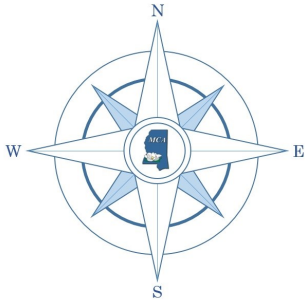


Fall 2024



MISSISSIPPI COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

THE COMPASS

Letter from the President

Hello MCA,

First, I want to thank you all for the opportunity to serve the Mississippi Counseling Association as a President. I have been involved with MCA for most of the last twenty plus years and I have loved my time with the organization. The Mississippi Counseling Association has been such a great network to meet people as well as develop long-term friendships with counselors from around the State of Mississippi.

This year’s theme for our annual conference is “Counselors Helping Counselors.” The reason I selected this theme has to do with the two groups of counselors we mainly represent. School counselors and mental health counselors are tasked with serving our great state in many different settings. My goal for the conference is to help counselors understand more about the areas of counseling they are unfamiliar with. My belief is if we have a better understanding of the different systems where counselors work it will help us serve our clients more effectively.

As a mental health counselor, I have been lucky to have several close counselor friends who are school counselors. This has helped me have a better understanding of school counseling. Additionally, my involvement with MCA has allowed me to help work on legislation for school counselors and mental health counselors. I believe that we have to work together and the first step of that is understanding how school counselors and mental health counselors can more effectively work together.

A second part of “Counselors Helping Counselors” relates to the overall mental health of counselors in the field. We all work hard with our clients no matter what setting. We are often tasked with seeing people at their worst or most vulnerable. The stresses of our career can often weigh heavily on each of us. Being mentally healthy is especially important for our long-term success. The stress of our jobs is only one factor. We are regular people with regular problems. Sometimes the same problems as our clients.

....message continued on page 5.

VOTE TODAY!

It is time to vote for MCA Officers. Newly elected officers will take office on July 1, 2025. Members must login to their MCA account to vote. Every vote matters! **October 31, 2024** is the deadline to vote.

President-Elect-Elect Candidates:

Walter Frazier
Leona Richards-Bishop

Treasurer Candidates:

Claire Threatt
Jana’ Slay

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Message from the Executive Director



It has been a pleasure to spend the last few months serving as the new Executive Director for The Mississippi Counseling Association. I have enjoyed many years as active member of MCA, but I am fortunate that I am now serving in a role where I can expand my knowledge and passion for what our association does and represents.

Over the years I served as the president of MCA, MSCA, and Capitol Area, along with many other leadership roles, all of which have equipped me with the knowledge and skills necessary to serve in this position. Currently, I still participate as a member on the Government Relations and Ethics Committees. In my role as the Executive Director for MCA, I am here to help our members in various ways such as through our

conference, CEU opportunities, networking, and many other things. But I will also use this time to represent our association in diverse opportunities ranging from executive director meetings to our political leaders who help pave the path forward.

MCA has many ways to offer support for our members through our various regions and divisions which I would love to help you get more involved if you don't know where to begin; however, MCA also offers support to membership by using one of the top lobbying firms in the south. Our lobbyist spends countless hours working to protect our profession as we continue to pave a path forward, and this is another area our association would love for you to be engaged.

If you find yourself wanting or needing to reach out, please note that this role is a part time position which operates during the posted office hours of Monday – Thursday, 9 AM – 3 PM. If your call cannot be answered immediately, please leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

You may also reach me at mcaoffice@mscounselor.org. I look forward to speaking with you in the future.

Hopefully we will see each of

you at our fall conference in Biloxi on November 6 – 8, 2024.

Jayme Sullivan, Ed.S., NCC,
NCSC, LPC

MCA Executive Director

**REGISTER
NOW!**

**2024 MCA Fall
Conference**

Nov. 6-8, 2024

**MS Gulf Coast
Convention Center
Biloxi, MS**

[https://mica.
memberclicks.net/](https://mica.memberclicks.net/)



MISSISSIPPI COUNSELING ASSOCIATION
A Branch of American Counseling Association
Serving Mississippi since 1950

MCA President's message continued...

