

PHOENIXES



MSAAA NEWSLETTER

**2017 REUNION CALL
FOR VOLUNTEERS**

**FUND RAISING
MSAAA RAFFLE OF
DREAMS**

**ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT
KATHERINE QUIN TAKES
ON BULLYING WITH THE
POWER OF CREATIVITY**

President's Note

October is in full swing and you can smell the pumpkin spice latte in the air. It's hard to believe that only two months remain in 2016! Soon winter will be upon us and in the blink of an eye, it will be time to begin planning the 2017 reunion, which we hope will be our biggest event yet. Honoring the class of 2007 this year, MSA reunions offer not only networking opportunities, but a chance to take a break and reconnect as we navigate our way through the perilous seas of school and careers. Last year our reunion included not only our alumni and families, but our brothers from a different mother- the Whitworth alumni, who turned out in full force. We look forward to their return this year as well. I hope to see you all there!

Joining the association is now easier than ever. I'm excited to announce that MSAAA has teamed up with the MSA Foundation to provide a secure online store for alumni to join MSAAA. Simply go to the MSA website (msabrookhaven.org) and join in the school store. For only \$10 a year, you can pave the way for a student in Mississippi to receive a life-changing experience in the arts. 100% of membership fees and donations go back to MSA in the form of the Rising Phoenix Scholarship – how many associations can make that claim? We are so fortunate to have such a dedicated body of alumni that's growing every year. Please join us this year by becoming a member of MSAAA.

We want to hear about what our alumni are accomplishing! Please follow us on Facebook and let us know about the great things you are doing. Every day I hear about alumni doing the most amazing things – you guys are creating scholarships, starting careers at Nintendo, appearing on television, interning with Disney and opening businesses. We can't wait to hear where you guys go next, so let us know!

And as always, please spread the word about MSAAA and the wonderful opportunities available at the Mississippi School of the Arts! Can't wait to see you in May!

Sincerely,

Brianna Moore-Christa, MSAAA President



8TH EDITION

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



ABOUT THE COVER ART

A Tribute to Michael

by Shelby Hamilton

"The three fates of Greek mythology oversaw the beginning and end of every life represented through a gold string, each existence different than any other," Shelby explained. The somber image reveals a crow resting on a piece of wood, as if it had transitioned into existence from the gray background around the circle and mysteriously emerged into focus to unravel a golden string around its claw. The circular shape of the foreground, like a camera lens, dramatically emphasizes a singular moment of the crow's journey, as the bird interacts with a string tied around its foot, serving as a reminder that the most treasured piece of life is the beautiful complexity that we wrap ourselves in. From person

to person, it's easy to see each soul shaping into its own self. Michael McNally was one of those souls who allowed his spirit to soar with each day that was given to him. He was an inspiration through his art and music, always working to better his craft and share his experience with others. Michael was also a shoulder to cry on and friend to all he met. We want to pay tribute to the life of Michael McNally. May his love, encouragement, and enthusiasm reach everyone he knew.

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CALL FOR REUNION WEEKEND VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are needed to assist with the 2017 reunion in May. Contact msartsalumni@gmail.com or briannamr37@gmail.com for more information. Lodging is provided.



DON'T MISS OUT ON MSAAA'S

Raffle for Dreams

Are you writing a book, making a film, launching a business, building an invention, have a creative project started, or going to school for the arts? Our talented alumni deserve support to help reach their goals, and that's why MSAAA wants to help make your dreams possible. That's why MSAAA is hosting a raffle specifically for alumni!

Pay \$5.00 to enter for your chance to win \$50.00 to fund your creative project!

Each alumni is allowed to enter twice for \$10.00.

Complete our [form](#) to enter. Deadline for submission is **December 23, 2016**.

*Your payment of \$5.00 is due within 24 hours of submitting this application [here](#). You must be a Mississippi School of the Arts graduate to enter. All proceeds help fund our MSAAA Rising Phoenix Scholarship fund for an incoming MSA junior. Winners will be announced in the January's edition of *The Phoenix Quarterly*.

