Atlanta Writers Club
Centennial Anniversary
(1914-2014)

Edited by AWC Presidents:
Valerie Connors
Adrian Drost
George Weinstein
PREFACE

One hundred years ago, Charlie Chaplin made his film debut, the protection of copyright was established, the US Federal Reserve Bank opened for business, and a Serbian nationalist assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife in Sarajevo, sparking the global cataclysm of the Great War.

In the Carnegie Library in Atlanta that same year, a mere fifty years after Sherman and his troops incinerated the city, a small group of writers and editors gathered to establish a social club for the advancement of literature and promotion of the written word. They decided to call themselves the Atlanta Writers Club and elected to be an elite society with membership by invitation only.

Prominent representatives of the turn-of-the-century literati were asked by members to address their periodic dinners, sumptuous affairs enjoyed in ball gowns and tuxedos, reflecting the dignity of their mission and social standing. Early editors of The Atlanta Journal, The Atlanta Constitution, and The Atlanta Georgian would be counted among their members, as would the first Georgia Poet Laureate, distinguished professors, accomplished journalists, and an array of successful novelists, poets, and playwrights. They banded together to share the camaraderie of their literary fellowship, strengthen their professional connections, and explore avenues for expanding the reach of their publications.

For a century this band of men and women committed to the craft of writing would survive wars, a worldwide Depression, social upheavals, economic downturns and recoveries, and vast technological developments. They would meet in the Atlanta Women’s Club mansion, in libraries, churches, nursing homes, and university auditoriums. They would have hundreds of members at times and at others, only a handful.

The demographics of their membership would shift in ways their literary ancestors could not imagine. They would publish books bound in leather and on e-readers. Their imaginations would take their readers to remarkably different worlds and their creativity would be expressed in magnificently varied ways. But the core dedication would remain, this unwavering devotion to words and ideas, the experiences they represent and the universes they evoke. These thin lines of ink, scripted by the efforts of AWC writers in successive generations, run through the past century like endless, living streams, emptying into the vast ocean of the human spirit. Some of these words remain, while others have been swept away by time. However, the artistic impulse, the urge to capture thought and immortalize it on a page, the inspiration to dream and hope and write is the legacy that was envisioned ten decades ago and has been endowed to the current members of this special association.

What was once an exclusive, almost aristocratic, coterie has become a profoundly egalitarian group of more than 700 members that welcomes all who have a fundamental desire to write, regardless of background. In 2014 our members span the range of genres and experience, and this mix of novelists, poets, playwrights, screenwriters, journalists, essayists, academics, and assorted scribblers, representing those who are just starting to explore the possibility of becoming a writer to those who have been successfully publishing for years, has generated a wonderfully effective and encouraging environment for creative growth.
We offer our members exceptional monthly programs with speakers from all aspects of the book business, as well as regular workshops with recognized experts, the biannual Atlanta Writers Conference, and peer critique groups scattered around the city. We have a visible involvement in the Decatur Book Festival and an emerging presence at Dragon*Con. We have cooperative relationships with the Georgia Center for the Book, the Southern Academy for Literary Arts and Scholarly Research at Georgia Perimeter College (GPC), and Ivy Hall at SCAD-Atlanta. We co-sponsor the biennial Townsend Prize for Fiction and support a scholarship for a deserving English major at GPC.

Our influence and interests stretch from local bookstores to university writing programs to libraries to regional conferences in fact any place where there are those who love books and aspire to write them and we continue to stretch our involvement with associations of writers throughout the area. With a number of strong university writing programs in the city, a rich historical tradition, a cultural matrix that encourages diversity and creativity, and a growing network of authors and publishers, Atlanta is starting to attract the attention of the wider literary world. And the Atlanta Writers Club is a significant contributor to these changes and beneficiary of these developments.

You hold in your hands a brief history of this estimable Club, what many of us consider to be a cherished family of writers past and present. Past AWC Presidents Adrian Drost and George Weinstein and current President Valerie Connors have done a marvelous job sifting through mountains of historical records to distill the essential story of our group. I trust you will take the time to read through this narrative and share in the lives and accomplishments of those who, for one hundred years, have been stubbornly devoted to words. Even more so, my hope is that once you reach the last page, you will be inspired to pick up your own pen, create your own art, and maybe even join us as fellow travelers along the way.

Respectfully,

Clayton H. Ramsey
Officer Emeritus
AWC President, 2009-2013
ORIGINS

In hindsight, the creation of the Atlanta Writers Club seems inevitable, a natural outgrowth of the fellowship of writers who came together during the Civil War, and in the decades that followed, in a singular location called the "Calico House."

The Calico House was a three-story mansion that owed its name to the creation of books. George E. Cruselle, the contractor for the house, was assisted with the intricate interior carving by his brother-in-law, Frank F. Rice, who had been employed by a bookbinder. Frank Rice had been taught by the bookbinder, after an oath of secrecy, the formula for marbleizing paints used in interiors of books.

Rice finished the interior and had started on the outside walls with a thick coat of white plaster when he was overcome with temptation and a strong compulsion to create with his secret formula. He spread three pastel shades of paint; blue, yellow and red over the white walls, splashing the lines in such a way that it resembled marbleizing. The marble-like covering could not be removed, nor would any other paint adhere to the surface to cover it.

When the young owners arrived to take possession of their new home they found a crowd of passersby staring, laughing, and pointing to what they decreed, "Looks like our new pattern of calico cloth." And from that day the elegant mansion was known as the Calico House.

During the early 1860s, the Calico House served as a hospital for Confederate soldiers and, after the Battle of Atlanta, as the temporary headquarters for General William T. Sherman and a hospital for Union troops. The Union Medical Officer brought to Atlanta Dr. Crawford Long, who discovered anesthesia in 1834, to serve the wounded soldiers. While serving under Federal orders, Dr. Long wrote medical papers pertaining to the care of wounded men, becoming the first author to live in the Calico House.