To help “Counselors Help Counselors” I would like to help MCA develop a member help line. The member help line would allow members of MCA to have a means to contact MCA and be directed to a provider to either deal with crisis or help find services to address whatever may be going on in their personal lives. Many professional organizations offer services such as these and I think MCA could offer something like this as a part of annual membership. I will speak more about this at the conference, but I will also be looking for volunteers to help as well.

This year's conference is being put together by a great crew of people. Our conference co-chairs, Claire Threatt and Hunter Burns, have done an outstanding job putting together our Conference. We have a broad spectrum of learning opportunities for counselors who will be attending the November. We will, of course, be back on the beautiful Mississippi Gulf Coast for the conference. The venue will be familiar for those who have attended in the past. The Convention Center has played host for MCA for many years, and we continue to work to keep this venue part of our annual conference in the future.

I would like to recognize the service of Paulette Edwards and Lori Parker. They have served as co-executive directors of MCA and finished their service in those roles on June 30th. I want to personally thank them for my time working with both and for answering all my questions regardless of how annoying they might have been. Thank you, Paulette and Lori, MCA owes you a debt of gratitude.

With the resignation of Paulette and Lori, MCA was left with a vacancy to fill. As many of you know, Jayme Sullivan was selected to become our new Executive Director. To say Jayme knows a lot about MCA is an understatement. I couldn't think of a better person to help MCA move forward and Jayme brings a wealth of knowledge and a love for the counseling profession.

I would like to extend a special thank you to Karla Weir for her help in transitioning to the President role this year. Karla has been kind and gracious along with offering me a wealth of knowledge from her time as President. She has been a great President and will continue to serve MCA in the future.

Following my term as President, Heather Norton will take over as President on July 1, 2025. It has been wonderful to work with Heather this year and I look forward to helping her as she transitions to President. MCA will be in good hands.

I would like to thank the people serving on the Administrative Council, Executive Board, Division officers, Regional Offers, committee members and anyone else that works hard for MCA. Thank you sincerely. I love this organization, and the people who are a part of it.

I would encourage anyone who feels that they would like to serve in any role in MCA, please ask anyone and we will find you a place. I know it seems scary, but it is a decision you will not regret.

I look forward to seeing every one of you at the MCA Annual Conference on the Coast. Safe travels and remember to vote before you head to the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Stafford, MS, LPC

APPLY NOW!

2024 MCA Scholarship Applications

Deadline to apply or nominate a worthy counselor is October 12, 2024!

Email: mcaoffice@mscounselor.org

Phone: 769-308-7925

******To access the scholarship applications, visit the MCA website, search under the “About Us” link..******

MCA President Elect-Elect Candidates



Leona Richards-Bishop, owner of Count It All Joy Counseling Services, is a Licensed Professional Counselor-Supervisor committed to helping others find JOY in their JOURNEY. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Tougaloo College and a Masters and Specialist Degrees in Counseling from Delta State University. She has over 25 years of experience in various settings, including mental health, schools, and private practice. An IFS-Informed EMDR therapist, Leona is also an EMDRIA Certified EMDR Therapist and Consultant-In-Training, Board Certified Telehealth Therapist, and National Board Certified (School-Retired) Counselor.

Leona has had the privilege of mentoring and supervising many clinicians and therapists throughout her career, guiding them on their professional paths. In 2007, she was honored to be appointed by Governor Barbour to serve a five-year term on the MS Board of Examiners for Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC), where she also served as Vice Chair. Mrs. Bishop has been grateful to receive several awards, including the Mississippi Counseling Association (MCA) Elementary/Middle School Program of the Year for PBIS Implementation and Outstanding Clinical Mental Health Counselor of the Year. She is proud to have led the Capital Area Counseling Association to be recognized as the MCA Outstanding Region of the Year during her presidency.

