



## PEOPLE

**Dr. Greg Granger**, Professor of History, was recently interviewed for the Billy West Live podcast. The topic was the American withdrawal of Afghanistan and the future of Afghanistan. The podcast can be heard via multiple platforms, including Audible: <https://nsu.la/GrangerAudio>.

Instructor of English **Charlene LeBrun's** article "Salt, Nails and Prayer: Horseracing and Superstition" has been published in the online journal *Nobody's Home: Modern Southern Folklore*. The piece will also be posted to Medium and will have a lesson plan so that it can be taught as part of a course curriculum.

Assistant Professor of English **Dr. Ereck Jarvis** administrated and participated in "Anti-Racist Pedagogies for 18th and 19th- Century Studies: A Teach-in," an event directed by Dr. Kerry Sinanan of the University of Texas at San Antonio in May.



**Dr. Michelle Fazio Brunson**



**Dr. Lisa Abney**

## Faculty lauded with research awards

**Dr. Michelle Fazio Brunson**, director of graduate programs in early childhood education, and **Dr. Lisa Abney**, professor of English, were named winners of two Northwestern State University research awards. Brunson is recipient of the Dr. Jean D'Amato Thomas Lifetime Achievement Award. Abney is recipient of the Dr. Mariette Lebreton Louisiana Studies Award.

"Each year, during NSU's Research Day, we present several research awards to individuals whose careers have been dedicated to research, scholarly achievements and service to their discipline," said **Dr. Greg Handel**, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs. "As Research Day was virtual this year, we made the decision to postpone the awards with the hope of announcing them during the Faculty/Staff Institute." Faculty/Staff Institute was postponed due

to COVID concerns.

The Dr. Jean D'Amato Thomas Lifetime Achievement Award is presented annually at NSU Research Day to honor senior faculty members whose careers have included a significant commitment to research and service to their discipline. Individuals must be nominated by a colleague, hold the rank of associate or full professor, have made significant contributions to the field of study, have remained dedicated to a consistent research agenda spanning their entire career and must demonstrate a sustained record of service to the discipline.

The Dr. Marietta Lebreton Louisiana Studies Award is presented annually at NSU Research Day to honor faculty members whose careers have been dedicated

# 13<sup>th</sup> annual Louisiana Studies Conference held virtually

By **Dr. Shane Rasmussen**

The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Louisiana Studies Conference was held on September 25 at NSU. Due to the ongoing pandemic the conference was held virtually on Microsoft Teams. **Dr. Lisa Abney**, Faculty Facilitator for Academic Research and Community College Outreach and Professor of English, **Jason Church**, Chief of Technical Services at the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training, **Dr. Charles Pellegrin**, Director of the Southern Studies Institute and Professor of History, **Dr. Shane Rasmussen**, Director of the Louisiana Folklife Center and Professor of English, and **Sharon Wolff**, Assistant Archivist in the Cammie G. Henry Research Center served as conference co-chairs, with **Church** serving as chair of Conference programming. **Daphne Hines**, Director of Publications, designed the Conference poster. **Daniel Gordy**, assistant professor in the departments of Criminal Justice, History, and Social Sciences and in English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies served as Conference technical liaison.

The staff of the Louisiana Folklife Center, administrative coordinator **Bessie Jones** and student workers **Armani Heckard**, **LeT'Anna Ledet**, **Aaron Malone**, **Olivia Sipes** as well as graduate assistants **Zoe Hebert** and **Christopher Jay**, prepped the event and kept the Conference running smoothly.

This year's conference theme was "Heroes, Saints, and Outlaws." The keynote address, "Becoming an Outlaw: How and Why the

Folk Undo an Ordinary Life," was given by folklorist Dr. Keagan Lejeune of McNeese State University.

The daylong conference was a great success. 36 scholars, creative writers, and cultural authorities participated in 9 separate panels. Conference participants came from Alabama, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, and Texas, and as well as from throughout Louisiana. Several of the presenters were NSU faculty.