Following the war, the Calico House became a boarding house and then the most distinguished hotel in Atlanta. In 1868, when the capital of Georgia was moved to Atlanta from Milledgeville and members of the General Assembly had to find a place to live while in town, several legislators found rooms in the three-story mansion. Among the new legislators was a handsome young bachelor, Hart Wylie. Other boarders included Mrs. Augusta Moore, her two sons, and a beautiful daughter, Lollie Belle Moore, aged eighteen.

Soon after the first General Assembly was over, Hart Wylie and Lollie Belle Moore were married and made their home at the Calico House. Lollie Belle was a poet and music composer. Soon, she and her mother, a dramatist, were inviting local writers, artists, and musicians to meet on Sunday afternoons to discuss current events, to read master poets, and to critique their own work. When Hart Wylie died in 1878, Lollie Belle went to work for the Atlanta newspapers as columnist and poet.
In the meantime, Henry W. Grady, editor of The Atlanta Constitution, came to the Calico House. His writing flair and silver-voiced oratory made him one of the most famous editors of America. He organized the Atlanta Library Association and secured an Andrew Carnegie grant for a public library. Grady’s use of writing to promote humanitarian works was legendary. At the time of his death in 1889, at 39, he was campaigning for a general hospital to serve the indigent of all races. He did not live to see the hospital; however, his friends raised the money to build the mighty Henry W. Grady General Hospital.

Another writer often seen at the Calico House was Dr. Wilbur Fiske Glenn, who became pastor of the First Methodist Church around 1880. As editor of the Christian Advocate and other publications, Dr. Glenn often met with fellow writers at the Calico House. Glenn Memorial Methodist Church on the Emory University campus was named to honor his memory.

As Atlanta recovered from the war and prospered, the Calico House continued to welcome prominent visitors and permanent tenants. The nights were full of music and social games played in the parlors and wide halls, and writers met to discuss their work and the latest publications. Eventually, Lollie Belle Wylie gathered her "Association of Writers" together for meetings in the new Carnegie Library, now known as the Atlanta Public Library.

After a prominent Atlanta insurance executive, Thomas Peters, married Kate Ross of Macon, the new Mrs. Peters became a member of the Association of Writers. Together she and Lollie Belle Wylie organized the group into the Atlanta Writers Club (AWC) on April 20, 1914 to bring about a helpful and more intimate acquaintance among Atlanta writers, to promote their talents and market their writings. Meetings were held in the University Club, Edison Hall, and in the Ansley Hotel parlors, always twice monthly, always well attended, with membership by invitation only.

Kate Ross Peters and Lollie Belle Wylie assembled an impressive membership list, which included:

- Angus Perkerson, originator of The Atlanta Journal Sunday Magazine, who was a charter AWC member and second Vice President; Margaret Mitchell was one of his staff writers.
- Frank L. Stanton, Georgia's first Poet Laureate, best remembered for his poems set to music, "Just A-Wearying for You" and "Mighty Lak a Rose."
- Charles W. Hubner, lyricist, painter, musician and historian, often called "Poet Laureate of the South."
- Lucius Perry Hills, referred to as Atlanta's wandering poet and lecturer.
- Lula Vollmer, an author and playwright who had successful plays on Broadway.
- Clark Howell, editor of The Atlanta Constitution for many years.
- James B. Nevin, at one time editor of The Atlanta Georgian.
- Dr. Mary Brent Whiteside, a well-known poet and teacher at Oglethorpe University.
• Ward Green, *Atlanta Journal* reporter and novelist, as well as a famous New York columnist and playwright.
• Wilbur Kurtz, Sr. and his wife, who were technical advisors on the movie, *Gone with the Wind*.

**PRESIDENTIAL BIOGRAPHIES**

The following is a brief biography for each AWC president, along with notable achievements during their tenure, often in their own words. These records and accompanying photographs were obtained from official Club records, albums maintained by AWC members, and historical archives.

**John Temple Graves, AWC Honorary President**
Mr. Graves was one of Georgia's most famous and colorful journalists. After his graduation at the State University he edited two Florida papers. On his return to Georgia, Mr. Graves became editor-in-chief of *The Atlanta Journal*, but is best remembered for his association with *The Atlanta Georgian* and the *New York Daily American*. Under his direction *The Atlanta Georgian* conducted successful drives against open saloons and the convict lease system, and championed the passage of child labor laws.

**William Francis Parkhurst, First AWC President 1914-1916**
Mr. Parkhurst had his own advertising agency in Atlanta and was at one-time president of the Ad Men's Club of Atlanta. As a member of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, he compiled a booklet of facts on Georgia resources, which was highly praised in the newspapers of that day. Mr. Parkhurst resigned as president, due to ill health. During his presidency, many interesting programs were enjoyed. Outstanding was one in 1914 in remembrance of the birthday of Uncle Remus (Joel Chandler Harris) whose home, "The Wren's Nest," had been made a shrine the year before. Located on the Harris front lawn are inscribed stepping stones in memory of many of the Club's outstanding members, such as Maude Lay Elton, Anderson Scruggs, Byron Herbert Reece and Ollie F. Reeves, Poet Laureate of Georgia, and others whose names appear from time to time in this history.

**J.O. Parmalee, AWC President, 1916-1917**
Ms. Parmalee was elected to fill the unexpired term of Mr. Parkhurst upon his resignation. She served the Club ably during these months.
**Lollie Belle Wylie, AWC President, 1917-1923**

Ms. Wylie was one of the founders of the Atlanta Writers Club and served as AWC president until her death in 1923. Ms. Wylie was a journalist, musician and poet. She wrote two books of poems, *The Arcades* and *Legend of the Cherokee Rose and Other Poems*. She also composed the music, with words by Robert Loveman, for "Georgia," which was made the first official song of the State of Georgia by act of the General Assembly in 1922.

While the nation sent soldiers to Europe to fight the World War, the AWC was active in giving aid to such projects as the sale of thrift stamps and liberty bonds, a French orphan adoption program, and entertainment for the troops at Camp Gordon.

