



Crime and Grits

The Official Newsletter of the Southern Criminal Justice Association

Issue 8

Welcome to *Crime and Grits*, the official newsletter of the Southern Criminal Justice Association (SCJA).

This summer newsletter includes information about the 2023 conference, association updates, member highlights, and upcoming elections.

We want to hear and see it all. If you have association or member pictures, or an idea for a news feature, please email crimeandgrits@gmail.com or contact Dr. Kristina Lopez at kristina.lopez@unf.edu.

Please share this issue of *Crime and Grits* with your networks. Thank you for being a dedicated member of our association and we look forward to seeing you all in September.

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Kent R. Kerley, Ph.D.

Chair and Professor

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

krkerley@uab.edu

CONFERENCE MESSAGE FROM THE 2023 PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to invite you, as well as your colleagues, students, and community partners, to the 2023 annual meeting of the Southern Criminal Justice Association. The event will take place September 13-16, 2023 at the Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel in Mobile, Alabama.

From Hurricane Katrina to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, to economic recession, Mobile has shown great resiliency in the face of hardship. Our conference hotel, built in 1852, is the third iteration of this property as the first succumbed to a flood and the second to a fire. The hotel and 100+ surrounding restaurants, bars, and shops serve as exemplars of how dedicated residents from diverse backgrounds can work together to create a vibrant community. According to Visit Mobile, Mobile is a “cultural center of the Gulf Coast and an authentic experience like nowhere else in the southern United States.” Indeed, you will find many cultural and recreational activities in the area, including the Mobile Museum of Art, Dora Franklin Finley African-American Heritage Trail, USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park, Bellingrath Gardens, and many walking tours of the area. Mobile is also home to the original Mardi Gras and some amazing cuisine, especially seafood and barbeque. I will stop there with all of the things to do in Mobile because we still want you to attend the amazing panels and special events that we have planned.

The hotel reservation link may be found here:

[Southern Criminal Justice Association Reservation Link](#)

Our conference theme is “Doing High-Quality Research in a Time of Ethical Challenges.” I invite you to submit abstracts by June 15 via this link: <https://www.southerncj.org/conference-2023/abstract-submission/>. If you have any questions about your submission, please email the program chair at scja2023@gmail.com or email me at krkerley@uab.edu.

Best wishes,

Kent R. Kerley
SCJA President

WELCOME BACK



Dr. Kathrine Johnson, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

University of West Florida

kjohnson@uwf.edu

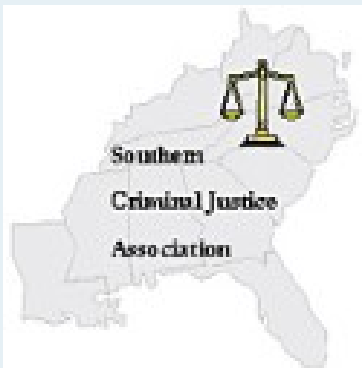
We are pleased to welcome Dr. Kathy Johnson back to the Executive Board and to serve as our 1st Vice President. The Executive Board overwhelmingly supported her appointment given her decades of service to the association and multiple elections to the Executive Board. While many of us are aware of her service as Secretariat from 2015-2022, her service dates back to 2002 when she served on her first SCJA committee as the Chair of the Student Paper Competition (2000-2001) and then chair of the Nominations Committee (2002-2003). Dr. Johnson was first elected to the Executive Board in 2006 as a Director at Large and then in 2011 as Treasurer.

Since 2000, Dr. Johnson has worked at UWF, specializing on various topics within courts, corrections, and pedagogy. For example, some of her areas of study have focused on the impacts of holding offenders in jail because of a violation of probation, risk assessment tools for pretrial release, and international collaborative teaching. Her research has been featured in various peer-reviewed journals, such as in *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, *Issues in Information Systems*, *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, and *Journal of Offender Monitoring*.

Please join us in welcoming her back on the Board and thanking her for continuous dedication and service to SCJA and its members. We look forward to seeing all she will continue to accomplish for the association in the upcoming years.



Ranked #3



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Applications are currently being accepted for Editor-in-Chief of *American Journal of Criminal Justice*: <https://www.springer.com/journal/12103/editors>.