ALUMNI TESTIMONIAL

VICTOR TERRY



Victor Terry, a 2009 graduate of the Mississippi School of the Arts Vocal discipline, 2012 graduate of Jackson State University in Speech Communication and Theater, and soon to be 2017 graduate of Providence College with his M.Ed in Urban Teaching has created the David and Jackie Martin Scholarship for students of color. David and Jackie Martin were Victor's host parents during his time at MSA "I started the David and Jackie Martin Hardship Fund for students of color because I needed the aid when I was a student at MSA. I also know of other students of color that came from poverty to MSA and needed funds for simply things like bedding, winter coats, and activities. David and Jackie Martin were my host parents. Without them I don't think I would have survived MSA. They took me into their family and provided me the love and support I need at the time. I am eternally grateful for them. Naming this fund after them is the least I could do. If anyone would like to donate to the David and Jackie Martian Hardship Fund please call MSA and they will take good care of you."

What are your future goals?

"As of now, my future goals include me producing performance pieces that examine the inequalities of society and social institutions. This includes examining the dynamic of gender, sexuality, class, race, and religion when juxtaposed to institutions like church, mosque, college, high school, the Northeast, and the South. I want to continue to teach literacy using critical race theory and Black Vernacular English. God willing, I would one day like to get my Ph. D in

Education with a focus on Race, Equity, and Justice."

How has MSA helped you achieve those goals?

"I remember driving my 92' Buick Regal to MSA on my own from Crystal Springs, MS. I drove myself to Prospective Students' Day, Audition Weekend, and Accepted Students' Day. This was the first time in my life that I started to take control of my future. I refused to be what all the national statistics projected I would become. I moved into MSA with two trash bags and faith in God. The lessons learned from those long drives down to Brookhaven, two trash bags, and faith in God has carried me far in life. MSA provided me with an excellent education that prepared me for my major in Speech Communication and Theater at Jackson State University, but more importantly MSA was where I witnessed that with God I can do it. I can fight the statistics."

If you could give advice to your past self, what would you say?

"If I could give advice to my past self, it would be to calm down, take a look around, and enjoy the moment. So much of time at MSA was filled with living in the future and planning for the future. I feel like I missed some great moments in high school. "

AD SPACE AVAILABLE!

DO YOU HAVE YOUR OWN BUSINESS? ARE YOU AN ARTIST THAT NEEDS PROMOTION? DO YOU HAVE YOUR OWN PRODUCT OR ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE? MSAAA WANTS TO SUPPORT YOU!

When it comes to fund raising, MSAAA wants to help support our association by integrating with our members and our local communities in Mississippi through selling ads in our newsletter *The Phoenix Quarterly*. All proceeds go to our Rising Phoenix Scholarship that helps fund a special incoming MSA junior each year.

NEED A DESIGN FOR YOUR AD?

No problem! At MSAAA we have volunteer graphic designers that graciously volunteer to create amazing designs for MSAAA and can help you create your ad! Just submit any content for your ad, and we will take care of the rest!

Ads will run for 12 months, and since this is the first year for us to sell ads, we are giving everyone a special introductory offer! Don't miss out on this amazing deal and help support MSA and our alumni association!

Pricing is listed below:

*****TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR INTRODUCTORY PRICES!*****

Full Page ad: \$50/year per ad

Half Page ad: \$30/year per ad

Quarter ad: \$15/year per ad

If you or someone you know is interested in buying an ad, please email visit MSA's website [here](#).



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

KATHERINE QUIN

by Lauren Leslie

"I've never told anyone this before..." This was the stunning phrase repeated by each interviewee during the conception of Katherine Quin's play about the harmful effects of female-on-female bullying entitled *I Like Girls Who Like Girls*.

Students attend Mississippi School of the Arts for a handful of different reasons, but perhaps the most common reason is the dream of studying and developing in an educational environment that will nurture its students' individuality. For Katherine Quin, a 2008 MSA Theatre alumni, MSA was a beacon of hope and a pivotal experience of empowerment that would inspire and teach her to use her creativity and theatre experience to create positive change.