After the war ended, the Authors' Grove in Piedmont Park was begun as a Club project, where trees were planted as "living memorials" to famous writers. In Ms. Wylie's words, "Our object was to promote talent and bring talent together, and still there was an aspect missing from the soul of our Club. I presented a plan to the members, which was received with general favor and that was to plant an authors' grove in Piedmont Park, to honor living writers, and to establish memorials for dead authors. I suggested that trees could be planted and dedicated to local and foreign writers by both civic and patriotic organizations of the city.

"The Park Commissioner naturally encouraged the tree planting as this would help beautify the Park, so permission was granted with pleasure. The city approved and Mayor Key was present and made a speech at our Authors' Grove dedication.

"At a meeting in December 1918, I suggested that the first tree be planted to be a memorial to the late Jacque Futrelle, former Atlanta journalist and author who lost his life on the *Titanic* in 1912."

This was the first of forty-two trees planted in Piedmont Park by the AWC. Jacque Futrelle, a friend of Ms. Wylie and participant in the Association of Writers that preceded the AWC, was the author of detective fiction. He had been called the "American Conan Doyle." As the *Titanic* took on water, he placed his wife on a lifeboat but refused to get in himself. She last saw him at the deck rail calmly smoking a cigarette next to multimillionaire Colonel John Jacob Astor IV.

Following the young oak tree planted to honor Mr. Futrelle were oaks to honor John Masefield, an earlier guest speaker at the AWC, and Jack London, American fiction writer, who had, two weeks before his death, written to the Club to confirm his plans to be the next guest speaker. William Shakespeare, Rudyard Kipling, Oscar Wilde, O. Henry, and dozens of others were similarly honored.
Ms. Wylie continued, “At the January meeting in 1920, I was able to announce that twenty Atlanta clubs had elected to plant trees in the Authors' Grove for the coming year. Also the tree planting memorial committee received a letter from the American Forestry Association commending us highly for the extensive grove that we were planting. They requested a picture for the American Forestry Magazine. We were happy with the letter of praise and delighted to send a photo.

The Uncle Remus Memorial Association chose to plant a tulip poplar in memory of Joel Chandler Harris. This species was selected because Mr. Harris had expressed his aversion to having a stone monument erected to him after death, and said that he would like to know that the tulip poplar tree which stood at the gate to the Wren's Nest would be a monument to him. The Atlanta Section, Council of Jewish Women, had plans to dedicate its second tree in honor of David Pinski, the successful playwright. The first was a memorial to Martha Wolsenstein of Cleveland, Ohio. Forty children from a Druid Hills Kindergarten planted a weeping willow in honor of Mother Goose, and what a special privilege and joy the Atlanta Writers Club had in giving the children a special place in the Authors' Grove.

The fame of the project went beyond our city borders. The president of the Virginia State Federation asked the privilege of planting a beech tree in the grove in honor of Edgar Allen Poe.

My photo appeared in the Washington Post. It was in 1922, and the occasion was the planning of the memorial tree in honor of President William McKinley. This was to commemorate his visit to Atlanta, in 1898, at which time he spoke at the jubilee meeting held at the Georgia capitol following the Spanish American War. He spoke the following words: “Every soldier's grave made during our unfortunate civil war is a tribute to American valor, and the time has now come, in the evolution of sentiment and feeling, under the providence of God, when, in the spirit of fraternity we should share with you in the care of the graves of the Confederate soldiers.”

The bronze tablet with McKinley's celebrated words was unveiled on the fourth of July in Authors' Grove at Piedmont Park just inches from the beautiful chestnut oak tree that had been
planted earlier. Various patriotic organizations participated and telegrams were read from President Harding and Governor Davis of Ohio. I presided, as president of the Writers Club, and gave a brief explanation of the purpose of the occasion, and as the band played ‘America,’ Betty Seeds of Ohio and my granddaughter Charlotte King unveiled the tablet.

We were pleased to receive letters asking for information about Authors’ Grove. The 17th of May was decided on as our annual tree planting day. We had a formal dedication of the Authors’ Grove
with a speech from the Mayor, music from the cadet band of the Georgia Military Academy, and various poems were read. I quote from the following day’s newspaper. "Loud applause was given when Mrs. Robert B. Blackburn read the poem ‘Plant a Beech Tree,’ written by Mrs. Wylie."

In total, forty-two trees were planted in the Authors' Grove, including an estimated twenty-nine as memorials to writers, and the organizations that had thus far donated the trees were recognized at the dedication service. The head of each organization indicated the type of tree planted and the name of the writer honored. At the dedication, Ms. E. N. Kirk, president of the Atlanta Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, announced that a beech tree had been planted in honor of Lollie Belle Wylie. Upon the death of Ms. Wylie in 1923, money was raised under the leadership of Ms. Julie Evans Cope of the Atlanta Writers Club and a monument was placed in the Authors' Grove in her memory. Names of the organizations and the authors for whom they had planted trees also were put upon the plaque. The unveiling took place on November 27, 1926.

The Authors' Grove was rededicated by the city of Atlanta and the AWC in 1960. In present day, the Authors' Grove continues to have a prominent place within Piedmont Park, located on what is called the park's 'front lawn,' on the west side between 12th and 14th Streets. About 25 of the Authors' Grove trees survive, as of 2013, and two of the park's most impressive trees—one a magnificent willow oak and another a deodar cedar—are within the Grove, located near the granite monument on which the bronze dedication plaque had been mounted.

On March 14, 2013, Lollie Belle Wylie was inducted into the Georgia Women of Achievement Hall of Fame. Additional historic information about her life can be found at the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library in Athens, Georgia. Her great granddaughter, Laura Augusta Hay, wrote a biographical manuscript titled: *Sincerely Yours, Lollie Belle Wylie 1858-1923*. This manuscript is in the archives of the Club.

**Dudley R. Cowles, AWC President, 1923-1924**

Mr. Cowles was in the publishing business from January 1900 until his death and made an outstanding president.

