

PHOENIX

A large, stylized illustration of a fox's head in shades of orange and brown, facing left. The fox has a thick, patterned collar in red and white. A small, light brown rabbit is positioned in the lower left foreground, facing right. The background is a light orange with faint, repeating patterns.

M S A A A N E W S L E T T E R

**Get the Details on the
2016 Class Reunion**

LAST CALL!
Find out More
About the 2016
Officer Elections &
get to Know
the Candidates

REALITY CHECK
Utilizing Artistic
Qualities to
Navigate Through
Hardships

Editor's Note

Spring has returned once again, and our MSAAA class reunion and officer elections are right around the corner! In fact, you still have until 10 p.m. tomorrow night (April 16) to run for an office. To run for office or be eligible to vote in the election, please pay your **2016 membership dues**. 100% of membership dues fund our Rising Phoenix Scholarship that goes to an upcoming MSA junior.

While we want to support the prospective graduates at MSA, we also want to do more for our alumni specifically in the upcoming years. Therefore, your support is literally everything to our association. I want to encourage alumni to get involved while we are still a relatively small organization. There is a huge opportunity here to have a beautiful effect for those willing to take initiative.

We invite discussions on our Facebook page about ways in which we can raise funds and network with the right people to assist with the initiation and development of future plans. If you have great ideas or valuable skills or connections, don't be shy.

Sincerely,



Lauren Leslie on behalf of the MSAAA Officers
and newsletter committee



Do you want to be a contributor? Please send your submission to msartsalumni@gmail.com for approval.



6TH EDITION

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Officers and representatives are marked with an asterisk (*).



About the Cover Art

6th Edition

Overcoming Anxieties in Life by Shelby Hamilton, Internal Communications Specialist and Graphic Designer for Caesars Entertainment Mid-South, combines the use of ink and digital media to create an illustration that represents the struggles everyone faces, especially artists. Her piece serves as a reminder that sometimes it's important to take a step back and realize there is so much more to life than just its obstacles in regards to the overall meaning. The constricted elements of the focal point, centrally located within the composition, emphasize the attention given to the whole rather than the individual pieces that construct it. With the predatory fox looming over the

rabbit and appearing to dominate the piece, the fox alludes to the seemingly inescapable heaviness of anxiety; the positions of both animals, in front of the circular background, capture a moment of uncertainty within their interaction. While the neutral color scheme presents a calming tone that intentionally dilutes the emotion within the scene, the red circle behind the fox and rabbit unifies the interaction between them suggests with its detailed pattern that the meaning of the interaction as a whole is just as, if not more important than the instinctual dimension of their interaction.

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2016

MSAAA CLASS REUNION

May 27–May 28

We are excited to be hosting our 2016 class reunion this year for all graduated classes of MSA. This year we are also honored to announce that the alumni of Whitworth College will also be joining us in our reunion activities, and we are excited that the reunion will take place the same weekend of Brookhaven's downtown Hog Wild BBQ festival. The reunion is a great opportunity to catch up with

old friends, explore the new changes on campus, and support MSA and our alumni organization. If you are able to attend, please use our [Facebook event page](#) to RSVP and stay updated about the event. Entry fee to the event is \$5.00 per person at the door. 100% of proceeds will go to the Rising Phoenix Scholarship.

Friday, May 27

Registration	7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Enochs Gallery
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Saturday, May 28

Registration and Breakfast	9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Enochs Gallery
MSAAA Alumni Meeting	10:30 a.m.	Black Box
Lunch	12:30 p.m.	Enochs Gallery
Tour of Campus	2:00 p.m.	Enochs Gallery
Historical Presentation	3:00 p.m.	Vernon Room at the Lincoln County Library
Water Balloon Fight	4:00 p.m.	Bell Tower
Dinner	6:00 p.m.	Georgia Blue

COMING IN MAY 2016

MSAAA ELECTIONS

As we move into another year, it is time once again to decide who will serve our alumni association as officers in this year's 2016 MSAAA officer elections. Voting will take place through an emailed electronic form starting on **May 1st at 3:00 p.m. CT** and will close on **May 7th at 10:00 p.m. CT**. MSA staff will be responsible for counting and handling all ballots. Please review the voting requirements. Winning candidates will be announced on Monday, May 9th.

You must have paid your 2016 membership dues to be eligible to vote. Please review the voting requirements. If you are interested in running it's not too late! **Applications will close tomorrow (April 16) at 10 p.m. CT**. Please complete [this form](#). Below are a list of officer responsibility descriptions and candidates.

Voting requirements:

If you plan to vote in the 2016 officer elections, please follow the instructions below.