After being frequently harassed by a group of girls who Katherine had considered to be friends at her previous school, she experienced the demoralizing effects of a chronically toxic environment first hand. "School is your life for so much of your youth, and when you don't feel welcome or connected to that life, it can be a bit nightmarish," stated Katherine, connoting of the realness of the mind's environment. However, when she stepped into MSA, where the students were dedicated and teachers were determined to help her achieve greatness, she discovered her own power was just as real as her suffering and

finally found a place of acceptance. "I was encouraged to be me more than I had ever been in my entire life...MSA was and is a sanctuary for all the teens who just want to be themselves in a place where it's much safer to be a bit more outlandish."

In May of 2012, Katherine graduated with her Bachelor's Degree in Theatre History from the University of Southern Mississippi, and she then went on to receive her Master's Degree in Theater History and Criticism in May of 2015. She used her creative skills and her education to write a verbatim play *I Like Girls Who Like Girls*. Originally written in part for her master's thesis, the play was opportunity help raise awareness about the shocking regularity and negative effects of chronic bullying specifically among females.

While both genders can be equally terrible to each other, the distinction of gender expectations correlates with the way the two genders bully each other. When girls are constantly being told by society to make perfection their highest priority in their personal lives, it's easy to understand why girls feel so powerless and anxious under the pressure to meet constant bombardments of high expectations in all areas of life, no matter how shallow, in the name of strength. This dynamic between society and women creates oppression and intensifies insecurities that are often projected from one girl to another in form of vicious insults,

“ I didn't want anyone who had suffered or was suffering to do so in silence. I wanted to give women the power to speak anonymously, have their voices heard... ”

gossip, and alienation among other forms of harassment.

With an open heart, Katherine conceptualized the bold narrative for her play by reaching out to women on social media in search for their experiences with bullying. Pride Film and Plays also helped connect her with more of the transgender community, which added a new level of intensity and diversity to her narrative: "I didn't want anyone who had suffered or was suffering to do so in silence. I wanted to give women the power to speak anonymously, have their voices heard, and have a moment of relief to know that someone out there could connect with them perhaps when they thought no one ever would." In fact, many victims of bullying never report the incident due to fear of amplifying their situation, being ignored, or being blamed. During her interviews with each woman, Katherine realized that the adults, who they depended on for help, had only validated their feelings of powerlessness. "They all had similar stories of either being ignored or not believed when giving the adults in their lives information about their struggles. Sometimes adults don't want to believe that other students would be so hateful, and other times they either don't see it...or choose not to."

With simple names such as "Woman 1" and "Woman 2" and suggested costumes, Katherine kept the character details simple and modeled them around the diverse group women who she interviewed. There was no questioning the characters or the narrative, which appropriately left no room for mystery or humor. Each character showed a different side bullying in a script that aimed to show the stripped-down gritty reality of the stories to connect with victims, who might be suffering helplessly. The play was recently produced and well received at Pride Film and Plays of Chicago at their summer event Lezfest. In that showing of *I Like Girls Who Like Girls*, four women performed her play: one twenty-year-old woman of color, one mid-twenties Caucasian woman, one mid-twenties transgendered performer, and another woman of color in her forties. Katherine's play was also performed this past July to a full house during an evening filled with all female performers who shared deep and personal stories. Feminism in its truest form is the supporting of female individuality and freedom by acknowledging that the inherent worth of each woman is because of her unique choices and

powerful spirit despite biology or any other external factors. *I Like Girls Who Like Girls* brilliantly presents a sobering glimpse of female-to-female bullying through the stories of each character. Despite the heaviness of the script, Katherine wraps the script up with a positive message that speaks to the strength of women as means to empower the female collective.

Katherine dreams of continuing the message of her play by having *I Like Girls Who Like Girls* being performed at schools to start conversations between school staff and students about bullying and how to prevent it. Her play encourages lifting the veil of ignorance, where bullying is regarded, by exploring the subject through a creative space of raw understanding and empathy. "You have to know your self worth and be ready to admit to what bothers you...I have kept some amazing friends who still respect my boundaries, and I have lost some friends who didn't want to. That can and is incredibly painful, but it is so necessary!" She advised. "I have had one of the healthiest years of my life because I have set the boundaries for myself and listened to the boundaries of others."