Each of the presentation panels was chaired by a moderator. Panels chairs included **Dr. Michelle Fazio Brunson** (Gallaspys Family College of Education and Human Development), **Dr. Sarah E. McFarland** (English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies), and **Dr. Mark O. Melder** (Criminal Justice, History, and Social Sciences).

The following individuals made scholarly presentations at the Conference:

**Dr. Michelle Fazio Brunson** (Gallaspys Family College of Education and Human Development), Louisiana children's author Mike Artell, **Dr. Debra Jo Hailey** (Child and Family Studies), and **Dr. Katrina Jordan** (School of Education) presented their paper "Louisiana from A to Z—Louisiana Children's Literature as a Tool to Teach Culture and Skills across the Curriculum with Children's Author Mike Artell."

**Dr. Benjamin Forkner** (English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies) presented his

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## *Faculty Research Awards ... Continued from Page 1*

to research regarding Louisiana topics.

Individuals may be nominated by a colleague or self-submit, hold any academic rank, have made significant contributions to the field of study, demonstrate a sustained record of research on Louisiana topics and the research must illustrate a significant connection

to Louisiana through history, culture, languages, science, math or other fields.

To learn more about each faculty member's research, access the videos below.

**Dr. Michelle Fazio Brunson:** <https://vimeo.com/607045369>

**Dr. Lisa Abney:** <https://vimeo.com/607095996>

"It is my honor to congratulate these two outstanding faculty members, and to thank them for their service to Northwestern, their dedication and service to their chosen disciplines and for continuing to support the Academic Mission of the University," Handel said.

## Kiwanis 5K Color Run & Pancake Fest Oct. 9

The NSU WRAC's Fitness Department is partnering with the Kiwanis Club of Natchitoches to host its annual 5K Color Run and Pancake Festival at the NSU Collins Pavillion. This event will be held on Saturday, October 9th.

The 1 mile fun run will be at 8 AM and the 5K color run will be held at 8:45AM. The pancakes and kid's zone are free. Link to sign up: <https://runsignup.com/Race/LA/Natchitoches/Kiwanis5KColorRunandPancakeFestival>.

Please email Kaitlyn Hamm at [richardsk@nsula.edu](mailto:richardsk@nsula.edu) with any questions.

## Wellness Week: November 1st - 4th

The NSU Wellness Fest will be from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 2 at the WRAC.

This is a free event open to all NSU faculty, staff, and students. The Wellness Fest will offer many educational opportunities, free testing, games and more.

Contact: Jessica Nash at [nashj@nsula.edu](mailto:nashj@nsula.edu) or Kaitlyn Hamm at [richardsk@nsula.edu](mailto:richardsk@nsula.edu)

## *Louisiana Studies Conference ... Continued from Page 2*

paper "Heroism in the Face of Unprecedented Hardship: A Retrospective Look at Lafcadio Hearn's *Chita* Through the Lens of the 2020 Pandemic."

**Dr. Katrina Jordan** (School of Education), **Dr. Debra Jo Hailey** (Child and Family Studies), and **Dr. Michelle Fazio Brunson** (Gallaspy Family College of Education and Human Development) presented their paper "A Comparison of Family Heroes: Children's Literature and Family Stories."

**Dr. Katie Magaña** (English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies) presented her paper "Finding Her Power: Young Women and the Supernatural in Louisiana YA Novels."

**Dr. Sarah E. McFarland** (English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies) presented her paper "Confronting Louisiana Climate Injustice: Environmental Heroics in the Plantationocene."

**Dr. Mark O. Melder** (Criminal Justice, History, and Social Sciences) presented his paper "We're Number One: A Discussion of the Role of Lex Talionis in the Louisiana Culture of Homicide."

The awards ceremony for the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual NSU Louisiana High School Essay Contest was also held on Saturday morning at the Conference. **Rasmussen** led the ceremony, assisted by **Van Erikson**, Director of Recruiting. Conference attendees heard essays by 1<sup>st</sup> place winner Gabrielle Murison of Belle Chasse High School and Honorable Mention winners Jeremiah Hopkins of Belle Chasse High School and Keara Nelson of Natchitoches Central High School.

