

**The Society of Alabama Archivists Annual Meeting**

**Opelika Public Library**

**October 18, 2024 at 1:20 p.m.**

Dr. Dees called the meeting to order at 1:22 p.m. Executive Board present included: President Dr. Deidra Dees, Treasurer Roland McDonald, Secretary Emily Fayard, Executive Committee Member Catherine Oseas, Historian Mary Jo Scott, Executive Committee Member Karen Horton, and Former President Samantha McNeilly.

Dr. Dees thanked sponsors for their generous support including Hollinger Metal Edge who sponsored our breakfast and Preserve South who sponsored our snack break. Dr. Dees presented the slate of proposed 2024-2025 officers from the nominations committee: President – Robin Watson, Vice President – Veronica Henderson, and Secretary – Rachel Jones Lopez. Roland McDonald will remain Treasurer for the 2nd year of a 3-year term that he was re-elected to last year. Dr. Dees also recognized Mary Jo Scott for her service as the SALA Historian and announced Ms. Scott will remain in the Historian role as appointed by the Executive Board. Dr. Dees presented the Executive Committee members and their remaining term lengths as: Catherine Oseas for 3 years, Laura Woodard for 2 years, and Karen Horton for 1 year and asked for them to stand for recognition. Ms. Oseas announced that Laura Woodard is not present. Dr. Dees opened the floor for any other nominations, none were presented. All membership in favor of 2024-2025 Executive Board that was presented stated “Aye”. There were no objections. Motion carried to accept the nominations as presented. Congratulations to the new Officers and Executive Committee.

Dr. Dees asked Ms. Catherine Oseas to come forward to present Certificates of Recognition to the 2023-2024 Officers. The certificates were printed on archival grade 25% cotton paper in an archival grade presentation sleeve. Ms. Oseas presented a Certificate to Dr. Dees for serving as 2023-24 President, Emily Fayard for serving as 2023-24 Secretary, Roland McDonald for serving as 2023-24 Treasurer, and Mary Jo Scott for serving as 2023-24 Historian - also known as the “Archivist of the Archivists.” Dr. Dees stated that Ms. Robin Watson will also receive a Certificate of Recognition for serving as 2023-24 Vice President, however, Ms. Watson was absent from attending the Business Meeting due to her new arrival of a baby girl – SALA members sent congratulations to Ms. Watson.

Dr. Dees announced Ms. Keri Hallford will be presenting the 2024 Marvin Yeoman Whiting Award. Ms. Hallford was happy to announce Ms. Rebekah Davis as the winner of the 2024 Marvin Yeoman Whiting Award for her impressive curriculum vitae and accomplishments in the archival world that made a huge impact, especially within the state of Alabama. Ms. Davis was welcomed onto the stage to receive her award and gave a thank you speech.

Dr. Dees invited Chair of the Awards Committee, Mr. Jim Baggett, to the stage to share a new awards proposal on behalf of the Awards Committee. Mr. Baggett thanked Emily Fayard and Keri Hallford for their service on Awards Committee for the last two years. Mr. Baggett shared the proposal with the Society Membership to introduce two new awards alongside the Marvin Yeoman Whiting Award and stated that the Awards Committee wanted to introduce this idea today for discussion only, not for official approval at this time. The criteria for the Whiting Award was written so that individuals and institutions are eligible, however, overtime it became more of a lifetime achievement award for those who are already mature in their profession. The presented proposal introduces two new awards: one for institutions and organizations and one for individuals who are earlier in their archival career. Mr. Baggett stated that adding two additional awards would not be a financial burden to the Society since the award plaques only cost around $50. Mr. Baggett opened the floor for discussion amongst the Membership. One member asked if all awards will be named after Whiting and Mr. Baggett responded that the new awards will have different names, which will have to be decided on. One member asked if all three awards would be presented every year, Mr. Baggett responded that there have been enough nominees each year that we could award all three annually. One member asked if any thought had been given to providing a monetary award for the early career award to an individual, Mr. Baggett responded that there is probably no money for that, but that everything is on the table in terms of discussion. There has not been a monetary award offered in recent times. Treasurer McDonald confirmed that there are no identifiable funds that still exist from this previous award. It was stated that there would probably need to be some fundraising to offer a scholarship with a monetary award. One member asked if the Whiting Award criteria would remain the same focused on the aspect of local history, Mr. Baggett responded that the only criteria change to the Whiting award would be to remove institutions as eligible. Institutions were largely what was getting shortchanged from receiving the Whiting Award but the new proposed award would eliminate that issue. Ms. Rebekah Davis made a comment to consider for the early career award to be inclusive of first decade of archival career since people come into a career in archives at different ages. Dr. Martin T. Olliff commented that a precedent has been set with awarding the Whiting Award every year, and over time, the precedent can begin to feel like bylaws, so it may be worth considering not presenting all of the new awards annually in order to avoid getting “locked in” to awarding each award every year. Keri Hallford mentioned that since the awards nomination process has been online, there has been an influx of good nominations each year and it has been difficult to select a winner. One member asked about the procedure for making these new awards official, “Would the proposal be voted on by the membership?” The President answered yes. It was also asked, “What is the lead time for the proposal to be given to the Membership before voting to make it official?”  Ms. Hallford answered that it takes 30 days for a vote of the Membership. It was stated a committee should be formed to work on this awards proposal to officially present next year. Mr. Baggett thanked everyone for having discussion and said we will be keeping everyone posted then turned the program back over to President Dr. Dees for the Officer’s Reports.

