



Mississippi Gulf Coast Alliance for Response Forum  
Speaker Biographies  
April 27, 2016

**Joe Boney**

Chief Boney started his career with the Biloxi Fire Department in 1984. During his 31-year career with the department, he has worked his way up through the ranks. Boney was appointed to his current position as Director of Fire in 2013. He is the founder - and currently serves on the board - of the West End House Co. #3 Museum and Fire Education Center. Additionally, Joe is the driving force behind the City of Biloxi's annual Fireman's Day Parades. During his tenure with the fire department, Boney has received numerous accolades, including a Medal of Valor for his service during Hurricane Katrina, and most recently was named Fire Chief of the Year by the Mississippi Burn Foundation's 2016 Hearts for Heroes.

**Larry Bowman**

Larry Bowman is the Recovery Office Director at the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and State Public Assistance Officer. In this capacity he oversees the efforts of the Recovery Office to provide assistance to citizens, local governments, non-profit associations, state agencies and businesses to aid in recovery from disasters.

**Jennifer Brannock**

Jennifer Brannock is an Associate Professor and Curator of Rare Books and Mississippiana at the University of Southern Mississippi. She holds a BA in Art History and a MS in Library Science from the University of Kentucky. Jennifer is part of the 2011 NHR (formerly AIC-CERT) cohort which focused on disaster recovery for cultural heritage institutions. She regularly teaches preservation workshops and assists community members with their preservation and conservation needs. Her research interests include special collections outreach, reference service, and midcentury lowbrow publishing history.

**Tom Claeson**

Tom Claeson is Senior Consultant for Digital & Preservation Services at LYRASIS. He consults on preservation, disaster preparedness, digitization, special collections/archives, remote storage, funding, strategic planning, and advocacy. Claeson received the 2014 George Cunha and Susan Swartzburg Award from the American Library Association, recognizing the recipient's career work in cooperative preservation. He has been a lead consultant on 17 IMLS "Connecting to Collections" statewide preservation planning grants (including here in Mississippi), and also led six implementation projects. Previously Program Director for New Initiatives at PALINET and Global Product Manager at OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Tom also held program management positions at Amigos Library Services. He was Acting President of Heritage Preservation in 2015, after serving on the organization's Board for 15 years. Tom has taught graduate-level preservation courses for University of Texas-Austin, University of California-Los Angeles, and University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

**Sharon Davis**

Sharon Davis works for the Harrison County Library System as Head Librarian of Biloxi Libraries. She holds a Master of Library and Information Science from the University of Southern Mississippi, where she previously taught courses in Information Literacy and Children's Literature. She joined the library system in 2005, four months prior to Hurricane Katrina. Post-storm Sharon assisted in initial damage assessment of library buildings and collections throughout the county, salvage and rebuilding of collections, and handling donations of books and supplies for Biloxi Libraries.

**Clay Jones**

A native of Biloxi, Clay Jones is currently the Deputy Police Chief with the D'Iberville Police Department, and on June 1, 2016, will become the D'Iberville City Manager. Clay is a graduate of Biloxi High School, the University of Southern Mississippi, and the Southern Police Institute in Louisville, Kentucky. He has 22 years of law enforcement experience, beginning with the Biloxi Police Department, then serving with the Harrison County Sheriff's Department before moving to D'Iberville. He has also previously served as the Southern Regional Public Safety Institute located at Camp Shelby.

**Sallye Killebrew**

Sallye Killebrew has a deep background in arts and culture - both educationally and through experience - and in 2006, became focused on Arts and Recovery in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. During her tenure at the Mississippi Arts Commission, Killebrew served as Special Initiatives Director, administering and adjudicating approximately \$3 million in federal, state, and private grant monies in an effort to assist the cultural rebuilding and revitalization of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. She's been a frequent conference presenter and a member on national emergency response committees and boards to help shape the new and relevant focus of the importance the arts and culture have in our communities, as well as the significance of preparedness, readiness, and relationships. After serving as the Interim Executive Director at the Mississippi Arts Commission, Sallye relocated to Bay St. Louis and is happy to be back home on the coast.

**Elizabeth La Beaud**

Elizabeth La Beaud is the Digital Lab Manager at the University of Southern Mississippi. She holds a Master of Library and Information Science, a certificate in Archives and Special Collections, and the Digital Archives Specialist Certificate from the Society of American Archivists. Elizabeth specializes in digital preservation, project planning and implementation, and copyrights as it pertains to digital collections.

**Rupert Lacy**

Rupert Lacy was appointed as the Director of Harrison County Emergency Management, Homeland Security, and E-911 Agency in December 2007. In this capacity he is responsible for coordinating preparations for events of a natural, technological or man-made emergency or disaster that threatens life, property or the environment of the citizens of Harrison County. Rupert has previously worked with the Harrison County Sheriff's Department, the Leake County Regional Correctional, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. He has been working "all major incidents" with the Civil Defense/Emergency Management Agency since 1978, and during Hurricane Katrina was appointed as Logistic Section Chief and Deputy Planning Section Chief.