He was born in Cowlesville, the family home near Williamsburg, Virginia, where generations of the Cowles family have lived since the early seventeenth century. He entered William and Mary College with the class of 1888, the first class to be enrolled after the Civil War when the college was reconstructed with funds allotted to it by Congress. He left college to teach for a few years, during which period he became Superintendent of Schools in Hampton, Virginia. He then went back to college and graduated with the class of 1895. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and was awarded the Frafferton medal for highest scholarship. During his teaching career he was also a member of the state Textbook Commission. In 1900 he was put in charge of Silver Burdett's southern business with an office in Atlanta. The position was one of several offered to him by the bookmen whom he met during his earlier career as a teacher in Virginia.
In 1923 Mr. Cowles oversaw the reorganization of the Atlanta Writers Club. At the beginning of Mr. Cowles' administration, the Club started its tradition of a monthly dinner meeting on the third Thursday of each month, September through May, in the ballroom of The Atlanta Woman's Club at Wimbish Mansion, where it continued to meet until 1990. The handsome and socially prominent president was a man of charm and added a great deal of glamour to the meetings. For many years, the dinner meetings meant black tie and dinner dress affairs. Later, when the men came directly to the Club from their places of business, the formality was less strict. The first President's Cup was presented to the Atlanta Writers Club by Mr. Thomas L. Latham, an Atlanta jeweler, in January 1924.
James B. Nevin, AWC President, 1924-1925

Mr. Nevin was of a delightful but modest personality. Because of his literary affiliations, he introduced to the Club a number of distinguished writers. He was ever eager to promote the talent of others, and looked upon the AWC as a real opportunity, especially for the young. So, under the sponsorship of Mr. Arthur Coldington, "The Spoken Magazine" came into being in 1924, with members submitting original work to be considered for inclusion and read aloud at a special meeting. As one of a committee of three, Mr. Nevin helped to select and edit all manuscripts submitted for the reading.

In addition to "The Spoken Magazine," the first cash prizes for serious verse, light verse, and prose were offered by the Club. Frank L. Stanton, Georgia's first Poet Laureate, judged the poetry entries.

A native of Rome, Georgia, he became editor of The Atlanta Georgian, a large and influential daily newspaper, in 1914. He was formerly on the staff of The Washington Herald. Franklin Garrett states in his Atlanta and Environs (II), "During the long occupancy of the editorial chair by Jim Nevin, which was concluded by death at his desk in November 1931, The Georgian reached high tide." Mr. Nevin also edited a book entitled Prominent Women of Georgia.

Dr. Wightman F. Melton, AWC President, 1925-1927

Dr. Melton was Poet Laureate of Georgia, State Curator, and served as head of the English department at Emory University for 18 years. He also taught at Oglethorpe University. Chimes of Oglethorpe is a book of his poetry, and he edited eight volumes of Poems of Trees, a Sidney Lanier Memorial. Dr. Melton introduced inspiring new programs, including the tradition of the Opening Prayer and also Robert Burns' "Selkirk Grace" as a Scotch blessing in 1926:

"Some hae meat and canna eat
And some wad eat that want it
But we hae meat and we can eat
Sae the Laird be thankit."

The blessing was recited for decades at the AWC dinner meetings. Dr. Melton also started the annual custom at the conclusion of the Christmas dinner of bringing in an English plum pudding with burning tapers. With the hall darkened, except for tiny candles at each plate, the Glee Club of Druid Hills School, under the direction of Mrs. J. B. McNelly, daughter of the Meltons, circled the tables singing Christmas carols. Manuscripts submitted by members were read at the dinner meetings with the winners decided by popular vote. During this period attendance was small, however the programs were inspiring, and there was a close association among the members.
Dudley R. Cowles, AWC President, 1927-1928
Mr. Cowles returned to the presidency to serve a second term. During the years when Mr. Cowles resided in Atlanta he not only found time to serve as president of the Atlanta Writers Club, but he was on the staff of the Governor of Georgia and for several years was a trustee of the Jessie Parker Williams Estate and president of the G. F. and A. Railroad.

Mr. Cowles had a keen interest in the drama. For three years he served as president of the Atlanta Drama League, and for several years was president of the Drama League of America. In 1939 he published a series of six Walt Disney readers, which combined Disney illustrations with material appropriate for school use for the first time. The readers were an immediate success with youthful moviegoers. Teachers were quick to appreciate their educational merit and more Disney readers soon followed. In 1942 Mr. Cowles was elected president of the American Textbook Publishers Institute, when the organization was formed by 28 textbook publishers in June of that year.

Daniel Whitehead Hicky, AWC President, 1928-1930
Mr. Hicky was young, vigorous, and inspiring in his leadership. During his administration many outstanding writers and speakers addressed the Club, including Corra Harris, Julia Peterkin, Roarke Bradford, Lawton B. Evans, Harry Stillwell Edwards, and Josephine Pinckney of Charleston.

A native Georgian, Mr. Hicky was educated in private schools at Memphis, Tennessee, and Charlotte, North Carolina. He traveled widely in Europe, Egypt, the Holy Land, Africa, South America and the West Indies. Wherever "Jack," as he was affectionately known to his closest friends, traveled he saw many interesting things that gave him new word pictures for his poetry. Since 1934, when he left the cotton business to devote his time to writing, he lectured before university and club groups throughout the country. At one time he conducted a newspaper column in one of Atlanta's leading newspapers. In 1942, he volunteered for the Army Air Corps.

**Ernest Hartsock, AWC President, 1930**
Mr. Hartsock was a brilliant young writer and editor who taught at Emory University and Georgia Tech, and was first Professor of Poetics at Oglethorpe University. Nettled by H. L. Mencken's jeer at the South as a "Sahara of the beaux arts," he established a magazine, *Bozart*, to refute the claim. His Bozart Press also published poetry books with flawless format and excellent contents. He started a Southern literary renaissance with the aim of getting away from "lavender and old lace" and bringing strength and originality to Southern poetry.