Sponsored by the Southern Criminal Justice Association since 1975, the *American Journal of Criminal Justice* disseminates empirical research and academic commentary on a wide array of criminal justice topics and issues. Published by Springer, *AJCI* features original and applied research articles that employ a broad range of methodologies and theoretical perspectives. The journal has been on a multi-year ascension in publication rankings, having reached #3 in Criminology and Penology in 2022 with an impact factor over 6.0.

The official start date is January 1, 2024, with orientation and training to begin this fall. Solo editor and co-editor applications are welcome. Finalists will be invited to an online interview with the search committee during summer or early fall 2023.

Include all items below in one email, use the subject line "AJCI Editor Search", and send to Kent R. Kerley, SCJA President - krkerley@uab.edu. The deadline is July 1, 2023.

Application Requirements:

1. Applicants must be members of SCJA at time of submission.
2. Current CV of the editor or co-editors.
3. Cover letter to include:
 - o Editorial experience.
 - o Vision for AJCI.
 - o Plans for editorial board.
 - o Disclosure of any current or pending retractions or cases with COPE.
 - o Statement of how diversity, equity, and inclusion will be central to the journal's mission.
 - o Resources needed from the publisher and SCJA.
 - o Statement of university support (e.g., faculty release time, travel funds, summer salary, office space, utilities, the use of computers and other office equipment, support for a managing editor, student workers, and/or other basic expenses).

SCJA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Billy Vahldiek

Captain

Gallatin (TN) Police Department

Bill (Billy) Vahldiek has become a regular face at SCJA conferences as one of the association's foremost practitioner members. After working through the ranks in law enforcement since 1993 and with the Gallatin (TN) Police Department since 1998, Billy was recently promoted to the rank of Captain in 2022. He previously held positions of Patrol Officer, Field Training Officer, Corporal, Sergeant and Lieutenant. Captain Vahldiek currently oversees the department's support and training divisions while assisting with dispatch, criminal investigations, patrol and crime prevention.

Billy studied at Sam Houston State University, has a B.S. Degree in Criminal Justice from Bethel University, and is a graduate of the 332th class of the School of Police Staff and Command of Northwestern University. He is an active member of the Tennessee Law Enforcement Training Officers Association, Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police, Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 65, FBI NA, and Bethpage Masonic Lodge #521. A strong advocate of research-practitioner partnerships, Billy has successfully partnered with criminal justice scientists and criminologists to secure millions of dollars in resources for justice mental health, substance abuse intervention, officer well-being, and law enforcement staffing analysis. The SCJA recognized his contributions to criminal justice and support of academe with the Outstanding Practitioner Award at the Daytona Beach conference in 2021. Congratulations to our colleague Captain Billy Vahldiek!



UPCOMING 2023 ELECTION

EXECUTIVE BOARD

The SCJA 2023 election is fast approaching and will be held for the positions of: Second Vice-President, Treasurer, and two Directors-at-Large.

Descriptions and Responsibilities

The **Second Vice-President** shall preside at Annual or Special Meetings of the Association in the absence, disability, or removal of the President and First Vice-President. The Second Vice-President shall automatically succeed to the office of President should the President and First Vice-President be unable to complete the elected terms of office. In addition, the Second Vice-President shall serve as First Vice-President for the year following the election to Second Vice-President. The duties of the Second Vice-President (First Vice-President) shall be:

- ♦To assist the President and First Vice-President as requested;
- ♦To assume responsibility for Association awards;
- ♦To assume responsibility for selecting the sites of future Annual Meetings;
- ♦To perform such other duties as directed by the President or the Board of Directors.

The **Treasurer** shall serve a term of three years or until their successors have been duly elected and qualified. Duties of the Treasurer include:

- ♦To keep an accurate record of all monies received, deposited and disbursed in the name of the Association;
- ♦To sign or designate and oversee the signing of all orders drawn on the funds of the Association as authorized;
- ♦To provide a treasurer's report at board and business meetings.
- ♦To perform such other duties as directed by the President or the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors shall consist of the immediate past President, the elected Officers, and five (5) **Directors-at-Large**. The Board of Directors shall provide general policy direction for the Association and perform ad hoc tasks at the discretion of the President, and are expected to attend all meetings of the Association. Directors-at-Large shall serve a term of three years or until their successors have been duly elected and qualified.

Southern Criminal Justice Association 2023 Annual Meeting

“Doing High-Quality Research in a Time of Ethical Challenges.”