**Chris Lopper**

Since 1994, Commander Lopper has been a member of the Gulfport Police Department. He is a graduate of Gulfport High School, and received a BS in Legal Systems Administration with honors from the University of Mississippi. Chris has attended the Harrison County Law Enforcement Academy, the Drug Unit Commander's Academy at the Drug Enforcement Administration in Quantico, Virginia, and the Southeastern Command and Leadership Academy held at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. He has worked on numerous task forces and with organizations such as the U.S. Customs Service and the DEA. In 2009, Chris was tasked to lead the newly formed Special Enforcement Division of the Gulfport Police Department and in 2013 was appointed Deputy Chief of Police.

**Kevin O'Brien**

Kevin O'Brien is the Executive Director of the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art. He has 30 years of senior level administrative and program experience in museums and cultural organizations throughout the United States. Prior to joining OOMA, Kevin served as Executive Director of the Montgomery County Historical Society, the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft, the Key West Art and Historical Society and as executive director of other arts and cultural organizations. He has also served in leadership positions with state museum associations, business associations, arts councils and foundations and taught art history. Kevin's educational background includes a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Notre Dame, and a Master of Fine Arts degree from Tulane University.

**Annie Peterson**

Annie is Preservation Services Librarian at LYRASIS. Before joining LYRASIS, Peterson was the Preservation Librarian for the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library at Tulane University. She holds a Master of Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. She is active in the American Library Association and is the Chair of the Association of Library Collections and Technical Services Preservation and Reformatting Section.

**Dusty Reed**

Born and raised in Gulfport, MS, Dusty attended the University of South Alabama in Mobile where he received a BS in physical geography with a minor in meteorology. At the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Reed received a MS in physical geography with a concentration in climatology and GIS. Reed is currently a GIS Analyst for Harrison County specializing in geography and geospatial technologies as well as a member of Harrison County's regional emergency management team. He has previously taught in geography labs at the University of Alabama, conducted land surveying along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and undertook a GIS assistantship at a cartographic research lab in Tuscaloosa.

**Lee Smithson**

On February 1, 2016, Smithson became the Executive Director of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). Prior to this appointment, Lee served as Director of Military Support for the Mississippi National Guard during Hurricanes Katrina, Gustav, Ike and Isaac, the Mississippi River Flood of 2011, multiple tornado outbreaks, and the Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill in 2010. He holds a BA from Tulane University, a Master of Strategic Studies Degree from the U.S. Army War College and a Master of Homeland Security Degree from the Naval Postgraduate School.

**Gene Taylor**

Gene Taylor is a former member of the U.S. Congress, having served for 21 years. He served as a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee and most recently as Chairman of the Seapower Subcommittee, providing oversight of expenditures for Navy and Marine Corps programs. As chairman he worked with senior Navy leadership to develop a 30 year shipbuilding plan. His work includes truncating the unaffordable DD1000 program and restarting the DDG51 program, making that ship the backbone of the Navy Surface Fleet and Missile Defense. He led the expansion of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle program that is credited with saving lives and limbs of thousands of soldiers and Marines. Taylor served as a senior member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Coast Guard Subcommittee. He was the leading advocate of the Jones Act and American shipbuilding. He co-chaired the Shipbuilding Caucus, the Coast Guard Caucus, the National Guard and Reserve Caucus and the Expeditionary Warfare Caucus. Since leaving Congress, Gene has continued his role as a public servant through work on the Department of Defense Reserve Forces Policy Board, and as a member of the Hancock County Port & Harbor Commission. He was recently selected to serve as President of the MS National Guard Youth Challenge Foundation Board. Professionally, Gene serves on the Board of Directors of Overseas Shipholding Group. OSG is a U.S. based operator of seventy-nine oil tankers ranging in size from 200,000 to 3 million barrels. OSG is the largest oil tanker company in the U.S. built, crewed and owned Jones Act Fleet.

**Jessica Unger**

Jessica (Jess) Unger is the Emergency Programs Coordinator at the Foundation of the American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (FAIC). In her role, she manages several programs that support emergency preparedness and response efforts among cultural institutions, including the national Alliance for Response initiative. Prior to joining FAIC, Jess had previously been on staff at Heritage Preservation, serving as Emergency Programs Assistant and Director of External Affairs. She holds a BA in Anthropology from The College of William and Mary and a MA in Public Humanities from Brown University.

**Richard Wilson**

As the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Deputy Administrator, Wilson oversees the day-to-day operations of the MEMA offices of Response, Preparedness, Field Services and Logistics. Richard has a long career in emergency management. He began his career with the Florence Volunteer Fire Department, spent 18 years as the Rankin County Emergency Management Director, and was deployed to the Gulf Coast to assist in response and recovery operations at the Harrison County Emergency Operations Center in Gulfport after Hurricane Katrina.

**Julia Marks Young**

Julia has been director of the Archives and Records Services Division, Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) since 2005, with oversight of state and local government records programs and Mississippi's state Archives. After hurricane Katrina, she helped coordinate recovery and response efforts and contributed to numerous national initiatives to improve emergency preparedness of cultural collections institutions sponsored by the Council of State Archivists, Society of American Archivists, Heritage Preservation, Northeast Document Conservation Center, and LYRASIS.