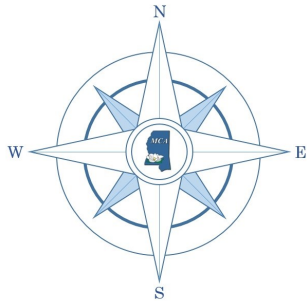


Letter from the incoming President



THE COMPASS

Dear Mississippi Counseling Association,

I am writing to introduce myself as the President-Elect of the Mississippi Counseling Association. It is a great honor to have been chosen by my peers for this position. I am excited to contribute to our organization's ongoing success and growth.

As President-Elect, I enjoyed working with our conference committee to help make our past 2024 MCA conference beneficial for all school counselors, licensed professional counselors, counseling educators, and other counseling professionals in our state. We had awesome presenters who provided a wealth of helpful ideas and information that could be used in schools or private practice.

I am committed to working with our leaders and members in this role. We are planning our annual Institute Leadership Training for June 28-July 1 this summer at the Sheraton Flowood, The Refuge Hotel and Conference Center. In March, information and details will be sent out for our upcoming region, division, and committee leaders. We also seek counseling professionals interested in becoming Emerging Leaders to attend ILT.

I am planning and preparing for my upcoming position as MCA President on July 1, 2025. I will be available for professional development, service opportunities, and continual collaboration with members. My vision is to work with our leaders to help guide them in creating a structured organization that provides quality learning opportunities to all of the counseling professionals in our state and also improve communication to promote and educate others about the benefits of joining the Mississippi Counseling Association.

I am pleased to inform you that our upcoming 2025 MCA Conference is scheduled for November 5-7 at the Cadence Bank Arena Conference Center in Tupelo, Mississippi. Our theme is "Can't Help Falling In Love With Counseling". This year's conference will feature an amazing Keynote Speaker, Learning Institutes, informative sessions on various counseling topics, and opportunities for continuing education credits. Also, counselors from all over the state can network with other professionals to engage knowledge and foster collaborations. Whether you are a seasoned practitioner, an educator, a school counselor, or a student entering the field, the Mississippi Counseling Association's 75th Annual Conference offers a valuable opportunity to gain fresh perspectives, enhance your skills, and contribute to the advancement of counseling practices. Registration information will be posted on the MCA webpage soon.

Please feel free to contact me directly at heatherbnorton1971@gmail.com if there is anything I can do to assist you. Open communication and transparency are key to our mutual success, and I support our shared mission.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the Mississippi Counseling Association. I look forward to seeing you in Tupelo this November!

Sincerely,

Heather Norton
MCA President-Elect



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**Calling for 2025-2026
Nominations for
MCA Emerging Leaders!**
Email President-elect Heather Norton
(heatherbnorton1971@gmail.com) for details.

**MCA Executive Board Meeting
Friday, April 11, 2025
Region 8—Canton, MS**

Message from MCA Executive Director

Dear Members:

The first half of my year as MCA executive director has been filled with many exciting meetings, workshops, receptions, and our annual fall conference. Our November conference was held in Biloxi with a wonderful turnout of in-person counselors and a record number of counselors attending sessions virtually. We were fortunate to have talented, professional speakers to provide the most up to date information for our counselors. Currently, we are already in the planning stages for the fall conference that will be **November 5-7, 2025**. We have secured a keynote speaker that will provide our association with a wealth of knowledge. We encourage each of you to make attending a priority. If you are interested in helping with planning or working at the conference, please let me know. We need members to help with registration, greeting, decorations, and assisting our exhibitors. There are many other areas available, and we can find you a spot if you are interested in helping.

Our Mississippi legislature has been busy this session and we are watching closely some of the bills that are still alive that affect our profession. Please help monitor these bills and notify us of any concerns so that we can communicate those to MCA's lobbyist. Our original January date for the Day at the Capitol for 2025 had to be postponed due to weather; however, we are now rescheduled at the **Capitol on March 19, 2025**. We will have a table set up beginning at **8:00 a.m. through 11:30 a.m.** Our hope is for the Capitol to be filled with counselors, and we also plan to attend the Senate session in the morning and the House of Representative session in the afternoon. **Please plan to attend.**

Reminder that your membership in MCA includes membership in your region. Regions are now offering workshops for this spring. You are not limited to attending only the region where you live. If you want to attend a workshop in another region you have that option, you will just need to register. Please watch your email and the MCA website for information on these workshops.