Unable to join was 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner Apryl Dr. Gallo of Belle Chasse High School,

3<sup>rd</sup> place winner Riley Leger of the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts, and Honorable Mention winner Cameryn Broussard of Carencro High School. **Abney, Church, Davis, Rasmussen,** and **Wolff** served as the Contest selection committee.

The Conference is co-sponsored by the Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Cultural Studies, the Louisiana Folklife Center, the NSU Center for Inclusion and Diversity, the NSU College of Arts and Sciences, the NSU Office of Recruiting, and the NSU Office of the President.

The 14<sup>th</sup> annual Louisiana Studies Conference will be held in September 2022. The 2022 Conference theme will be "Supernatural Louisiana." For more information contact Dr. Shane Rasmussen at [rasmussens@nsula.edu](mailto:rasmussens@nsula.edu) or (318) 357-4332.

# October Non-Credit Classes

## Pick Up your Brush-Painting Classes

In these classes, you will learn the art of painting using step-by-step instructions to create a masterpiece of your own. No special or prior skill required. Just relax and enjoy each class.

Students will take home a completed painting at the end of every class. Children ages 7 - 12 years old are allowed to enroll, but a parent MUST accompany the child the entire class. Parent does not have to enroll unless they participate. All supplies included.

Date: October 7,  
Thursday Scarecrow Sam

October 21,  
Thursday Moonlight and Pumpkin Patch

Time: 5:30 - 8:30 pm

Fee: \$45 per session

Location: 2nd Floor Classroom, South Hall

Instructor: Shanna Dees Gaspard

## Cookie Decorating with Royal Icing for Beginners

Cookie Decorating with royal icing is a

beginning class to learn some basic decorating techniques. This course will teach students how to make an amazing sugar cookie dough suited for shaped cookies and then explore different royal icing techniques such as dip tie-dye, outlining and flooding with single and multiple colors, and painting on royal icing. Students will be encouraged to express themselves creatively.

NOTE: There is a \$25 fee due at the first-class meeting (cash or check only made payable to the instructor). This fee will cover all ingredients needed in the course- cookies prebaked for some class dates; food coloring, paintbrushes, cookie cutters to be shared in the class; and a set of 3 piping tips, a coupler, and a reusable piping bag for each student to keep.

Date: October 12 – November 2, Tuesdays

Time: 5:30 – 8:00 pm

Fee: \$75

Location: Culinary Arts Building (100 Caspari Street)

Instructor: McKenna Marsh

For more information or to register for classes, visit [checkout.nsula.edu](http://checkout.nsula.edu) or call (800) 376-2422 or (318) 357-6355.



**SLOW STITCH**  
mindful meditative sewing

Join NSU Mindful Stitchers for a relaxing hour of stitching by hand!  
This activity does not require special skills and talents, patterns, or expensive step-by-step guides.  
Bring your own project or start one with supplies available on site.

**SCHEDULE:**  
2021 Fall Semester  
Every Thursday from 4:30-5:30 pm  
Student Union Room 221  
(Except on 9/30 & 10/28 where we will meet in Student Union Room 315)

For more information, contact Phyllis Lear at [learp@nsula.edu](mailto:learp@nsula.edu) or Christine Ferrell at [ferrellc@nsula.edu](mailto:ferrellc@nsula.edu)

# Office of Sponsored Programs

## CONGRATULATIONS

**Mr. Joseph Biscoe**, Department of Psychology, College of Education and Human Development, received notification of a \$25,000 continuation award from the University of Texas at Austin for “Subaward from the University of Texas – South Southwest AATC, Austin TX.”

**Mr. Kevin Ammons and Dr. Kirk Cordell**, National Center for Preservation, Technology and Training, received notification of a \$451,387 award from the National Park Service for “Partnering for Preservation 2021.”

**Ms. Jennifer Kelly**, University Affairs, received notification of a \$107,895 subaward from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette through the Louisiana Department of Health for “Partnership for COVID-19 Vaccination for Underserved Populations in Louisiana (VAX-UP Louisiana).”

