teacher of the Year, and Awards of Merit.

Leslie-Burl McLemore, a former member of the Jackson City Council and current alderman in Walls, received the Lifetime Achievement Award. He was a leader in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) during the civil rights movement and a founding member of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1964 that made history in Atlantic City, New Jersey. As the founding chair of the political science department at Jackson State University, he was a trailblazing academician. More recently, McLemore was involved in the location, funding, and interpretation of the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum and played a central role in creating the Mississippi Freedom Trail, a group of historical markers about civil rights history.

Evan Howard Ashford, assistant professor of history at State University of New York Oneonta, received the Book of the Year Award for *Mississippi Zion: The Struggle for Liberation in Attala County, 1865–1915*. The book examines how African Americans in a rural Mississippi county shaped economic and social issues after the Civil War.

Jere Nash won the *Journal of Mississippi History* Article of the Year Award for “The Mississippi Legislature Changes the Flag,” which documented the remarkable, historic passage of a law in 2020 that led to the adoption of a new state flag for the state.



*Jere Nash accepted the Journal of Mississippi History Article of the Year Award from Brother Rogers, MHS secretary-treasurer.*

The Outstanding Local Historical Society Award was presented to the Historic Ocean Springs Association for its project installing more than thirty interpretive signs at landmark locations throughout the historic districts of Ocean Springs.



*Susan Gulledge and Melanie Allen of The Historic Ocean Springs Association accepted the Outstanding Local Historical Society Award from Daphne Chamberlain, MHS president.*

The Teacher of the Year Award was presented to Alexandria Drake of JPS-Tougaloo Early College High School.



*Alexandria Drake, JPS-Tougaloo Early College High School, accepted the MHS History Teacher of the Year Award from Daphne Chamberlain, MHS president.*

Awards of Merit were presented to the Mississippi Department of Agriculture & Commerce for publishing a history of the agency from the first commissioner in 1906 through the present; city of Jackson and Visit Jackson for organizing the celebration of the bicentennial of the city's founding; city of Madison for installing ten historical markers to mark significant sites in the city's history; Jackson State University for its community-building project to honor the life and legacy of James "Jim" Hill, a Reconstruction politician who was the last 19th century African American to be elected to statewide office in Mississippi; Light-House | Black Girl Projects for its work to add the Unita Blackwell Property to the National Register of Historic Places; Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument for opening as the first national monument in the state of Mississippi; Mississippi Humanities Council for its Museum on Main Street program; Mississippi Museum of Art for its brilliant exhibit called *A Movement in Every Direction: Legacies of the Great Migration*; and the Museum of African American History and Culture and the city of Natchez for designating twenty-seven African American historical sites with markers.

Tougaloo College professor Daphne Chamberlain completed her

term as president of the Society and welcomed new president Will Bowlin of Northeast Mississippi Community College. Rebecca Tuuri of the University of Southern Mississippi was elected vice president. New board members are DeeDee Baldwin, Mississippi State University; Sylvia Gist, Migration Heritage Foundation; Jean Greene, Utica Institute Museum; Sharelle Grim, Mississippi Delta Community College; Brian Perry, Mississippi Department of Agriculture & Commerce; and Rory Rafferty, Pass Christian Historical Society.

# Program of the 2023 Mississippi Historical Society Annual Meeting

By Brother Rogers

The Mississippi Historical Society (MHS) held its annual meeting March 2-3, 2023, at the Two Mississippi Museums in Jackson. The program began on Thursday morning, March 2, with the board meeting and annual business meeting.

The opening session and luncheon started with a welcome by Katie Blount, director of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. MHS president Daphne Chamberlain, vice president for strategic initiatives and social justice at Tougaloo College, then interviewed Reena Evers-Everette, executive director of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Institute, about her father's legacy on the approaching 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his assassination in 1963.

The first afternoon session was titled "Jackson State University and the HBCU History and Culture Access Consortium" and moderated by Garrard Lee from the Margaret Walker Center at Jackson State University (JSU). Panelists from the Walker Center included archivist Angela Stewart and students Chioma Ajuonuma, Jaylen McDaniels, Jeremy McDuffey, and Carolyne Rutto.



Roderick Red accepted the Excellence in History Award for directing the documentary, *The Defenders: How Lawyers Protected the Movement*.

The second afternoon session was titled “Women in Mississippi History.” It featured three presentations: “Dr. Jane Ellen McAllister: A Columbia University Teachers College Hero,” by Betty Gardner, professor emerita at Coppin State University, and David Rae Morris, photographer and film maker; “Outstanding Black Women of Yalobusha County” by Dottie Quaye Chapman Reed, columnist at the North Mississippi Herald; and “Commemorating Anne Moody” by Roscoe Barnes III, cultural heritage and tourism manager at Visit Natchez. DeeDee Baldwin, MHS board member and engagement librarian at Mississippi State University, moderated the panel.