He wrote three volumes of poetry and won the Poetry Society of America's prize for his poem, "Strange Splendor." He was exacting in his editorial standards, shaping much Atlanta poetry of that and later periods. With curly gold hair and a handsome physique, he conducted the Poetry Forum of the Atlanta Writers Club, looking like "a piece of Greek sculpture." Poets came to the meetings "to tear and be torn." Yet he was a tactful critic, and even those whose poetry he decimated loved him. He became president of the Atlanta Writers Club in 1930, and died in December of that year, at the age of twenty-seven.

What he wrote of Keats applies to his own life:

His was a life whose April stood  
Like autumn, bloody on a wood,  
Yet like a perfect simile,  
A splendor born of brevity.

---

**Lida Wilson Turner, AWC President, 1930-1931**
Ms. Turner was the tenth AWC president, assuming the leadership of the Club immediately following the death of Ernest Hartsock. During the regular meetings at the Atlanta Woman's Club, inspiring speakers were invited to stimulate interest, and prizes were offered to contest winners.

Mrs. Turner was a charter member of both the Atlanta Writers Club and the Atlanta Branch, National League of American Pen Women. She has won many worthwhile prizes offered by both of these writing groups. Her book, *Flagstones and Flowers*, was published in two editions, one at Oglethorpe and one at Emory. Her poems were published in *The New York Times*, *The Cincinnati Enquirer* and a number of church magazines. Through the years, Mrs. Turner urged young writers to produce more and better work and encouraged them by purchasing their published works. She and her husband often entertained writers and writers groups in both their city and country homes.
Dr. Anderson Scruggs, AWC President, 1931-1933
Dr. Scruggs was born in West Point, Georgia, in 1897. He received his doctor of dental surgery degree from the Atlanta-Southern Dental College (later Emory University) in 1925. He joined the faculty of the college in 1926 as an associate professor.

He began writing as a boy and became one of the nation's outstanding poets. He was acclaimed by Robert P. Tristram Coffin. Hon. Isaac Foot, English poet, made a special trip to visit the Atlanta poet because of the high regard he had won in Great Britain. His work appeared in virtually every quality magazine in America. His sonnet, "Glory to Them," published in 1933, appeared in a half dozen anthologies and became one of the more popular poems of his time, as well as being the title poem of one of his books. His other books were, Ritual for Myself and What Shall the Heart Remember? As AWC President, Dr. Scruggs placed his emphasis on encouraging the young writer, especially poets.

Dr. Scruggs died of a heart attack in January 1955. The Atlanta Writers Club and the Uncle Remus Memorial Association held a service in his memory at the Wren's Nest, where a stone was unveiled for him in the Authors' Walk by his grandson.

Dr. Wightman F. Melton, AWC President, 1933-1944
Dr. Melton returned to the presidency to serve a much longer second term. During 1933 a memorial tablet was unveiled with an impressive ceremony at Carnegie Library (now Atlanta Public Library) honoring the memory of the Club's late young president, Ernest Hartsock.

During this period, outstanding Southern writers and other celebrities visited the Club. Among these were Medora Field Perkerson, Assistant Editor of Atlanta Journal Magazine and author of Who Killed Aunt Maggie? and Blood on Her Shoe; Harry Lee, Atlanta novelist; Mr. William Hebert, Publicity Director for Gone with the Wind, and A. B. Padgett, Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer's Atlanta representative, who gave highlights of the Gone with the Wind premier plans; Caroline Miller, Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist; novelist Harriet Hassell; and Marian Sims, novelist and short-story writer.

Dr. Melton passed away on November 13, 1944.
Ollie F. Reeves, AWC President, 1944-1946

Mr. Reeves, the thirteenth president, offered a number of interesting speakers at the dinner meetings and was himself the subject of a column by frequent AWC guest Celestine Sibley.

Dean Raimundo de Ovies; Ralph Ramsey, Georgia Educational Association; Dr. Louie D. Newton paid a personal tribute to Georgia's poets laurate; Marian Sims, novelist, talked about "Writing the Novel"; Dr. James Routh, poetry critic and professor, brought an inspiring talk; Dr. Will D. Howe, author and editor of Scribners Magazine spoke on "Writing and Submitting Manuscripts to Editors." Dr. Wendall Brown, Oglethorpe University, addressed the Club on "Human Understanding"; Mrs. Arthur Styron, professional reader and a member of the National Story Teller's League, read a Christmas story, "The Blue Spruce."

During this administration, Mrs. J. L. Perry of Fitzgerald gave the Club a check for $200.00 with which to start a "conference of writers," launched in 1948.

Mr. Reeves was the author of a book of verse, "Nothing Serious," and wrote a daily column of light verse for the Atlanta Constitution until his death in 1963.
Louis Caroline Frederick Hays, AWC President, 1946-1947

Ms. Frederick broke the line of poet-presidents. The Club, small in membership, held its meetings in the parlors of the Atlanta Woman's Club. Ms. Hays, a woman of great wit and charm, initiated the idea of four divisions of the Club: Poetry, Prose, Drama, and Radio.

On May 4, 1947, at a Poetry Forum meeting, a stone was unveiled in Author's Walk at the Wren's Nest, honoring the Club's late president and poet laureate, Dr. Wightman F. Melton.

Mrs. Hays was born in Marshallville, Georgia and graduated with an A. B. degree and first honors from Wesleyan College. She held an Honorary literature degree from the University of Georgia (1924). She authored Macon County History (1933), Rumph-Frederick Families (1942), Hero of Hornet's Nest, a Biography of Elijah Clark (1946); edited and indexed a reprint of The story of Wilkes County Georgia, by Eliza A. Bowen (1950), and compiled Life and Letters of Benjamin Hawkins (1950).

Mrs. Hays became Director of the Archives Department and State Historian on January 1, 1937 and held this place until her death on October 14, 1951 in Montezuma, Georgia. She was State President, Georgia Federation of Women's Clubs (1919-23); organizer and president, South Eastern Council of Women's Clubs (1921-23); State President National League of American Pen Women (1948-50), V.P. Georgia Writers Association; Member Georgia Historical Society; Atlanta Historical Society; Southern Historical Association and Society of American Archivists; Daughters of the American Revolution; United Daughters of the Confederacy; Mayflower Society; Colonial Dames of America; Daughters of American Colonists; Daughters of 1812; and the American Association of University Women.