The MCA office was moved from the coast to Brandon, MS, in June 2024, which included changing the post office box address. We had many counselors' business offices that did not receive the updated address and W-9 which caused many counselors to have a delay in the registration process for the conference. Please make sure you provide the updated documents and make those that are in your billing process aware that the current address for the Mississippi Counseling Association is P.O. Box 5827, Brandon, MS 39047. The current phone number for the office is 769-308-7925. If your billing department needs an updated W-9, please contact me soon so we can make the registration process run smoothly. Office hours for MCA are Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m. through 3:00 p.m. All messages and emails are returned in the order they are received.

It is imperative that each of you **log onto your member portal** and update your names if changed, your address, your numbers and emergency contact information. When trying to reach many counselors over the time I have been serving MCA, I have had a difficult time trying to reach members or match their dues and/or registration to names that did not match their



names listed in our system. Hopefully, we will never need your emergency contact, but we do need that information in the event you have an issue during our conference or a workshop.

The Office will be closed on March 26 - 28, 2025, for all Administrative Council to attend a required meeting.

I look forward to having the opportunity to work with each of you in the coming months.

Thank you,

Jayme Sullivan
MCA Executive Director



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

Leaders Voices—Focus on Leadership Growth

Mississippi Counseling Association Emerging Leader

by Jazzmine Williams, MS, LPC-S, NCC, CHMT

Since becoming a Diane Speed Emerging Leader Honoree in July 2024, my life has been a whirlwind of professional growth and a whole lot of passion-driven work. My work in counseling has been more fulfilling than ever. As the owner of Williams Counseling & Consulting Services, I've continued providing therapy for children, adolescents, and families. I have spent the past 6 months going through supervision to become certified in trauma-focused CBT (TF-CBT) through the Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy National Therapist Certification Program. I will be able to sit for my exam this March! At the same time, my role as a Behavior Specialist in the Madison County School District keeps me deeply engaged in developing behavior intervention plans, conducting assessments, and advocating for students who need support. I love being that bridge between a struggling student and the strategies they need to succeed.



Beyond my clinical work, I've thrown myself into professional development and advocacy. Over the past several months, I've had the privilege of presenting at multiple international, national, and state conferences. I have focused on topics close to my heart, such as autism interventions, culturally sensitive trauma counseling, and classroom behavior strategies. I believe in collaborating with colleagues, which has made these experiences even more impactful. Whether it's a webinar or a live conference, I thrive on sharing knowledge and engaging in discussions that push our field forward.

One of the most exciting shifts has been stepping into editorial and leadership roles. I am Co-President elect of the Omega Zeta Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota (CSI). I also serve as the Research and Scholarship chair. We have focused on growing professional identities as graduate students, which has led to serving programs geared toward helping students gain professional experience. I also serve as the co-chair of the professional development committee of the Association of Child and Adolescent Counseling. In this role, I am the national conference planner, and our team is spearheading the project to bring a monthly webinar series to the members. As the Editor-in-Chief for CSI's *The Digest* newsletter, I've been curating content that uplifts and informs our members. I also joined the Counselor's Bookshelf editorial board for CSI Nationals and have been reviewing manuscripts for IGI Global Publishing.

Oh, and I can't forget the awards and recognition along the way! Being named a 40 Under 40 Honoree by the University of Mississippi and helping my chapter receive the Chi Sigma Iota Outstanding Chapter Individual Program Award (Large Chapter) for a program I co-created were deeply meaningful moments. They reminded me that every late-night research session and weekend activities missed were all worth it.

As I look ahead, I know the pace isn't slowing down. I have a full plate between finishing my Ph.D., continuing my research on neurodivergent-affirming practices, and finding ways to elevate mental health support in underserved communities.

But if these past several months have taught me anything, I'm right where I'm supposed to be!



In Memoriam

Amendia Shoemake-Netto, retired School Counselor, MCA, MSCA & Pinebelt member

On September 22, 2024, I was privileged to attend the Celebration of Life service for a true friend of MCA and of school counselors across our state. Martha Jane Garrett was the Coordinator of Counseling Services and the Division Director of Counseling for the Mississippi Department of Education from 1993 until 2009. In this position, she served as an advocate, trainer, and supporter of Mississippi school counselors and their work with students.

She promoted language in MDE policies that recognized the importance of credentialed school counselors in our schools. During her tenure with MDE, Martha traveled the width and breadth of Mississippi presenting workshops and important resources/training materials on legislative developments and MDE policies, directives, and initiatives as they impacted the work of school counselors.

Following the tragic shooting at Pearl High School in 1997, she collaborated on a Crisis Intervention/Crisis Response model curriculum for our schools and trained counselors in its use. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, she joined with MCA members to organize counselors traveling to the Gulf Coast to provide counseling services in schools.

A tireless professional, Martha was committed to supporting school counselors in their many roles. She was an active member of MCA and MSCA, and her presentations at annual conference were always well-attended. Following her retirement, she moved to Tupelo to live near her family, and passed away on September 13, 2024. Her dedicated service to school counselors, and thereby to our students, is remembered by many.