- 1) You must have paid your 2016 membership dues by May 1st. [Pay here](#).
- 2) Complete the voting form. This form will be sent to alumni through email on May 1st.
- 3) Submit your vote within the election time period. All votes submitted after the election time period will be voided.

OFFICER DESCRIPTIONS

PRESIDENT He/She works directly with the vice president to organize meetings, and maintain effective communications between officers, representatives, alumni and MSA. The president is directly responsible for administrating social media pages and the email account. The president must attend the yearly reunion in order to facilitate the yearly member's meeting as well as chair over all regularly scheduled meetings and organizes the alumni booth at Ole Brook Festival. Promotes the welfare and further the objectives of this Association. Plays a lead role in fundraising activities and other events.

VICE PRESIDENT Assists the president with organizing meetings, coordinating events, and maintaining communications between all officers, representatives and alumni. The vice president must attend all regularly scheduled meetings. He/She promotes the welfare and further the objectives of MSAAA. In the case that the president resigns or takes a leave of absence, the vice president will assume the president's responsibility and authority.

SECRETARY Records and maintains minutes from each meeting, helps maintain effective communication between officers, representatives, alumni, and MSA. Attends all regularly scheduled meetings and assists the president and vice-president as needed. Promotes the welfare and further the objectives of this Association.

TREASURER Works directly with the president to handle association business transaction, maintains the bank account and Paypal account, and attends all regularly scheduled meetings. The treasurer is also responsible for providing a bi-annual budget report to the newsletter for publication. Promotes the welfare and further the objectives of this Association.

REPRESENTATIVES They play important supporting roles with MSAAA and alumni of their discipline. Representatives are responsible for the participation of their own disciplines during MSAAA events and should have the desire to provide opportunities for alumni associated with their field. They should bring new ideas to association regarding the involvement of the disciplines they represent, and they must be able to take initiative to carry out their ideas.

2016 ELECTION CANDIDATES

(Introduced on next page...)

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Brianna Moore-Christa

Visual Discipline 2005



As a resident of Brookhaven who is actively involved in local organizations and events as well as an employee of MSA, Brianna has the unique advantage of being able to help connect the association with MSA and the Brookhaven community on a daily basis.

Brianna first became involved with MSAAA in 2010 at the first reunion. At that time she was elected as the first secretary of the association. Unfortunately, she had to suspend her involvement with the association in order to focus on finishing her degree. Brianna became involved with MSAAA again in 2014, when she became a co-editor for the alumni newsletter *The Phoenix Quarterly*, and she took over as 2005 class representative in order to help plan the ten-year reunion as well as build the alumni database. As a class representative, Brianna was part of the team that collaborated to form the Rising Phoenix scholarship and helped the association achieve 501(c)(3) tax status. In 2015 she was elected vice-president and since then has been directly responsible for planning meetings, organizing fundraisers, and planning the 11th year reunion.

As president, Brianna hopes to continue to grow the association into much more than it is now. She wants to work with MSA to further expand the alumni database to 80% completion by August, as well as form a collaborative

relationship with the Brookhaven Regional Arts Guild (BRAG) to bring alumni back to Brookhaven for hosted visits and workshops throughout the year. She believes our most important goal is to continue fund raising efforts so that the scholarship can be fully implemented this year. "MSA has given alumni so much, now we have the opportunity to give back, whether it be through membership dues of \$10 a year, visits to the campus and community, or service in the association. Along with our Ole Brook booth, which was incredibly fun and successful last year, I hope to work with BRAG to add two additional community fundraisers throughout the year." Another huge priority for Brianna is offering more member incentives for alumni who join the association or who wish to return to Brookhaven to visit, and she wants to reach out to alumni who may have felt excluded in the past.

2010-2011 Secretary

2014-2016 – 2005 Class Representative

2014-2016 Newsletter Co-Editor

2015-2016- Vice President

VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Lauren Leslie

Visual Discipline 2006



Volunteering out of Portland, OR since 2014, Lauren has stayed committed to MSAAA as the 2015 Visual Representative. Lauren continues to provide opportunities for alumni on a consistent basis. By producing MSAAA's newsletter *The Phoenix Quarterly* as a way to communicate with MSA's alumni, she has also opened doors through the newsletter for alumni to add volunteer work to their resumes and portfolios, promote their talents, and support Mississippi School of the Arts and MSAAA. After reaching a year of publication she continues to manage the newsletter. She has also reached out to provide opportunities for alumni to sell and display their work during Festival South 2016. Lauren has volunteered her time and skills to create MSAAA's logo, crest, brochures, and various social media graphics to help promote MSAAA internally and externally.

