

MPA Newsletter

FALL 2024



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2024 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

President:

David Gavel, Ph.D.
steadfast.gavel@gmail.com
Hattiesburg

President-Elect:

Amanda Gugliano, PsyD
amanda.gugliano@msh.ms.gov
Whitfield

**Immediate Past-President
& Convention Chair:**

Kristy McRaney, Ph.D.
kristy.mcraney@usm.edu
Hattiesburg

Financial Officer:

Jeff Parker, Ph.D.
jparker@umc.edu
Jackson

Communications Officer:

Joshua Fulwiler, Ph.D.
cardinalclinical@gmail.com
Tupelo

Region 1 Representative:

Ty Stafford, Ph.D.
tws37@msstate.edu
Starkville

Region 2 Representative:

Liz Woodruff, Ph.D.
elissa@drelissawoodruff.com
Ridgeland

Region 3 Representative:

Geralyn Datz, Ph.D., MP
drdatz@southernbmed.com
Hattiesburg

Region 4 Representative:

Jennifer Ladner-Graham, Ph.D.
jenmladner@gmail.com
Picayune

APPOINTED POSITIONS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Legislative Relations Officer:

Natalie Gaughf, Ph.D., ABPP

Continuing Education Chair:

Kathryn Waggoner, PsyD, ABPP

Business of Practice Chair:

Liz Woodruff, Ph.D.

Public Education Chair:

David Gavel, Ph.D.

Psychology and Law Task Force Chair:

Amanda Gugliano, PsyD

Telehealth Rural Health Coordinator:

Joshua Fulwiler, Ph.D.

Diversity Chair:

Ryan Liu-Pham, Ph.D.

Historian:

Angela Herzog, Ph.D.

Early Career Psychologist Chair:

Nathan Ross, Ph.D.

Membership Chair:

Barbara Martin, Ph.D.

Disaster Response Chair:

Vacant

Academic/Training Chair:

Michael Nadorff, Ph.D.

Federal Advocacy Coordinator:

Danielle Maack, Ph.D.

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A CALL TO ACTION FROM THE PRESIDENT



David Gavel, Ph.D.

What a year! As an organization, MPA has been incredibly active in 2024. Let's just briefly review some of what this year has held.

- PSYPACT legislation was passed and enacted.
- MPA membership numbers increased by nearly 10% year-over-year.
- MPA Annual Convention attendance increased by 18% over 2023.
- Approximately 25% of the membership participated in events such as the Virtual Townhall and the return of Regional Mixers.
- We implemented significant operational upgrades to our website and social media presence.
- The MPA Convention included the return of MPA Fellow status and an increase in student involvement!

In addition to the organizational activity, a number of you have been exceptionally productive at the individual level. Here are just a few highlights I personally spoke to you all about.

- New private practices,
- Managing multi-million-dollar grants for research and community aid,
- Responding to the needs of underserved populations in your community,
- Career advancement in your agency/organization,
- Participating in advocacy or legislative efforts, and
- Assisting in the design of new facilities intended to better meet the needs of Mississippians in crisis.

These lists include just a few tangible indicators that our membership has been active, productive, and engaged with one another for the goal of advancing of our collective discipline throughout the state. These are initiatives and roles each of you carry out every day and I consider myself privileged to be a part of what MPA is doing as a collective voice for the advancement of psychology in Mississippi.

With that in mind, I need to issue a challenge to us all. Whether you are in the late stage, early years, or enthusiastic graduate student phase of your career, you have an integral part to play in the advancement of psychology within the greater mental health environment of Mississippi. As you've heard/read me articulate before, I believe MPA rebounded from the COVID era and is riding much needed momentum in an upward direction. As we approach 2025, there are several movements we must USE that energy to address. You will continue to hear more about those in the near future, but for now, I want to issue a Call to Action to all of my amazing colleagues.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER CONTINUED

To my seasoned expert colleagues: You hold wisdom gleaned from your lived experiences as the field/world has changed over the decades. Your stories, those of success and shortcomings, provide context that generations behind you must know about if they are to build on your successes and avoid similar pitfalls. Your input in this new era is as valuable as ever and I challenge you to increase your 2025 involvement. Perhaps you join a leadership committee, attend an MPA event you have never been to, or recruit a new member whose voice needs to be heard. Even if your only role with MPA in 2025 is to maintain a membership and share one story about your professional life with colleagues at a Regional Mixer, you have contributed value to the organization in a way that only you could. Fortunately, I know many of you will go far beyond that and I look forward to more conversations like the ones I had last month with Drs. Martin, Herzog, and Hetrick about their history in our state.