## CURRENT ACTIVITIES

**Dr. Michelle Brunson**, College of Education and Human Development, submitted a proposal to International Paper entitled “Born to Read.”

**Dr. Shane Rasmussen**, Louisiana Folklife Center, College of Arts and Sciences, submitted a proposal to the Louisiana Office of Cultural Development/Division of the Arts entitled “2022 Natchitoches – NSU Folk Festival.”

**Dr. Grace Edgar**, School of Creative and Performing Arts/Theatre and Dance, College of Arts and Sciences, submitted a proposal to the Louisiana Office of Cultural Development/Division of the Arts entitled, “Seussical the Musical.”

**Dr. Darlene Williams**, Vice President of Technology, Innovation and Economic Development, submitted a proposal to the Louisiana Board of Regents entitled “NSU Regional STEM Network Center.” **Ms. Jennifer DePriest** is collaborator.

## LA BOARD OF REGENTS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FY 2021-2022

Requests for Proposals for the FY 2021-22 Louisiana Board of Regents Support Fund (BoRSF) competitive cycle are now available at <https://web.laregents.org>. When submitting proposals to the Office of Sponsored Programs, please complete the required [OSP Routing Forms](#) which are now electronically formatted for obtaining approval signatures. A working draft or nearly complete copy of the proposal, a budget/budget justification and supporting documentation should accompany these forms during the approval process.

If you should have any questions or have interest in submitting a proposal, please contact either Carla Howell or Alysia Jones at [orsp@nsula.edu](mailto:orsp@nsula.edu) or 318.357.5222 to discuss the proposal preparation process.

## Resources and Assistance

For assistance in seeking information about funding opportunities, preparing proposals or administering projects, contact the Office of Sponsored Programs by phone, 357-5222; e-mail at [orsp@nsula.edu](mailto:orsp@nsula.edu), or visit the OSP website at <http://www.nsula.edu/orsp>.

OSP Staff

Carla Howell  
Director

Alysia Jones  
Associate  
Director



**Carla Howell**, Universities of Louisiana Content Expert for Research and Grants, is presenting a webinar series this semester to explore various aspects of her area of expertise. The first session is in two weeks.

What: "Need funding? Let's look here!"

Focus: The Board of Regents Support Fund with Enhancement Program Manager Bryan Jones

When: Tuesday, Oct. 12 at 2 p.m.

Click the button below to register and receive the Zoom link.

Register for the Zoom link at:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_MKRGHUCeRO65EX\\_mYT3Pow](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_MKRGHUCeRO65EX_mYT3Pow)

## Gilbert discusses her documentary work at international film festivals

Northwestern State University Associate Professor of **Melody Gilbert** recently traveled to Bulgaria and Modlova to discuss her documentary films and work with emerging filmmakers.

A retrospective of her documentaries was presented as part of the Sofia Documental film festival. Organizers said they wanted to have a special section of some of Gilbert's films as one of the "most influential documentarists."

According to Festival organizers, "the films Melody directs are noteworthy for featuring a rare intimacy with her subjects as she unearths previously hidden worlds. She has the ability to get people to reveal their innermost thoughts whether it's people who have full-fledged relationships with synthetic companions ('Synthetic Soul'), or two Bulgarian girls who try to follow their dreams in the USA ('The Summer Help'), or in her latest film, 'Stories I Didn't Know,' in which a search for Irish ancestors leads a woman down an unexpected path to a family secret about a sacred piece of land."

"I was thrilled to get this invitation and for the honor. I'm grateful for the acknowledgment that my creative work means something to people in another country and I'm proud that I represented NSU while I was there," said Gilbert.

The festival showed two of Gilbert's shorts: "Beneath the Ink" about a Ohio tattoo artist enriching lives by removing hateful and racist tattoos and "Viewfinder," which tells the story of Michael, who every day for the past 23 years has



Melody Gilbert, center, discussed her work

taken a single picture with a film camera, a process which takes on a new meaning when he starts to lose his memory.