Gladys McCary Massey, AWC President, 1947-1949

Ms. Massey’s tenure of office was highlighted by many prestigious events. Among these were the Homecoming Meeting, the Exhibit of Members' Work which honored the club's six living past presidents. The Club's first Yearbook was distributed, including a history based on her extensive research. A Citation-of-Merit was established. These were presented to Angus Perkersan, Editor of The Atlanta Journal Sunday Magazine and Ralph McGill, Editor of The Atlanta Constitution. Another innovation was the Press and Author dinners,
which brought together members of the press and new authors of the year for outstanding programs honoring journalistic and creative writers. Many brilliant speakers appeared on her programs, and new awards were obtained from patrons. The Spoken Magazine, originated by Arthur Codington, made its reappearance. Past presidents were made honorary members, and fifty-two new members were added.

When Ms. Massey became president in Sept. 1947 she traced the original President’s Cup, awarded to the Club in 1924, to a box of old AWC records in a member's garage. Ms. Massey polished the tall, silver vase and had all of the presidents' names and dates engraved upon it.

Ms. Massey planned and directed the first Georgia Writers Conference at Emory-at-Oxford, June 8-11, 1948. She organized and led the Georgia Writers Association as President-Director and was chosen Atlanta's Woman of the Year in Arts in 1954. Through the Georgia Writers Association, Mrs. Massey gave recognition to established writers of the region, encouraged new writers and stimulated public interest in Georgia literature. In addition, she was an editor of the Southern Banker and of several house organs. She was a contributor to leading trade journals, a poet and artist.

Jeanne Osborne Gibbs, AWC President, 1949-50

Ms. Gibbs invited many prominent writers to address the Club at dinner meetings. They included Dr. Archibald Rutledge, Poet Laureate of South Carolina; Dr. Charles Allen, author of many religious books, and Dr. Frank G. Slaughter, physician-novelist. The luster of their fame has steadily increased throughout the years.

This administration enjoyed several firsts: a Big Top-themed Spoken Magazine celebrated a three-ring circus of writing talent in stories, articles, and poetry. Elizabeth Stevenson spoke to the Club after the publication of her first book, The Crooked Corridor. The beloved Brigadier General and future AWC President William E. Brougher was brought to the Club for the first time and gave a talk, "Inspiration and Perspiration." A unique program, never given before or since, was Sarah Wheeler’s "Living Book Reviews," the depiction of literary works by tableaux, pantomimes, dances, and songs.
Ms. Gibbs won the Georgia State Latin Tournament, sponsored by The Atlanta Journal, during all three years at Atlanta Girls' High School. She graduated from Agnes Scott College where she was a member of Mortar Board and Phi Beta Kappa. She became a reporter for The Atlanta Constitution and wrote book reviews for The Atlanta Journal as well as a bimonthly column for Georgia Magazine. She was a member of the Georgia Writers Association and the Poetry Society of Georgia and has won awards from both organizations. Over 500 of her poems have appeared in New York Times, New York Herald Tribune, The Writer, National Parent-Teacher Magazine, Denver Post, Holland's, Georgia Review, Emory University Quarterly, Georgia Magazine, and other national magazines.

Duke Cole Meredith, AWC President, 1950-1951

Mr. Meredith opened the thirty-seventh season with an annual citation awarded to Harold Martin, popular Atlanta Constitution columnist and Saturday Evening Post staff writer.

Interesting speakers of the season were Dr. Archibald Rutledge of Hampton Plantation, S. C. and poet laureate of his state; J. Q. Maxwell, literary scholar; the mountain poet, Byron Herbert Reece; Dean Raimundo de Ovies; General William E. Brougher, and Chattanooga author, Zella Armstrong. Past president Daniel Whitehead Hicky read from his book of poetry, Never the Nightingale.

The press was honored at a special Georgia writers night, with Byron Herbert Reece, Athos and Sara Menaboni, and Lilliam Barker, author of the book, The Dionne Legend, also acclaimed.

Mr. Meredith was the author of two books of poetry, the best known of which is Live Oaks of Glynn (1938); had been Contributing Editor to the Journal of Labor; and was Georgia State Editor and later Associate Editor of Better Verse, a West Coast poetry magazine of national circulation. His book on the sonnet was used in the English Departments of Emory University and Harvard University. He lectured on the Technique of Poetry to many colleges, criticized poetry for pupils from coast to coast by mail, and had poems published in leading magazines, anthologies, and newspapers.

Kate Fort Codington, AWC President, 1951-1952

During Ms. Codington's presidency, among the distinguished speakers were Glenn W. Rainey, Georgia Tech literary authority. Max McMurray, Mississippi author of Far Bayou; Agnes Gray Ronald, nationally known poetess; Lea Aikman, Atlanta Constitution columnist who talked on "The Four F's"; John Fort, author of Make Way for the Brave; Dr. James P. Wesberry, former Senate Chaplain, and Dr. Edward Dawson gave a humorous talk on names of Georgia towns. Drama and radio groups presented their compositions, and a special committee judged the Sunday afternoon poems.
At the age of seven, Kate Fort had a poem "The River" published in Frank L. Stanton's column in *The Atlanta Constitution*. Later, Poet-Laureate Stanton awarded her the first prize ever given by the Atlanta Writers Club for her poem, "The Holly Berry."

Mrs. Codington was graduated from Lucy Cobb Institute. Later, while living in Macon, she had her poems reviewed in a literary column published by Jayce Kilmer. She was an editor of a column in *The Macon Telegraph*. During this period Henry Halt wrote an editorial about her poem, "A Garden Misgiving," published in his magazine. Her poems appeared in numerous magazines and anthologies, and she won a number of national poetry prizes. Her cantata, "The Legend of Nacoochee," sold to Fischer Brothers, was widely presented. She also was a member of the Georgia Writers Association, The League of American Pen Women and The Poetry Society of Georgia.