To my earlier career colleagues: Your perspective may not include decades of experience, but it does hold fresh ways of thinking, youthful vigor, and a personal stake in the direction of our discipline. If you expect to be practicing/teaching/training beyond 2030, you have MUCH to gain or lose based on the advancement of our discipline at the state and national level. If you do not participate beyond the walls of your employment environment, you miss out on the opportunity to influence that direction and advocate for your own success. Starting or maintaining MPA membership in 2025 and actively contributing to its efforts is just one of many ways you can guide your professional future. Reach out to a colleague and advance your professional network. Provide your input to APA and MPA calls for comments. Attend Day at the Capitol and meet a few folks. Whatever you do, don't miss the chance to be heard.

To the next generation: The time to begin networking and learning about the organizational level of your future career is now. I know your life is consumed by books, articles, exams, and papers. You are focused on microskills, stats, and integrated reports. Your dreams are consumed by the internship resume and how to increase the all-important "fit." At this phase of your career, organizational involvement does not have to be time consuming to be valuable. Be informed. Ask questions. Show off a poster. Eat some free food at annual events. The decisions of today impact the professional opportunities of tomorrow. You are invested in tomorrow. So be a part of today.

WHOOOO! Deep breath! I know this was long and if you're still reading, you're probably wondering why this article sounded like a recruitment add. Well, it was. It absolutely was. I believe in the value of psychologists across the spectrum of our culture. I love the state of Mississippi. And I wholeheartedly believe that no organization such as ours can remain static. It is either advancing or degrading. MPA is currently advancing. What role would you like to play in that?

Be well,

David Gavel, Ph.D.
MPA President

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• **JOIN MPA TODAY**

and get the rest
of the year for
FREE!



Join MPA now and get full member benefits through the end of 2025!

- ✓ **Gain access to the MPA Listserv**
- ✓ **Receive members-only pricing at all MPA Events**
- ✓ **Get referrals from our online member database**
- ✓ **Grow your professional network**

• **Contact Now**



(601) 608-7677



info@mpassoc.org



www.mpassoc.org/membership

LETTER FROM THE CONVENTION CHAIR



Hello, MPA members.

I don't know about each of you, but I am still smiling thinking back on convention. I hope those of you who were able to join us had as wonderful of a time as I did. MPA's annual convention has always been one of my favorite times as it provides a chance to connect with everyone from across the state. I love learning more about what everyone is doing professionally, and it is nice to have a chance to catch up with how people are doing personally as well. This year was one for the books and was full of learning, connecting and networking, and countless memories being made. We had a wonderful team that coordinated all the magic of convention, and that is all due to an amazing trio - a giant thank you goes out to LaDarion, Taylor, and Lauren with Ten One Strategies! They really did a stellar job!

Kristy McRaney, Ph.D. As my term comes to an end as Immediate Past President, I want to say thank you to our membership for allowing me to serve MPA in presidential leadership roles. It's been a wonderful experience and honor, and I'm excited to see MPA continue to grow and flourish in the years to come. I am also looking forward to serving in a different leadership role for MPA as the Region Three Representative next year. I hope each of you has a wonderful fall and holiday season.

Kristy McRaney
Immediate Past-President & 2024 Convention Chair

2025 EC ELECTION RESULTS

WE ARE THRILLED TO ANNOUNCE OUR NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS FOR THE 2025 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL!