While in Sofia, she was interviewed by Bulgarian National Television.

In Moldova, Gilbert trained emerging filmmakers as part of Moldox Film Festival in Cahul, Modlova. She taught a master class and tutored filmmakers with social justice films and gave them feedback on their projects. Gilbert said the program is called Inspiration Workshop. She helped prepare the students for pitching their projects to a jury of industry professionals from all over Europe.

"My goal with all my films is to open hearts and minds and to create conversations," said Gilbert. "As a filmmaker, I don't have answers. I'm just taking you on my journey of discovery. I'm happy to say that there were many deep and thoughtful conversations after my screenings in Sofia, so I feel like that goal was accomplished."

Gilbert's visit was sponsored by the U.S. Embassies in Bulgaria and Moldova.

"It felt great to travel

overseas and to be out in the world again for in person events after almost two years of this pandemic," said Gilbert. "Connecting with other filmmakers and viewers was so joyful. Watching a movie on a laptop screen is convenient, but there is nothing like being a room together with other people and having the shared experience of watching a film together on a big screen and having a discussion afterwards."

Gilbert taught at a Bulgarian university for four years and got to reconnect with many of her former students and colleagues.

Gilbert is an award-winning director, producer, cinematographer and editor who has directed 12 feature-length documentaries that have screened at prestigious film festivals and been distributed internationally. The films she directs are noteworthy for featuring a rare intimacy with her subjects as she unearths previously hidden worlds. She works mostly solo as a one-woman crew and has the ability to get people to reveal their innermost thoughts, whether it's

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# Covington will be featured at NLMTC event

The Noel Foundation is partnering with the North Louisiana Math Teachers' Circle (NLMTC) to host "The Tower of Hanoi and More!", a hands-on presentation for local math teachers featuring NLMTC founder **Dr. Judith Covington**, professor of mathematics at Northwestern State University.

The event will be in the LSU-S University Center ballroom from 5-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, October 5. Guests can look forward to a free dinner and dessert as well as giveaways for the first 20 teachers who register.

"The goal of Math Teachers' Circles across the nation are to get K-12 math teachers excited about doing mathematics. It's different than a typical workshop where teachers simply discuss how to better teach their students," Covington said. "At this event teachers will have the experience of being students themselves and working together to solve exciting math problems."

"The Tower of Hanoi and More!" is a presentation that will allow participants to work hands on with the Tower of Hanoi puzzle to explore the minimum number of moves required to complete it. After determining that number,



**Dr. Judith Covington**

participants will explore modifications to the puzzle.

The Tower of Hanoi, also called Towers of Hanoi or Towers of Brahma, puzzle involves three vertical pegs and a set of different sized disks with holes through their centers. The disks are initially placed on one of the pegs, with the largest disk on the bottom and the smallest on top. The task is to transfer the stack to one of the other pegs subject to two rules: only individual disks may be moved, and no disk may be placed on a smaller disk.

Working with local K-12 teachers and area college faculty is always exciting," Covington said. "I believe that K-12 teachers are the key to our future, and any opportunity to support and encourage them should be embraced. For over 10 years, NLMTC has provided fun, exciting, and challenging sessions for local teachers."

The NLMTC is part of the Math Teachers' Circle Network,

a project of the American Institute of Mathematics. It was founded in 2010 after Dr. Covington and four other local teachers attended a workshop in Washington, D.C. The NLMTC's first event was held in December 2010 and since then they have been offering hands-on professional development for teachers in the region to collaborate with each other and strengthen problem-solving abilities.

The mission of the North Louisiana Math Teachers' Circle (NLMTC) is to establish the foundation for a culture of problem solving by fostering the enjoyment of mathematics among middle school math teachers. They offer professional development meetings for middle school teachers from North Louisiana, and their ultimate goal is to help today's teachers and students become flexible, creative, and collaborative problem solvers. They believe that strengthening teachers' mathematical problem-solving skills will impact middle school students' problem-solving experiences, expertise, and enthusiasm for mathematics and ultimately transfer to higher student achievement in mathematics.