**General William E. Brougher, AWC President, 1952-1953**

The General stated his objectives to make the Atlanta Writers Club mean what it says, to emphasize the professional angle and attitude, to face the fact that publication is the only real test of merit in writing, to build up flagging masculine interest, and to foster the effort to make Atlanta a real writing and publishing center of America.

For the 1952 Christmas dinner program, General Brougher suggested that members bring books to be distributed under the Christmas tree "your own or those of some lesser author" and that the members represent literary characters. The response was enthusiastic.

During World War II General Brougher served as Commander of a Combat Division in Bataan and was imprisoned for more than three years in Japan. While a prisoner of war he wrote a book of poems, *The Long, Dark Road*, in which he recorded his own experiences and those of his comrades. After the war, this book enjoyed outstanding sales. On September 16, 1957, General Brougher was awarded the Distinguished Service Star by the Philippine Government at the Embassy of Philippines in Washington, D.C.
His splendid story, "Baggy Pants," won nationwide acclaim in the Readers Digest in 1956, and in 1965 this was the lead story in his BAGGY PANTS AND OTHER STORIES, released posthumously. This book was awarded the Aurelia Austin trophy for prose in 1966, which Mrs. Brougher received for him.

Harold R. Random, AWC President, 1953-1955

As the AWC's 20th president, Mr. Random invited outstanding speakers including Mac Hyman, author of the bestseller No Time for Sergeants; John E. Drewry, Dean of the School of Journalism at the University of Georgia; Robb White, author of This Virgin Isle, later featured on the This is Your Life program. Danton Walker, New York newspaper columnist and author of Danton's Inferno was a featured speaker and for several years presented an award to the Club. By resolution, the Club joined other Atlanta literary groups in having a lake named in honor of Sidney Lanier. The Club, also by resolution, requested the Atlanta Board of Education to name a new school for Margaret Mitchell, which became a reality in Northwest Atlanta, and Mr. Random participated in this dedication.

Junior memberships were established to encourage young writers. At one dinner meeting, 21 students representing journalism classes and school publications were honored.

Mr. Random studied business administration at Temple University in Philadelphia. He earned a graduate diploma from the American Savings and Loan Institute and taught family finance at the University of Georgia, Smith Hughes, Lockheed Aircraft Corp., and other organizations. He first published in The Percolator, a column in the Milwaukee Sentinel. He originated and published a booklet used nationally by the savings and loan business that sold several million copies. Mr. Random published articles in trade and financial magazines and developed a Family Budget Kit, distributed by several insurance companies.
Cecil Cobb Wesley, AWC President, 1955-1957

Ms. Wesley served with distinction a two-year term, welcoming guest speakers that included legendary poet Carl Sandburg at the Georgia Writers Conference (along with former AWC president Gladys Massey).

Born in Vinings, Georgia, she grew up in Smyrna and attended Cox College in College Park just before it closed its doors to Georgia girls. She began writing at an early age and was published using a pseudonym in the *Cobb County Times*.

As she continued to write both prose and poetry, she was widely published under her own name in such publications as *Christian Century*, *Emory University Quarterly*, *Georgia Review*, *Good Housekeeping*, *New York Herald-Tribune*, *Readers Digest*, and *Best Articles and Stories Magazine*. In 1964, a collection of her best poems was published in a volume called *History Street*.

When *Georgia Magazine* began publication in June 1957, Ms. Wesley was invited to be a member of its editorial staff. She passed away in September 1968. In the October-November 1968 issue, its editor and publisher Ann E. Lewis wrote this tribute to her:

Cecil Cobb Wesley was *Georgia Magazine*’s first subscriber and she was a contributor to every issue we have published. She read every poem submitted and many of the articles. Her comments and criticisms were always astute, sometimes acid. They were our guides. We loved her. We respected her. We frequently disagreed with her and she with us—but we were friends. We were loyal friends. We will miss her.
Thelma Thompson Slayden, AWC President, 1957-1958
Ms. Slayden brought prominent speakers to the Club, including Dr. Corbett H. Thigpen, coauthor of *The Three Faces of Eve*; Colonel Harold Sundt of Fort Monroe, Virginia, who spoke on *The West Point Story*; Rev. Park Tucker, Chaplain of the Federal Penitentiary and author of *Prison In My Parish*.

Ms. Slayden’s regime was highlighted by the first Yearbook since 1950; 23 new members with fifty professional sales including six books; a Christmas project of 25 gift books to girls at Adamsville State Penitentiary; a new President’s Cup presented to the Club by Eugene Patterson of the Atlanta Newspapers, Inc., to be presented along with the first President’s Cup to the incoming president at the beginning of each Club year by the outgoing president; the Danton Walker Georgianna Award of $100; the Walter R. Thomas Biblical Award; an Honor Plaque—silver platter presented to Arthur Cordington in gratitude for 35 years of service including his Spoken Magazine.

Ms. Slayden has contributed articles to several national magazines and authored five novels depicting factual medical background. *Miracle in Alaska* won the national League of American Pen Women Penney Award and the AWC Aurelia Austin Writer of the Year Award. Because three of her novels dealt with the Public Health Service, she was invited to the White House Rose Garden in the mid-1960s by President Lyndon B. Johnson to witness his signing of public health legislation. President Johnson presented her with a pen to encourage you to write another book.
Ms. Slayden was included in *Who’s Who in the South and Southwest, Who’s Who of American Women*, and *Atlanta’s Golden Book of Who’s Who in Greater Atlanta*.

**Dr. Bertram Holland Flanders, AWC President, 1958-1960**

Dr. Flanders brought the Club some outstanding speakers from the universities and the State Board of Education, among them being Dr. Noah Langdale, Dr. William M. Suttles, Dr. Kenneth England, Dr. Raymond Cook, Dr. Dozier Cade, Dr. Ed Windfield Parks, Ms. Bernice McCullar, and Ms. Edna Herren from Georgia State College.