In the meantime, Katherine offers resources for those who want to support in the movement to stop bullying by starting conversations and being a light for victims. "...It Gets Better Project for LGBTQA youth as well as The Trevor Project, The Love is Louder Organization based around the arts, The Kind Champaign which is specifically devoted to female to female bullying, Stomp Out Bullying gives great advice on how to discuss this topic in schools and The Born This Way Foundation which is all about finding your own strength in your individuality."



Read a featured excerpt from Katherine's script "*I Like Girls Who Like Girls*" on the next page.

ALUMNI WORK

KATHERINE QUIN

Below is an excerpt from Katherine Quin's play entitled *I Like Girls Who Like Girls*.

Woman 3: If we don't stand together... If we don't choose to like each other and then ourselves... We won't get any better. I like girls who like girls. Meaning, I like ladies who respect ladies and take care of them. If there's something going on with a fellow woman, I'll try to help her out! If I see a girl, stranger or not, in some sort of distress... I want to help her.

Woman 2: I've had to learn to trust women again. I always assumed any compliment was a lie... Any whisper was about something negative about me. It was hard... It is hard. But I want to trust again. I want to be a sister that can be trusted and have trust to give as well.

Woman 1: I like girls.

Woman 2: Who like girls.

Woman 3: I like women.

Woman 4: Women build women up. We start life... we raise life... and we should treasure life.

Woman 1: I am smart.

Woman 2: I am talented.

Woman 3: I am beautiful with or without makeup.

Woman 1: I am in love with life.

Woman 4: I am a mother.

Woman 2: I am a sister.

Woman 3: I am a lover.

Woman 4: I am a woman who will continue to build up women.

All: I like girls who like girls.

T-SHIRT DESIGN COMPETITION

WIN A FREE T-SHIRT & BEEF UP YOUR PORTFOLIO!

Right now, we are looking for an awesome design for our MSAAA t-shirts!

Knowing how many talented alumni we have, we are holding an MSA alumni t-shirt design competition, and the winner gets a **FREE SHIRT!** The winner will be announced in January's edition of *The Phoenix Quarterly*.

The competition is open to all MSA alumni with no entry fee; however there are requirements. Entries that do not meet the requirements of the Submission Rules will be disqualified. The work will be judged on quality, appropriateness, and creativity. Please view the Submission Rules below before entering. We look forward to seeing all of your amazing designs!

Submission Rules:

- Entries must preferably be uploaded as a **PNG** file with transparent background; however **JPG and GIF** file types are also accepted.
- Design must be your own original work.
- The file's resolution should be **300 DPI** (dots per inch)
- **Deadline:** January 5, 2017
- You are allowed to enter as many designs as you'd like.
- Please submit your entry or any questions to msartsalumni@gmail.com with your **first and last name**.



MSA EVENTS

Wed, Oct 19, 2016

6:00 pm
Connect Event – Oxford
*Lafayette County & Oxford Public Library, Oxford
Mississippi*

Thu, Oct 20, 2016

6:00 pm
Connect Event – Tupelo
Lee County Library, Tupelo Mississippi

Thu, Oct 20, 2016 – Fri, Oct 21, 2016

7:00 pm
Fall Dance Concert
Enochs Black Box Theater, Brookhaven Mississippi

Thu, Nov 3, 2016

6:00 pm
Connect Event – Coast
Courtyard Marriott Hotel, D'Iberville Mississippi

Thu, Nov 17, 2016

6:00 pm
Connect Event – MS Museum of Art
Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson Mississippi

Sat, Dec 3, 2016

EXPERIENCE MSA DAY!
Mississippi School of the Arts, Brookhaven Mississippi

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



NETWORK WITH OTHER ALUMNI

JOIN MSAAA'S LINKEDIN GROUP

Thanks to alumni suggestions, we now have a professional networking group LinkedIn for MSA alumni specifically! The goal of this group is for members to share industry-related resources, knowledge, and job opportunities. Visit our page here:

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8539706>



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 eighth 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!



Brianna Moore-Christa
President

Lauren Leslie
Vice President