Having worked several years in team-oriented corporate environments and independently as a freelance graphic designer and illustrator, Lauren knows the importance of good communication, dependability, and sacrifice in order to be effective. She is equipped with knowledge, skills, and resources to coordinate teams, create processes, work efficiently, and formulate creative solutions. As a current officer of the association, Lauren knows that the ability to make effective, strategic decisions with clear understanding is essential to manage an ever-growing organization and have a positive impact.

As vice president, Lauren would like to help MSAAA launch deeper into its untapped potential and hopes to open many more doors for alumni. Her long-term and short-term goals for the association include:

- Raising funds is a constant focus. One attainable way MSAAA can raise funds and support is through designing and selling t-shirts that promote the organization.
- While social media serves as the face of our organization currently, MSAAA deserves an official home on the web to truly represent our special organization of creative individuals. Having a website is possible if MSAAA acquires enough funding and would open doors to produce funds by allowing us hosting advertising space for sponsors and alumni businesses.
- Noticing how many of our alumni have dreams to own their own businesses, publish their own books, record their own albums, etc...Lauren wants to support alumni by using MSAAA to help them fund their creative dreams each year by having a fun annual drawing called "Drawing for Dreams."
- Lauren also wants to involve the next visual representative and other alumni with specific skills in the production of a promotional video for MSAAA that would serve to promote MSAAA to the prospective graduates of MSA.
- After living in Oregon for four years, the new perspectives and knowledge one can gain from traveling is extremely valuable. In regards to long-term goals, Lauren would love to find a safe, secure way to start a program in which our alumni around the USA can act as host families for prospective alumni who might be visiting other areas for college. This would also be a more affordable and more valuable alternative way to travel and see other parts of the country.



Jasmine Murray walked the red carpet at the *Gods Not Dead 2* premiere on March 31st. Her single "Rest Of My Life" was featured on the soundtrack which is available on the Fair Trade Services label. In the film, Melissa Joan Hart plays a high-school teacher who faces a court decision that could end her career.



Congratulations to Ann-Marie Herod, an alumna from the 2012 theatre discipline, for receiving the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award. Ann-Marie was

honored in the Gertrude C. Ford Ballroom at Inn at Ole Miss on April 6. The Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award was established in 1890 to honor individuals who exhibit nobility of character, exemplified by selfless service to others and the community. This is the University of Mississippi's highest award in honor of service. Award criteria emphasize placing service to others and the community before oneself, while embodying the qualities of honesty, morality, ethics, integrity, responsibility, determination, courage, and compassion. Individuals who do not actively seek recognition are prime candidates for this award.





It is with deepest regret and sincere condolences that we take the time to remember Jordan Oliveria, who graduated from the Visual Arts discipline in the Inaugural class of 2005. Some of you may remember Jordan from our first edition of *The Phoenix Quarterly*, at which time he was fighting his battle with cancer. Others are sure to remember him as a classmate at MSA, where he was one of the most dependable, likable, and intelligent students of his class. Unfortunately, Jordan passed from this Earth on March 12, 2016 at the age of 29. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family as they heal from this incredible loss. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

MSA EVENTS

4/1-2	A Winter's Tale, Theatre Production	7:00 p.m.	Enochs Theater
4/3	Matinee	2:00 p.m.	TBD
Mondays, 4/4-5/2	MSA Literary Showcases	6:00 p.m.	www.msa.k12.ms.us
Tuesdays, 4/5-5/10	MSA Visual Art Showcases	6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.	Enochs Art Gallery
4/14	MSA Vocal, Musical Theatre Showcase	7:00 p.m.	Enochs Theater
4/29	Vocal Senior Recital	7:00 p.m.	Lampton Auditorium
5/9	Dr. Lebow's Retirement Reception	5:00 p.m.	Phoenix
5/13	Spring Chorale Concert	7:00 p.m.	Lampton Auditorium

MSA needs your help! It's time to FINISH Elizabeth Cottage! Alumni who wish to order a brick are urged to do so as soon as possible. You are already a part of MSA history - don't you want to see it LITERALLY set in stone?

(See page 8)

REALITY CHECK

by Lauren Leslie

Each of us have been met with crossroads and turns that took us in different directions after graduation, and some of us have encountered more pleasant experiences and smoother transitions than others. May is mental health awareness month, reminding us to be compassionate towards others by connecting to our shared experience and remembering that a person's fortune or misfortune does not ultimately define his or her value.

As artists, we strive to display the complex layers of human nature, which in itself presents the obstacle of often being misunderstood by the majority of society that generally views sensitivity and individuality as inhibitors to success and catalysts for strife. However, it's our internal state that uses the transcendental language of emotion as a means of communication to bring us into awareness and alignment with what we truly want. It's no wonder so many people find themselves paralyzed by fear, confused, resentful, and disillusioned by the ideologies of society. But our creativity contributes to our resilience by helping us find opportunities within different areas that align with our individuality.