Mobile, AL
September 13-16, 2023

2023 CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

- ◆ Conference Registration [Link](#).
- ◆ Abstract Submission [Link](#).
- ◆ Join SCJA for [membership pricing](#).

Advance Registration

- ◆ Student Member: \$5.00
- ◆ Regular Member: \$40.00
- ◆ Student Non-member: \$20.00^
- ◆ Regular Non-member: \$55.00



On-Site Registration

- ◆ Student Member: \$5.00
- ◆ Regular Member: \$70.00
- ◆ Student Non-member: \$20.00^
- ◆ Regular Non-member: \$85.00



REGISTER

2023 ANNUAL MEETING

HOTEL DETAILS

Dates:

- ♦ September 13-16, 2023

CONFERENCE HOTEL:

- ♦ The Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel & Spa
26 North Royal Street
Mobile, Alabama 36602



HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS:

- ♦ Reservations can be made using our [personalized group link](#).
- ♦ The conference rate is on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- ♦ Make your reservations as soon as possible.
- ♦ Contact the hotel to be added to the room block if booking through a third party website.

What's
the
plan?

Questions? Please Contact:

- ♦ Dr. Julie Baldwin at:
jbaldwin@american.edu

SCJA PROGRAM CHAIR



Shelly McGrath, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

smcgrath@uab.edu

Introducing Dr. Shelly McGrath. She will be serving as Program Chair for Dr. Kerley's upcoming 2023 conference in Mobile, AL.

Dr. McGrath graduated from Saint Mary's College, South Bend, IN with a BA in sociology and communications. She earned a MA in sociology and a MA in political science from Ball State University, and her Ph.D. in sociology with an emphasis in criminology from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. She is currently an associate professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Dr. McGrath's research interests include rural crime, domestic violence, fear of crime, and animal abuse. She has published articles in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *Deviant Behavior*, *Victims and Offenders*, *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, and *Aggression and Violent Behavior*. She has also taught numerous courses in the department including Crime and Criminality, Introductory Statistics, Research Methods in Criminal Justice, Corrections America: Overview, and Juvenile Delinquency. Dr. McGrath also currently serves as the President of the Mid-South Sociological Association.

Be on the lookout for emails from her in the upcoming months as the program is being finalized. We thank you, Dr. McGrath, for serving in this important role.

SCJA OFFICERS

President

Kent Kerley, PhD
University of Alabama at Birmingham

1st Vice President

Kathrine Johnson, PhD
University of West Florida

2nd Vice President

Julie Baldwin, PhD
American University

Treasurer

Molly Buchanan, PhD
Crime & Justice Institute

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Florida Southern University

Director-at-Large

Kristina Lopez, PhD
University of North Florida

Director-at-Large


Ben Stickle, PhD
Middle Tennessee State University

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Shaun Thomas, PhD
University of Arkansas

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J. Mitchell Miller, PhD
University of North Florida

***Crime and Grits* Editor**

Kristina Lopez, PhD
University of North Florida

GOT MEMBERSHIP?

Not Yet a Member? Join the SCJA Association Today!

Cost:

- ◆ Student Membership: \$15
- ◆ Faculty Membership: \$50
- ◆ 3-Year Membership: \$140
- ◆ Lifetime Membership: \$500

How to Join:

- ◆ Visit southerncj.org for more information.
- ◆ To sign up, click on the membership tab and register.
- ◆ Paypal, credit card, and checks are accepted.

BENEFITS:

- ◆ Visit great locations including Daytona Beach (2021), Nashville (2019), Pensacola Beach (2018), New Orleans (2017), Savannah (2016), and Charleston (2015).
- ◆ Discounted rates at the regional association conference.
- ◆ Welcoming, friendly atmosphere suited for professional fellowship, networking, and research presentations.
- ◆ Numerous social receptions and activities for faculty and students.
- ◆ Student members are eligible for a variety of financial awards such as the student poster competition and three other annual awards.
- ◆ Two networking meals for students to meet with Board Members and Journal Editors.
- ◆ Subscriptions to the *American Journal of Criminal Justice* and an electronic subscription to *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*.

Our members come near and far. Member states include:

Alabama Georgia Florida Tennessee South Carolina

North Carolina Mississippi Louisiana Kentucky Virginia

West Virginia Puerto Rico Virgin Islands



HAVE A WONDERFUL AND SAFE SUMMER BREAK!

SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER IN MOBILE, AL!