Dr. Dees started the President’s Report by recognizing the Executive Board, Ms. Keri Hallford, and Ms. Meredith McDonough with appreciation for all their work preparing for the conference. Dr. Dees announced an opportunity that will soon become available for SALA members for an upcoming writer’s retreat at the Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts and Humanities at Pebble Hill guest house at Auburn University that will be held April 28 through May 2, 2025. Dr. Dees invited Emily Fayard to give more details on the retreat opportunity. Ms. Fayard explained that Dr. Mark Wilson shared the vision for offering this writer’s retreat in hopes that someone will utilize this opportunity to write about Alabama History. Dr. Wilson gave a tour of the newly built guest house to early SALA attendees the day prior to the Annual Meeting showcasing its nice atmosphere conducive to writing. Ms. Fayard said the applications for the writer’s retreat opportunity will be sent out via the SALA email listserv once made available, expected around December 15, and encouraged anyone interested in the opportunity to apply.

Dr. Dees gave the Vice President’s Report, filling in for Ms. Robin Watson. She gave a thank you to the Board of Officers and Executive Committee who helped with behind the scenes planning for the annual meeting. Dr. Dees credited Ms. Watson with announcing the call for proposals and arranging the schedule of presentations. Dr. Dees thanked all who responded to the call for proposals and all of the presenters that contributed to making this annual meeting a wonderful program.

Emily Fayard gave the Secretary’s Report stating the Executive Board met monthly to plan for the annual meeting. Emily reported all meetings were well attended with participation from members of the Executive Board made up of the Officers, Executive Committee, last year’s president, and Historian. She thanked Historian Mary Jo Scott and former President Samantha McNeilly for attending the meetings as their background of knowledge in history of the organization and how to plan the meeting was very helpful since Officers change each year. She stated there was an in-person meeting at the beginning of the year and the rest of the meetings were conducted via Zoom. Emily turned it over to Roland McDonald for the Treasurer’s Report.

Roland McDonald gave the Treasurer’s Report stating that there was just under $5,000 in expenditures and income of just under $4,000 with a check of just under $500 that will be coming in from some organizations paying for their members and three other members who have contacted him to submit payment as well. The final check from last year is reflected on this report and it was just under $3,000. Mr. McDonald asked if there were any questions or discrepancies. No comments from Membership. Mr. McDonald turned the program back over to President.

Dr. Dees announced a $100 honorarium check and Poarch Creek Indian Tribal lapel pins will go to the Opelika High School Choir known as the Opelika Ovations as a thank you for their beautiful performance this morning.

Dr. Dees opened the floor for nominations for a location for the 2025 SALA Annual Meeting. One member suggested to have the meeting somewhere in north central Alabama. Another member proposed the location of University of Alabama at Huntsville. It was voted on by the membership. All in favor, none opposed. The 2025 Society of Alabama Archivist annual meeting will be held at University of Alabama at Huntsville.

As the last order of business, Dr. Dees announced that Gaylord Archival sponsored a door prize of a $150 gift card for Gaylord Archival supplies. Mr. McDonald drew the raffle ticket that revealed the winner of the door prize was Ms. Lauren Arnaud—he congratulated her. She is a graduate of Auburn University and current student of University of Mississippi, as well as a first-time SALA attendee.

Dr. Dees thanked everyone for their attendance.

Meeting adjourned at 2:04 p.m.

*Minutes recorded by Secretary Emily Fayard*