A devoted member of the MCA since graduate school, Leona has frequently presented at state and regional conferences, contributing to developing our professional identity and advocacy within our field. She served as past president of the Capital Area Counseling Association and remains connected with affiliated divisions. Leona Richards-Bishop remains deeply committed to empowering others through her work and is dedicated to fostering unity and collaboration within the counseling profession. Leona's vision is to bring diverse voices and perspectives together, strengthening our collective impact and advancing our profession with a focus on compassion, integrity, and service.



Walter Frazier has served in various capacities with the Mississippi Counseling Association and Mississippi Licensed Professional Counselors Association over the past 25 years. For MCA, I served as the editor of the MCA Journal for three years, and I had the privilege of publishing two editions of the journal during that time. I served as President of MLPCA back when Hurricane Katrina came ashore, and I had the opportunity to lead the Nurturing the Nurture Conference we held on the Gulf Coast on the 1-year anniversary of Katrina's landfall. Since then, I completed a PhD in Counselor Education, and I served as a faculty member and Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program Coordinator at Mississippi College for eight years and then on faculty at Walden University for the past nine years. Most recently, I have served as the Associated Dean and Director of Academic Quality of the School of Counseling at Walden University since 2018.

I recognize that much has changed in our national organization over the past 25 years, particularly the disconnection of divisions such as AMHCA and ASCA. Over this time, counselors have worked hard to establish a professional identity while also maintaining the individual discipline characteristics across School Counselor, Mental Health Counselor, Addictions Counselor, and so on. Despite the push and pull that has impacted relationships between disciplines within counseling, the profession has grown. Events such as COVID-19 and all the political turmoil across the nation and even within our state have highlighted the value of counselors as well as challenged us to maintain our common roles for the good of the children in our schools, the marginalized members of our society, and the counselors across all disciplines within our profession. It is my position that we must celebrate and promote the unique traits that characterize each specialized practice area while also nurturing the foundations of our professional identity. We are all counselors, and together we combine multiple characteristics that make us stronger as a profession.

MCA Treasurer Candidates



Jana' Slay is a dedicated school counselor with a strong commitment to the well-being and development of students. Currently serving as the School Counselor at Madison Crossing Elementary (MCE), Slay began her career at St. Joseph Catholic School in Greenville, MS, where she provided comprehensive K-12 counseling services.

A proud graduate of Alabama A&M University with a BA in Psychology, Slay furthered her education at Delta State University, earning both an M.Ed. and Ed.S. in School Counseling. During her time at Delta State, she became a member of Chi Sigma Iota and actively participated in the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the Mississippi Counseling Association (MCA).

In 2019, Slay served as the President of MCA's Delta Region and was selected as an Emerging Leader of MCA in 2021. Her expertise in the field is demonstrated through numerous presentations at counseling conferences, including Woodall and MCA. As a National Certified Counselor and National Certified School Counselor, Slay is committed to excellence in the field of counseling.

Jana' Slay is enthusiastic about the opportunity to serve as the Treasurer of the Mississippi Counseling Association, bringing a wealth of experience, dedication, and leadership to the role.



It is an honor and privilege to be running for Treasurer through the Mississippi Counseling Association! My name is Claire Threatt, and I have been a member of MCA since I moved back to the great state of Mississippi in 2014. A colleague and friend encouraged me to join MCA while working as a school counselor. At first, I didn't get involved in the organization other than attending the annual conference several years. In 2023 at the same encouragement from a colleague, I applied as an MCA Emerging Leader and my application was accepted. I had no idea the extent that MCA reached in advocating for our profession until I got more involved, and I strongly encourage everyone to do so! I was elected as the Mid-Eastern region of MCA in 2023 and it was an honor to represent our region. I attended MCA Day at the Capital in January

2024 and observed how MCA advocates for our profession in our state's legislature. I was the chair of the Poetry & Art Contest for our state at the national level with NCDA, and two of our entries won awards that went to the national level. I have enjoyed learning more about MCA in a leadership role. This year I have the privilege to serve alongside a good friend and colleague, Hunter Burns, as co-chairs in this year's annual conference.