Updates from the Mississippi Department of Education/Office of Secondary Education

By Ma'Kesha Adams, Director, Secondary Curriculum and Instruction



Course Codes: Due to the agency's transition to MSIS 2.0, updates to MSIS and the Course Code Portal for 2025-2026 are forthcoming.

Major Clarity: The MDE has secured funding for Major Clarity, the college and career readiness platform, through September 30, 2025.

JROTC Endorsement: Diploma seals for eligible students who meet the criteria for this endorsement option are available [here](#).

Proposed Additional Option to be Added to Appendix A-5: The MDE is proposing the addition of the *Student Portfolio and Exhibit Option* be added to Appendix A-5 of the Accountability Standards. The option will be available for review and public comment soon.

Updates from the Mississippi LPC Board

Hi everyone,

This has been an active season for the MS Board of Examiners for Licensed Professional Counselors. Focused on the regulatory practice of the counseling profession, we recently presented at state and national conferences, including the MCA Conference, American Association of State Counseling Boards (AASCB) Conference, and we look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming Woodall Conference. Mrs. Lee-Ann Mordecai, Executive Director of the Board, continues to serve as the MS representative for the Counseling Compact and Dr. Richard Strebeck currently serves as the Board Member-at-Large for AASCB.

We have received positive feedback from licensees who are now using CE Broker for CE management. The free basic account for the digital CE tracking system is currently available through the Board website and becomes mandatory for submitting CEs for renewal on July 1, 2025. The directory of approved courses will be available upon activation of your new account.

Additionally, on July 1, 2025, the *Supervision Contract* and *Declaration of Practice* forms provided by the Board must be included with each Provisional-Licensed Professional Counselor application. Please note this is not a new process, but an attempt to decrease the number of provisional licensees that become contingent due to missing information or incomplete forms. The members of the Board will present a virtual Lunch and Learn at noon on Wednesday, April 16 to review the provided forms. More details regarding log in instructions for the session will follow.

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 future opportunities to connect.

Dr. Kimberly Sallis, Board Vice-Chair, Congressional District I
Ms. Sherry Bouldin, Congressional District II
Dr. Melissa Windham, Board Chair, Congressional District III
Dr. Shelbi Bradley, Congressional District IV
Dr. Richard Strebeck, Secretary, Congressional District-at-Large



MISSISSIPPI COUNSELING ASSOCIATION
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Presidential Reflections Steven Stafford, MCA President 2024-2025

Dear MCA Members,

I hope this letter finds you all well and you are all thawing out from the crazy Mississippi Winter and the “Coastal Blizzard of 2025.”

I would like to send a very special thank you to the many volunteers that helped make the MCA Fall Conference happen. For those of you who have never worked behind the scenes at an MCA Conference or event it takes a lot of hard work to pull an event like this off. MCA is blessed with a great group of leaders and members who work tirelessly in the months heading into conference to make that event happen. Those same volunteers carry over into conference and do their best to make the event special and memorable to all. If you volunteered in any capacity this year, I just want to send a big thank you to each of you. Thank you for your gift of time, effort, energy, support, patience and generosity. You guys are great.

Day at the Capital is March 19th, 2025. We had to move the original date due to the snowstorm. Please join us for a day of handshakes and good conversation with your legislators.

The MCA Spring Executive Board meeting will be held at Region 8 Mental Health Center in Canton, MS. We need all Divisions, Regions, and Special Interests represented. We have a large amount of information to convey and lots of discussion.

MCA Conference will be in Tupelo, MS this November 5th-7th, 2025. Bring your blue suede shoes and join us in the hometown of Elvis Presley.

Thank you for all you do. I look forward to seeing you in the future.

Sincerely,
Steven R. Stafford, MS, LPC



Your official continuing education tracking system

Connect with your licensing board, manage your renewal requirements, and reach compliance.

The free basic account for the CE Broker tracking system is currently available through the [MS LPC Board website](#) and becomes **mandatory** for submitting CEs for renewal on July 1, 2025.

THE COMPASS EDITORIAL STAFF

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Editor: Mary Bess Pannel

THE COMPASS

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FALL/WINTER 2025

SUBMISSIONS DUE
SEPT. 1
PUBLICATION
OCTOBER 1

PLEASE EMAIL
SUBMISSIONS TO
MPANNEL@DELTASTATE.EDU

Calendar at-a-Glance

MCA Day at the Capitol	March 19th
Woodall Conference— Delta State	April 4th
MCA Executive Board Meeting	April 11th
MCA Conference- Tupelo	Nov. 5-7th