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## Spotlights: Faculty, Alumna, Kaigler Children's Book Festival

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### Spotlight—Faculty:



**Dr. Laura Clark Hunt** joined the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) School of Library and Information Science in Fall 2021. She comes to the School of Library and Information Science with ten years' of experience in public and academic libraries. Her dissertation focused on emergent literacy in public libraries and was noted as one of the most *Notable Dissertations* for 2017 by *American Libraries* <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2017/05/01/2017-notable-dissertations/>.

Laura was part of a fellowship in 2017-2018 at the *Florida Public Archaeology Network* assessing public outreach programs throughout Florida. This project focused on reaching the public with the message of cultural heritage. Assessed programs varied from museum children's programming to underwater preservation programs for dive masters. Before coming to USM, her last position was an academic library director at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. She served on the University System of Georgia Committee with other college directors for the state.

Needs-Based Research is at the core of Laura's interest, along with collaborative research projects, as they offer opportunities for interdisciplinary discovery and impact. Her specific interests include cultural heritage, assessment in libraries, information literacy, and management in libraries.

### Spotlight—Alum

Mississippi native, **Floyce Thomas**, earned an Associate of Arts in Early Childhood Education from Utica Junior college and a Bachelor of Science in Childcare Development. She has two masters—a Master's in Elementary Education from Alcorn State University and a Master's of Library and Information Science Degree from Southern Miss in 2016.

After working as a library clerical assistant in both serials and acquisitions, on March 13, 2017, Floyce joined Alcorn State University as a Serials Librarian in the J. D. Boyd Library. She acts as the departmental liaison for various departments on campus, including the School of Business, Mathematics and Computer Science, Chemistry and Physics, Fine Arts, and Agricultural Business. Floyce's goal for those she works with on campus is to demonstrate how to successfully use the library resources and promote all of the useful library services. She holds memberships in Mississippi Library Association and the American Library Association, including Black Caucus RT and YPSRT (Young People Service Round Table); serves as a Student Advisor for Friends of the Library Student Group and the IMPACT Community Service Organization, a member of the ASU Alumni Local Chapter, and a member of the Alcorn Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.



## Spotlight—Program "The Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival"

The dates for the virtual 2022 Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival are April 6-8, 2022. Our Southern Miss Medallion winner is award-winning author and illustrator **Brian Selznick**, the author and illustrator of many books for children, including *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, winner of the 2008 Caldecott medal and the basis for the Oscar-winning movie *Hugo*, directed by Martin Scorsese. His book *Wonderstruck* was also made into a movie by Todd Haynes with a screenplay by Brian.

Other books include *The Marvels*, *The Doll People* trilogy by Ann M. Martin and Laura Godwin, *The Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins* by Barbara Kerley (winner of a Caldecott Honor), and *Amelia and Eleanor Go For a Ride* by Pam Munoz Ryan. Brian and his husband David Serlin collaborated on a 158-page beginning reader called *Baby Monkey*, *Private Eye*. To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the beloved *Harry Potter* series, Brian created new covers and a box for all seven books. His newest book, *Kaleidoscope*, was published in 2021.

Additional keynotes include:

**Jen Bryant** is an American poet, novelist, and children's author. She has won several awards for her work, most notably the Robert F. Sibert International Book Medal for *The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus*, the NCTE Orbis Pictus Award, and the Charlotte Zolotow Honor Award for *A River of Words: The Story of William Carlos Williams*, and the Schneider Family Book Award for *Six Dots: A Story of Young Louis Braille*.

**Lesla Cline-Ransome** and **James Ransome** are the de Grummond Children's Literature Lecturers for 2022. Lesa's debut middle-grade novel, *Finding Langston*, was the 2019 winner of the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction and received the Coretta Scott King Award Author Honor. Her newest book, *Leaving Lymon*, is a companion novel to *Finding Langston*. Lesa's husband **James Ransome** was named by The Children's Book Council as one of the 75 authors and

illustrators everyone should know. James and Lesa have collaborated on many books, including *Overground Railroad* and *Before She Was Harriet*.

**Raúl the Third** is an award-winning illustrator, author, and artist living in Boston. His work centers on the contemporary Mexican-American experience and his memories of growing up in El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. *Lowriders in Space* was nominated for a Texas Blue Bonnet award in 2016-2017, and Raúl was awarded the prestigious Pura Belpré Award for Illustration for *Lowriders to the Center of the Earth*.

**Eric L. Tribunella** is the author of *Melancholia and Maturation: The Use of Trauma in American Children's Literature* (2010), co-author of *Reading Children's Literature: A Critical Introduction* (2013 & 2019) with Carrie Hintz. His articles include "Between Boys: Edward Stevenson's Left to Themselves (1891) and the Birth of Gay Children's Literature," which received the Children's Literature Association Article Award in 2014. His essay on sexuality in children's and young adult literature was published in the *Cambridge History of Lesbian and Gay Literature* (Cambridge UP, 2014).

**Donna Washington** is the 2022 Coleen Salley Storytelling Award Winner. Donna is an award-winning recording artist and has performed at thousands of schools and libraries and numerous storytelling festivals throughout the country. She has also been featured at numerous storytelling festivals, including the 2004 National Storytelling Festival, The Illinois Storytelling Festival, The Three Rivers Festival, The St. Louis Storytelling Festival, The NC StoryFest, The Corn Island and Cave Run Festivals in KY, and the Broward County Children's & Ocala Storytelling Festivals in FL- to name a few.

There will be a reduced registration rate for the 2022 Children's Book Festival, and CEUs will still be offered to Mississippi educators. Registered virtual participants will have access to live sessions and recordings. All information and updates about the Festival will be posted on the website at [www.usm.edu/childrens-book-festival](http://www.usm.edu/childrens-book-festival).

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*Virtual* **FAY B. KAIGLER  
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**APRIL 6-8**



*with* **SOUTHERN MISS  
MEDALLION WINNER  
— BRIAN —  
SELZNICK**

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