Currently I work at my alma mater and high school, Northeast High School, in Meridian, MS. I am the high school counselor to 600+ of the best teenagers and students in the state. They are all my pride and joy and it's so rewarding to me to serve the very high school in which I graduated. I am also honored to be an adjunct professor at Mississippi State University, Meridian campus. This job is also important to me as I encourage and teach the next cohort of counselors in our state within a university that invested in me in my bachelor's and specialist degrees.

Emerging Leaders Voices

Emerging Leader 2024–2025

by Kristy Laster, Ph.D., LPC-S, NCC, NCSC

Mississippi isn't last... at least not when it comes to establishing a segue for rising leaders within its counseling association! One of the ways MCA has accomplished such a feat is by way of a hidden gem. Ever heard of Emerging Leaders?! Kinda, Sorta, Maybe? Yes, but not up to speed? Keep reading! I am so glad I stumbled upon the program as it has already become beneficial only months post-completion and training!



The Emerging Leaders program has not only impacted Mississippi, but has won multiple awards and recognitions from national organizations such as the American Counseling Association, and been sought after by other state associations for modeling their programs to equip their future leaders! Can we say MCA has a history of leading the way?!

The purpose of the program arose from MCA encouraging active involvement in ways such as serving in leadership positions throughout the association. These various leadership positions can take place at a variety of levels such as more locally centered, state-wide focused, or both. Positions can include several different divisions, interest groups, or regions! Because this program offers such amazing and unique opportunities, there is an application process, training, and volunteer services hours aimed at instilling dedication to the cause. Special benefits include becoming eligible to be an elected member of the MCA Administrative Council, becoming President-Elect for one of the aforementioned areas, or serving on either of the committees associated with them!

Becoming eligible for leadership positions is only a small portion of the reward gained from this experience, though, as I can tell the choice to submit an Emerging Leaders application has already created a ripple effect that will be lifelong. As a Private Practice Owner, Board Qualified Supervisor, and Adjunct Professor, I plan to ensure all of my employees, supervisees, and students are aware of the program to further the maturation of it and MCA as a whole. Dr. Lynn Etheridge made sure to tell us that this concept, strength and longevity of MCA and its leaders, was the foundation of Emerging Leaders when Dianne Speed, a past MCA Executive Director, fostered the program. She knew a professional organization is only as strong as its future. The future I envision she had in mind includes partnership, mentorship, and establishing pathways that are relevant and timely!

Personally, 'a breath of fresh air' is how I will describe my experience with Emerging Leaders! So often it can feel like we work in silos, while grasping at straws trying to sort it all out! This can feel defeating, lonely, and lead to burnout. However, this program allows for connections to be made with fellow counselors on the journey as well! It's like meeting someone heading to a similar destination as yours - abet a slightly different path. I've already been afforded even more professional counselor friendships, connections, referral opportunities, access to community offerings, and a space to share many ideas for present and future happenings of "our" MCA!

As a leader in several other areas of my life, I find it a joy to add MCA's Emerging Leader program to the mix! I'm excited to see the many more fruits associated with completing the program from both a more immediate instance and also long-term.

I hope you are one of the next members or an encourager of one! Happy Serving!

Emerging Leaders Voices - Knocking on Your Neighbor's Door

Emerging Leader 2024—2025

by Darla Poole, MEd, NCC, CCC

When my generation was younger, Mr. Fred Rogers taught us about the importance of being kind to our neighbors. One of my favorite quotes states: *"If you could only sense how important you are to the lives of those you meet; how important you can be to the people you may never even dream of. There is something of yourself that you leave at every meeting with another person."* This is what it means to be a counselor, and as someone who has never worked in a traditional school or clinical counseling setting, I highly value interactions with every counselor I meet.