The writing awards were presented at the evening banquet, with Will Bowlin, MHS vice president, presiding. The winner of the Book of the Year Award was Evan Howard Ashford, author of *Mississippi Zion: The Struggle for Liberation in Attala County, 1865-1915*. Jere Nash won the *Journal of Mississippi History* Best Article Award for “The Mississippi Legislature Changes the Flag.” The Outstanding Dissertation Award went to Mark Aidinoff of the University of Mississippi for “A More Updated Union: A History of New Liberals and Their New Computers in the New New South.” The Outstanding Thesis Award was claimed by Kara Goldman of Delta State University for “Queer in the South’s South: Women Desiring Women.”



*Evan Howard Ashford won the Book of the Year Award for Mississippi Zion: The Struggle for Liberation in Attala County, 1865–1915. He is pictured with the selection committee: MHS board members Amanda Clay Powers, Rebecca Tuuri, and TJ Taylor.*



*Marc Aidinoff accepted the Outstanding Dissertation Award from MHS board member Anne Marshall for his work, "A More Updated Union: A History of New Liberals and Their New Computers in the New New South."*

The first morning session on Friday, March 3, was called "Environmental History in Mississippi." It featured four presentations: "Through the Wilderness: Andrew Jackson's Military Road and the Settlement of America's Southern Frontier," by Dustin Mitchell Wren, social studies teacher at Itawamba Agricultural High School; "This Land of Sickness and Death: Reexamining the Siege of Corinth Using the Lens of Environmental History" by Christopher T. Slocombe, assistant director of admissions at Creighton University; "Jamie Whitten and the World: The Agrochemical Mississippi Delta and its Global Entanglements by Maarten Zwieters, assistant professor of American studies and history at the University of Groningen; and "Sus Scrofa: Feral Hogs as Prizes and Pests in Mississippi, 1970-2010." Jeff Rosenberg, MHS board member who works at the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, moderated the session.

The second morning session was titled "20<sup>th</sup> Century Mississippi History." It featured four presentations: "The Threefoot Building and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Meridian" by Kasey Mosley, graduate student in history at Mississippi State University; "Time Bomb in a River: Oxford, Natchez, and Two Million Pounds of Liquid Chlorine" by Micah Reuber, associate professor of history at Mississippi Valley State University; "Rail of Wrath: Racial Violence Along the Mobile & Ohio Railroad from 1875 to 1940" by Michael Tobin of Baltimore, Maryland; and "A Complete Revolution: Documenting Prison Reform and Civil Rights Papers



of Judge William C. Keady” by Kate Gregory, director of Mississippi Political Collections at Mississippi State University. Roscoe Barnes III, cultural heritage and tourism manager of Visit Natchez, moderated the panel.

MHS president Daphne Chamberlain presided over the awards luncheon. Incoming president Will Bowlin adjourned the meeting. Afternoon activities continued with tours of the Two Mississippi Museums, the Eudora Welty House & Garden, the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument, the COFO Building, and the Old Capitol.



*Incoming MHS president Will Bowlin of Northeast Mississippi Community College received the gavel of leadership from outgoing president Daphne Chamberlain of Tougaloo College.*



*National Park Service Superintendent Keena Graham and staff accepted an Award of Merit for opening the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument in Jackson.*



*The city of Jackson and Visit Jackson, represented by Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba, Rickey Thigpen, and others, received an Award of Merit for their work on the bicentennial of Jackson.*



*Jane Jarvis and Lucy Weber accepted an Award of Merit to the city of Madison for installing multiple historical markers to mark significant sites in the city's history.*



*Heather A. Denne and students at Jackson State University accepted an Award of Merit for a project to honor the life and legacy of 19th century Black political leader James “Jim” Hill.*



*Natalie Collier from The LightHouse | Black Girls Project accepted an Award of Merit for getting the Unita Blackwell property in Mayersville added to the National Register of Historic Places.*



*Jared Vardaman, Hannah East, and Claude Nash of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce accepted an Award of Merit for publishing a history of the agency from the first commissioner in 1906 through the present.*



*Stuart Rockoff and staff of the Mississippi Humanities Council accepted an Award of Merit for the organization’s Museum on Main Street program.*



*Lydia Jasper, curatorial assistant at the Mississippi Museum of Art, accepted an Award of Merit for the exhibit, “A Movement in Every Direction: Legacies of the Great Migration.”*



*Bobby Dennis, director of the Natchez Museum of African American History and Culture, and Natchez First Lady Marla Gibson accepted an Award of Merit for the museum and the city for designating 27 African American historical sites in Natchez with markers.*