To register for the event, contact Iris Johnson at [iris.johnson@lsus.edu](mailto:iris.johnson@lsus.edu).

## *Gilbert ... Continued from Page 6*

the family of a child who can't feel pain ("A Life Without Pain"/Sundance Channel), a former vice president of the United States ("Fritz: The Walter Mondale Story"/PBS), or people who have full-fledged relationships with synthetic companions ("Silicone Soul"/Starz).

She received a national Emmy nomination for "Beneath The Ink" and an Alfred I. duPont award for "Love Them First" (2020). The

Documentary Channel once called Gilbert "one of the most fearless filmmakers in contemporary documentary cinema."

She joined the faculty at Northwestern State in the Department of New Media, Journalism and Communication Arts in 2019. To see trailers of all her films, go to: [www.frozenfeetfilm.com](http://www.frozenfeetfilm.com). IMDB: <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1745923/#director>

## ‘Confluence’ expresses themes of history, passing down knowledge

A new public art piece was installed at Northwestern State University last week that acknowledges several aspects of Natchitoches/NSU history and legacies that are passed down from one generation to the next.

“Confluence” by public artist DeeDee Morrison, is modeled after the shape of a pen quill with a basket weave pattern inspired by the work of Caddo Indians that once inhabited the area. Within the pattern are laser cutouts that depict the leaves of a pawpaw tree and the zebra swallowtail butterfly, whose caterpillars feed on the pawpaw leaves. Pawpaw is a native fruit-bearing tree, from which the Natchitoches Tribe of Louisiana derives its name, translated from the Caddo language as “place of the pawpaw.”

“Just as in the southern quilting traditions, these cultural legacies are maintained by women who continue to pass on the tradition, mother-to-daughter from one generation to the next. The conical shape of the form reflects the tip of a pen quill and its connection to the importance of the written word in documenting our shared history,” Morrison explained in her proposal.

The sculpture, 17 feet tall and 1,300 pounds, stands in the triangle where Sam Sibley Drive meets Caspari Street and is illuminated at night with LED lighting. The sculpture was designed by Morrison with fabrication and laser cutting by Kyle Rebechini of RSI Design in Chicago. Doug Smoak, also an artist and sculptor, fabricated the base and worked with campus personnel on its installation. Andrew Mulkey is credited for lighting. The site will soon be landscaped to compliment the new sculpture.

“Confluence” sits directly in front of NSU’s Student Services Center that opened in 2012. The project was funded by Louisiana Percent for Art program, which stipulates that whenever more than \$2 million in state funds is spent by a state agency for the construction or renovation of a state building, 1 percent of the state money is reserved to restore or install works of art for display in or on the grounds of the state building.

Morrison has been working as a public artist for 15 years and has an extensive resume of projects all over the U.S.

Morrison has a connection to NSU. Her grandmother, Anne Dixon of Belcher, attended Louisiana State Normal College, as NSU was then known, from 1922-24 and earned a teaching certificate. Dixon, who lived to be 101, had a profound influence on Morrison. She was a



Photo by Vanner Erikson

teacher before her marriage and also the sister of acclaimed Louisiana artist and sculptor Clyde Connell.

“‘Confluence’ is the merging of different flows, like a river and the things I learned from my grandmother,” she said. “It’s the legacy, like a quilt or remnants of pieces that you assemble and pass down through families or with the Normal School have an opportunity to learn and go on and teach others.”

In developing the concept for “Confluence,” Morrison visited the NSU Archives to research the history of the town, the Caddo and their pottery and basketry patterns, which can be complex. The piece she designed for NSU incorporates themes not only of history, but also the area’s connection to the pawpaw tree and its coevolutionary pollinator, the zebra swallowtail, which nests within the pawpaw, a collaborative ecosystem that speaks directly to education, Morrison explained.

“It’s three dimensional and there are a lot of layers,” Morrison said. “The structure itself is a complicated structural design. It’s the confluence of events. It’s a powerful concept.”

Information on Morrison and her public art projects is available at <https://www.deedemorrisonsculpture.com/>.