However, as a highly masked neurodiverse counselor, even those who know me well may not know that social anxiety, imposter syndrome, and I are a package deal. So I was very much a bundle of nerves when I walked into this summer's Emerging Leaders training to meet this year's cohort for the first time. I won't bore you with all the specific (unhelpful) thoughts, but after spending time with this group, I left that weekend with a profound sense of community and belonging.

If you ask me about this cohort, I'd tell you about their job titles and their resumes. However, if you ask me on a deeper level, I'd tell you that they are a dynamic, driven, ambitious, and kind group of young counselors who are all so important to the lives they touch in so many ways.

Kristy immediately shone bright as our fearless leader with a confident voice, big ideas, and diplomatic problem resolution style.

- Jazzmine was an instant friend, and she didn't hesitate to offer me a ride to dinner, though I was a stranger she had just met.
- Dr. Mike expressed openness and curiosity, and he was a natural at asking open-ended questions to get to know his fellow Emerging Leaders.
- Laura had a laid back and welcoming demeanor, and she didn't bat an eye at my profound knowledge of my eccentric special interests.
- Delphia similarly had a calm and quiet presence as she helped welcome all members into the conversation.
- Aaliyah was by no means a new acquaintance. In fact, she loudly and proudly told the group of our previous interactions throughout our time as students at DSU, and she brought a fresh, youthful energy to the group.

All of these counselors embody this year's conference theme of "Counselors Helping Counselors." They instantly responded to the call to build our network while making meaningful contributions as Emerging Leaders. And most importantly, they are highly dedicated to the counseling profession, and they love their work out loud. To quote Mr. Rogers again: *"The thing I remember best about successful people...is their obvious delight in what they're doing, and it seems to have very little to do with worldly success. They just love what they're doing, and they love it in front of others."*

This is what makes a successful counselor and Emerging Leader in the counseling profession - not titles, nor positions, nor traditional settings - but a genuine desire to touch others' lives, the ability to welcome fellow humans with open arms, a love of the profession and the work we do, and the ability to build a community of belonging. While we work hard to earn our credentials, we also love the work we're doing, and being a part of this group gives us the opportunity to love it in front of others, while giving back not only to the future of the profession, but also to each other as colleagues and neighbors.

Updates from the Mississippi Board of Examiners for Licensed Professional Counselors

In support of our membership and the counseling profession, the Mississippi Counseling Association is proud to maintain a long-standing relationship with the Mississippi Board of Examiners for Licensed Professional Counselors. MCA leadership reaches out to the LPC board for updates and communications. This information is used to inform our members, guide decisions and to advocate for counseling. At times there are concerns to arise that may call for updates to current statutes. MCA works with a lobbyist to advocate for concerns that are in the best interest of the counseling profession and those served. We will continue to stay abreast of the current needs for advocacy. Recently I had the pleasure of contacting the current Mississippi LPC Board Chair, Dr. Kim Sallis, and she shared the following:

Greetings to all licensees from the LPC Board. I hope each of you are doing well and are enjoying the cooler weather. I am Dr. Kimberly Sallis, LPC Board Chair, and I want to give you all a quick update on the activities of the Board for this current year. Although the LPC Board is only required to meet twice per year per our Statute, we have met in person or virtually 11 times since January 2024. In July, the Board had two new Board members appointed, Ms. Sherry Bouldin representing Congressional District II and Dr. Shelbi Bradley representing Congressional District IV. The Board has presented at state and national conferences including the Woodall Conference at Delta State University, the American Association of State Counseling Boards Conference, and the Counseling Regulatory Boards Summit. Ms. LeeAnn Mordecai, Executive Director of the Board, continues to serve as the MS representative for the Counseling Compact. The Board heard and responded to concerns regarding timelines for applying for licensure. Access to the application portal is open and applicants can now begin the application process at any time as opposed to having to wait until their degree is conferred by their respective university in order to begin the application process. Fingerprints can also be sent to the Board once the application process begins. Please refer to the Rules and Regulations for details of the process.