Ty Stafford, Ph.D.
President-Elect
2025



Michael Nadorff, Ph.D.
Financial Officer
2025-2026



Hilary DeShong, Ph.D.
Region 1 Representative
2025-2026



Kristy McRaney, Ph.D.
Region 3 Representative
2025-2026

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CONVENTION



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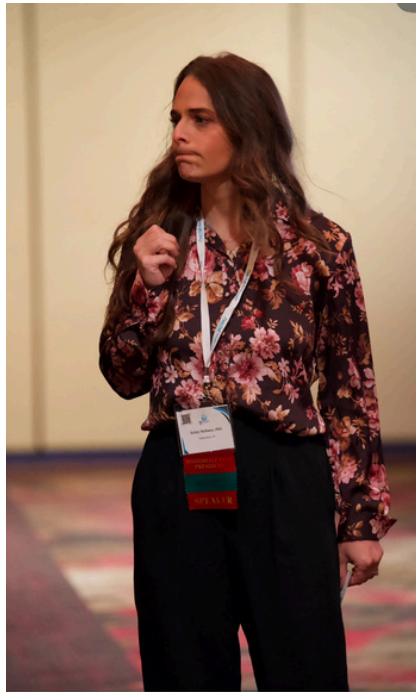
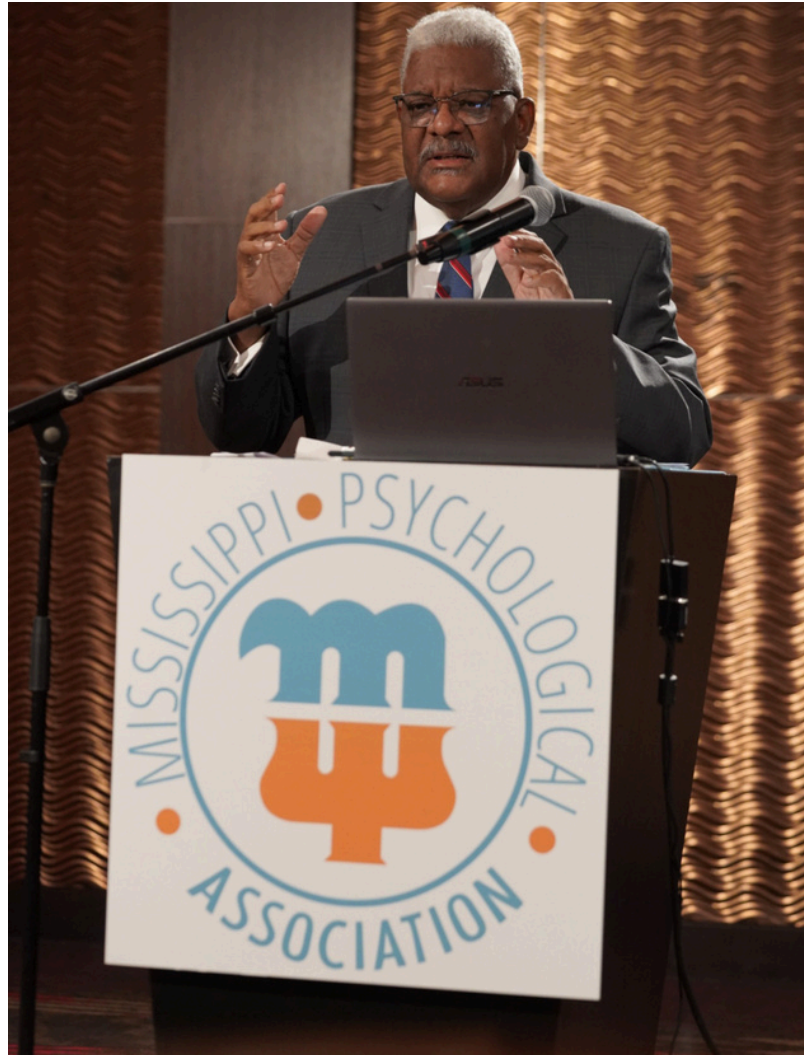
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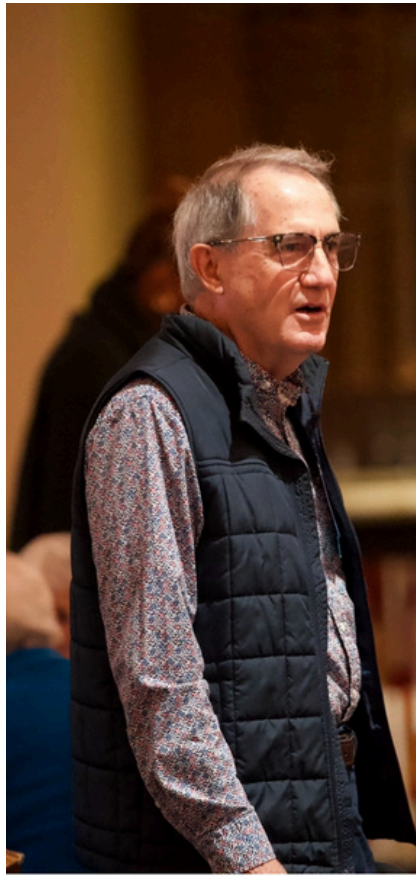
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CONVENTION AWARDS