Jordan Scaife, a 2008 alumna of the Theatre discipline, found herself utilizing the empowering qualities of creativity while wrestling with poverty and estrangement throughout her experiences before and after graduation. Because of budget cuts in Louisiana, she suddenly lost the security of housing and education at the University of New Orleans. Being forced to discontinue her studies, she found herself in debt and essentially homeless in New Orleans, moving from one home to another without a reliable support system. "When Louisiana made their severe budget cuts, it cost me not only my higher education but also my housing. That's no small thing to an 18 year old with nowhere to go," Jordan affirmed.

But the symptoms from the system of poverty affect more than just an individual's external environment; they also affect the internal environment of the psyche. Along with her skepticism towards the possibility of any good fortune, Jordan attributes her struggles with forming long-term relationships to the guilt she felt from previously having to depend on the charity of others. "Although I'm not close with really anyone from that time in my life anymore, just recognizing that I don't ever have to feel alone, that there

will always be people in the world that care about me, has been a comfort through some of my darkest struggles." She later moved to North Dakota to work in the oil fields, and after being laid off from her job, she made the decision to move to Colorado to find work.

Despite her struggles, by seeing the space around her hardships and embracing her flexibility, Jordan remains optimistic about moving forward: "I am much less materialistic, having moved so often and into such cramped quarters... It is easier for me to make firm, confident choices in a shorter time frame than most others that I've encountered, as I've spent years having to make life-altering decisions very quickly."

It's in our nature as creative people to explore, learn, experiment, and produce whether that manifests through relationships, shelter, careers, etc... Having this obsession with motion can be overwhelming at times and can make us feel like we are in a constant whirlwind; therefore, allowing ourselves space, patience, and flexibility will soothe anxiety and invite solutions into the moment with us. Jordan has recently joined the United States Air Force in hopes for another chance to eventually attend college for engineering, with an emphasis on petroleum engineering.

Survival requires us to be sensitive—intelligently in tune with our internal compass of emotions. The advantage of being artists, among a society that discounts the value of emotion, is that we understand the importance of bringing the internal state to a point of awareness. We express this understanding through the creation of art in whatever form it takes. Occasionally, a painter must take a step back and view his or her work from a broader vantage point to gauge its progress, yet even the labor of reflection is just as intensely intimate as that of construction. Through this use of disassociation, we can see beyond obstacles to evaluate and determine the best course of action. "I think my theatre training [at MSA] gave me the tools to deal with my often chaotic surroundings in a way that was calm and rational," Jordan attested.

Unfortunately, estrangement, homelessness, and unemployment are not uncommon, as other young adults have also been affected by these experiences. Difficult situations such as those that cause mental illness are understandably just as difficult for others, who are more fortunate, to accept. But despite how our situations may differ, we all naturally share our experience on a deeper, universal level of operation in which our lives are guided by feeling, rather than by external goals and expectations. Understanding the human experience from a sensitive perspective, reveals unity in compassion and resolves struggles through synchronicity in the midst of an unpredictable reality.

ALUMNI WORK

KATELYN WASDEN

Katelyn Wasden is a mixed media/watercolor artist located on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Her formative years were shaped by her instructors at the Mississippi School of the Arts, and her work continues to be inspired by dreamscapes and the seaside. Katelyn will be displaying her work with Jesse Thames in an MSA alumni show, *Ignited Skies*, for **2016 Festival South** at the Shop Downtown in Hattiesburg, MS during the entire month of June.



SUPPORT MSA RENOVATIONS

BUY A COMMEMORATIVE BRICK

By purchasing an engraved brick you are given the means by which to become a lasting part of the Mississippi School of the Arts. Each newly engraved brick will be placed in the walkway of Lampton Auditorium at MSA. You will also be contributing to further improvements to the campus and facilities at MSA. Order forms are available at Mississippi School of the Arts or by clicking [here](#).

\$100
4"x8" Brick

\$250
8"x8" Brick

\$500
8"x8" Granite
Custom Paver



FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

Stay up to date on opportunities, events, and what your fellow alumni are doing by following MSAAA on Facebook! If you are a member of our MSAAA Facebook group, make sure to follow us by checking the "Notifications" box on the top right hand side of our page. You don't want to miss out on the exciting things that are happening!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/msaaa/>



Without your input and contributions, the sixth edition of our MSAAA newsletter would not have been possible. *The Phoenix Quarterly* is made by the alumni for the alumni. If you would like to contribute to future editions or have suggestions please reach out to our newsletter committee by emailing us at msartsalumni@gmail.com.

You can download previous editions of *The Phoenix Quarterly* [here](#).

Thanks for reading and be sure to share!



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