The Board continues its responsibility to regulate the practice of counseling in our state as we seek to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of Mississippians. Please feel free to reach out to any Board member for general questions, suggestions, or concerns. We look forward to seeing all of you at MCA in November.

Dr. Kimberly Sallis, Board Chair, Congressional District I

Dr. Melissa Windham, Board Vice-Chair, Congressional District III

Dr. Richard Strebeck, Secretary, Congressional District-at-Large

Dr. Shelbi Bradley, Congressional District IV

Ms. Sherry Bouldin, Congressional District II

MCA will continue communications with the LPC Board and seek opportunities for advocacy. We look forward to having the representatives from the LPC Board present at the annual conference in November. I hope that everyone will join us and take the opportunity to meet the board members.

Karla Weir, PhD., LPC-S, NCC, NCSC

MCA Past-President and Strategic Planning Chair



MISSISSIPPI COUNSELING ASSOCIATION
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Message from the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid

F” is for Fall, Football, the Fair and Financial Aid

Fall is here! It is finally time for football, the Mississippi State Fair, and... that’s right, financial aid forms!

The Mississippi Aid Application (MAAPP – www.msfinancialaid.org) opens on October 1. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA – www.fafsa.gov) will open with full functionality on December 1.

Students who plan to go to college in 2024-2025 and students who are uncertain of their plans after high school should complete the MAAPP for the opportunity to tap into the \$50 million the State of Mississippi provides to help students pay for college. The MAAPP does not require any financial information and typically can be completed in 10 minutes or less.

By completing the MAAPP, students apply for all state aid programs, but deadlines do apply. The application deadlines are as follows:

HELP Grant (full tuition):

- o MAAPP – March 31, 2025
 - o Supporting Documents (including completed FAFSA) – April 30, 2025
- #### MTAG (\$500), MESG (\$2,500), or FAITH (up to Cost of Attendance):
- o MAAPP – September 15, 2025
 - o Supporting Documents – October 15, 2025

The MAAPP is not just an application. It is also an information portal for counselors. With access to MAAPP, counselors can see and export lists of students who have completed a MAAPP or a FAFSA, search for individual students, see individual student accounts, update student accounts, access the document share portal, and more.

To ensure you have access to MAAPP during the 2024-25 school year, make sure your district Superintendent or private school Headmaster has updated your school’s annual MAAPP Participation Agreement.

The updated agreements became available online beginning September 4. Renewal reminder emails went out on September 4 to all Superintendents and Headmasters who signed the agreement last year with instructions for logging in to MAAPP to update the agreement and authorize or reauthorize MAAPP users.

If you have a new Superintendent or Headmaster, please email Brandon Johnson at bjohnson@mississippi.edu. SFA will verify the new school leader and email him or her with instructions.

SFA Resources:

- Counselor Center: www.msfinancialaid.org/counselors
- MAAPP Counselor Dashboard: <https://maapp.msfinancialaid.org/#/account/login>
- SFA Staff Support: 1-800-327-2980 (toll-free in MS), option #3 or sfa@mississippi.edu

MISSISSIPPI COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

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THE COMPASS

NEXT ISSUE:
SPRING 2025

SUBMISSIONS DUE:
FEB 28TH

PUBLICATION APRIL 2025

PLEASE SEND SUBMISSIONS TO
MPANNEL@DELTASTATE.EDU

Calendar at-a-Glance

MCA Conference Biloxi, MS Nov. 6th-8th

MCA Virtual Conference Nov. 7th

Day at the Capital Jackson, MS Jan. 21, 2025

Delta State University Woodall Conference April 4, 2025