Distinguished Teaching of Psychology Award - Dr. Natalie Gaugh

Outstanding Early Career Psychologist Award - Dr. Hallie Smith

Distinguished Practitioner Award - Dr. John Stoudenmire

Distinguished Legislative Achievement Award - Senator Joey Fillingane

Humanitarian Award - Dr. Jeff Parker

Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award - Dr. Kelsey Bonfils

Kinloch Gill Award - Dr. Kristy McRaney

C.D. Gaston Spirit of MPA Award - Dr. Jana Martin

Past President Award - Dr. Kristy McRaney

2024 MPA Fellows

Dr. Molly Clark

Dr. Criss Lott

Dr. Jeff Parker

Dr. Patrick Smith

Student Data Blitz

1st Place - Brittany Garza, University of Southern Mississippi

Lourdes C. Rodriguez, BS, Claudia Abril-Ochoa, BS, Zachary LaBrot, Ph.D.

2nd Place - Lauren Hales, University of Southern Mississippi

Austen Anderson, Ph.D., Lindsey Ostermiller, BS, Isabel Rice, MS, Joshua Batia, BS

3rd Place - Lindsey Ostermiller, University of Southern Mississippi

Lauren S. Hales, MS, Hannah Linss, BS, Jennifer Lemacks, Ph.D., Austen R. Anderson, Ph.D.

Student Poster Presentation

1st Place - Lillian A. Hammer, University of Southern Mississippi

Kelsey A. Bonfils, Ph.D.

2nd Place - Cassi Springfield, University of Southern Mississippi

Scott Willoughby, Ph.D., Kelsey Bonfils, Ph.D.

3rd Place - Jewel Lynne Shirley, Mississippi State University, Meridian Campus

Tawny Evans McCleon, Ph.D., NCSP

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CONVENTION AWARDS



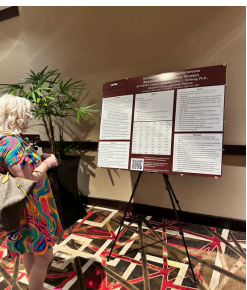
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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



LaDarion Ammons

Dear Members of the Mississippi Psychological Association,

Wow—what a year it’s been! The Ten One team has been hard at work alongside all of you, focused on building MPA to its full potential, and the results are something we can all be proud of.

This year, we launched a brand-new website, making it easier for members to stay connected and up-to-date with association news. We also hosted regional mixers to bring our community together, held a successful town hall, and—perhaps one of the biggest wins—worked with our lobbyist, Chip Reno, to get PSYPACT passed. What a milestone for psychology in Mississippi!

Our annual convention brought us back to pre-COVID attendance levels, a great testament to the strength and dedication of our members. Even better, membership is up, showing that more psychologists than ever see the value of being part of MPA.

But this is just the beginning. Let’s continue working together, bringing more psychologists into the fold, and building MPA into an even stronger, more vibrant association. Together, we can make MPA better than ever!

Thank you for being part of this incredible year, and I look forward to all that we’ll achieve in the future.

Warm regards,

LaDarion Ammons
Executive Director



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BYLAWS AMENDMENT VOTE

MPA Members,

Following in-depth discussions by the ad hoc Bylaws Committee and the Executive Council, MPA Leadership has drafted proposed amendments to the MPA Bylaws. Please review the proposed changes and cast your vote on them.

Proposed changes and reasoning:

SUMMARY

- Article VI, 6.1: Creates an elected Membership Officer position on the Executive Council.
- Article VI, 6.2: Clarifies filling vacated Executive Council positions.
- Article VI, 6.3: Broadens the section to cover all vacated positions and removes redundancy.
- Article XII: Fixes a spelling error in "Provision".

Please login to the MPA website for full details.

[MEMBER LOGIN](#)

[VOTE](#)

FEATURE FROM THE APA COUNCIL REP



On August 7, 2024, at the American Psychological Association (APA) Council of Representatives meeting, Jennifer F. Kelly, PhD was honored with the Raymond D. Fowler Award for all of her work with state psychological associations and with APA.

Dr. Kelly has been a friend of the Mississippi Psychological Association and a friend to many of us individual psychologists over the years. Please feel free to reach out to Dr. Kelly and congratulate her on this honor.

Sincerely,

Natalie W. Gaughf, PhD, ABPP
APA Council Representative

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SAVE THE DATE

SEPTEMBER 24-26, 2025

76TH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE
MISSISSIPPI PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

STRANGER MINDS



Exploring the
Uncharted Territories
of Psychology