Aurelia Austin was the professional award winner in 1959 with her book of poems, *Bright Feathers*.

Dr. Flanders held creative writing classes in his home, which were enthusiastically attended by poets and prose writers alike who were interested in improving their writing skills. He collected the poetic endeavors of members in an anthology entitled *Atlanta Poetry Gallery*.

During his administration, Dr. Flanders was Head of the English Department of Georgia State College. He held AB and MA degrees from Emory University and a PhD degree from Duke University. He was the author of two books, *Early Georgia Magazines* and *A New Frontier in Education*, a history of Georgia State College.

**Harold R. Random, AWC President, 1960-1961**

Mr. Random’s second term as president was highlighted by a series of notable events:

Participation in the Atlanta Arts Festival in Piedmont Park included the rededication of Authors’ Grove with city officials, authors, and civic leaders paying tribute to the AWC. A permanent wreath was placed before the memorial monument. Later the same day a condensed version of the Club's Spoken Magazine was presented on the
Arts Festival stage, the first and only time ever presented outdoors and to a public audience.

A Writer of the Month award was originated and continued through the year, offered by the President. Also the Writer of the Year award was established, offered by Aurelia Austin. The first sterling silver trophy was awarded to former AWC president Thelma Thompson Slayden, for her novel *Miracle in Alaska.*

A surprise program honored Ann E. Lewis, founder and publisher of *Georgia Magazine.* Other programs included Madeline Mason, internationally published poet and author of a number of books; Don Robertson of Cleveland, Ohio, author of several Civil War historical novels; and Emily Badham Coxe of South Carolina, author of *Mother of the Maid.*

Another first for this administration was the publication of a monthly newsletter about the activities of members.

During this period, Mr. Random organized and conducted essay contests on the topic of thrift for his firm. More than 10,000 entries were submitted from the school systems in several counties. His firm received a Freedom Foundation Award because of this program. He organized a one-day forum on thrift, for which Georgia State College received a Freedom Foundation Award as sponsor.

**Dr. John Ransom Lewis, Jr., AWC President, 1961-1962**

Dr. Lewis, the twenty-fifth president, invited to the Club many interesting speakers.

The Aurelia Austin Writer of the Year Award was won by Ann E. Lewis for her outstanding *Georgia Magazine.*

Dr. Lewis was educated at Louisville Academy, Emory at Oxford, Emory University (B.S.), Emory University School of Medicine (M.D.), later specializing in general surgery. Following a tour of duty in the Pacific Theatre during World War II, he specialized further in plastic surgery. He was a member of the American College of Surgeons, International College of Surgeons, American Board of Plastic Surgery, American Society of Plastic & Reconstructive Surgeons, Southeastern Society of Plastic Surgeons, American Medical Association, Pan-American Medical Association and other organizations. Dr. Lewis contributed more than 30 articles on plastic surgery in various medical journals, and lectured throughout the United States.

He published poetry in various newspapers, magazines and seven anthologies. He was named Young Poet of the Year by *The Lyric* in 1958. He gave college lectures in poetry and also at Writers Conferences. He was author of *To Dock at Stars* (1962). He has read his poems on radio, television, and recorded them for overseas broadcasts by the Voice of America. In 1974, he was named the seventh Poet Laureate of Georgia.

**Emily M. Slyer, AWC President, 1962-1964**

Ms. Slyer oversaw the golden anniversary of the Atlanta Writers Club in 1964. At the 50th Anniversary banquet in April 1964, sixty-seven authors of 160 books published during 50 years were honored. Ernest Rogers, columnist, and Angus Perkerson, charter member, reminisced. An anniversary tea was held at the picturesque home of Miss Nora Belle Emerson where the anthology, *Leaves of Life*, edited by Aurelia Austin and the anthology committee, was distributed to the membership.

Member dinner speakers were Ms. Marguerite Steedman, journalist, poet and author of the bestseller, *Refuge in Avalon*; Thelma Thompson Slayden, former AWC president and author of five novels; Dr. Alfred Weinstein, author of *Barbed-Wire Surgeon* and *The Scalpel’s Edge*. Two outstanding drama programs were presented by Vinnie Ream Boyd. Visiting speakers were Dr. Noah Langdale, President, Georgia State College; Dr. Walter Langsam, President, University of Cincinnati; Ben W. Fortson, Jr., Georgia Secretary of State; Dr. Maxine Boatner, teacher in the Galludet School for the Dumb (Conn.); Dr. William R. Cannon, author and Dean of the Candler School of Theology, Emory University; Dr. Larry Rubin, poet and Professor of English, Georgia Tech; and D.W. Brooks, world traveler and prominent businessman.

Dr. John Lewis, former AWC president, was the winner of the Aurelia Austin Writer of the Year Award in 1963 and Lillian Church was the recipient in 1964.

Mrs. Slyer was educated at Agnes Scott College and Emory University. She taught piano and composed music for children. She also taught in the Atlanta Public Schools.
James A. Hayes, AWC President, 1964-1965

During this administration effort was made to increase membership and to stimulate increased attendance at all Club functions, including the monthly dinners and the poetry and prose forums; also to unveil to the public at every opportunity the considerable broad talent within the membership of the Atlanta Writers Club.

As a result of these special efforts by the Club leadership and membership, the poetry and prose forums were attended, month after month, by capacity or near capacity crowds; the attendance at the monthly dinners steadily increased, and the following members were featured in functions of the Club: Agnes Cochran Bramblett, Georgia's first woman Poet Laureate; Thelma Thompson Slayden, Cecil Cobb Wesley, Marel Brown, Mary B. Stevenson, Lillian Church, Dr. Bevel Jones, Vinnie Ream Boyd, Dr. John R. Lewis, Jr., Harold Random, Daisy F. Smith, Dr. A. S. Furcron, Julian Maddox, Imogene Buder and others. Non-member speakers included Edward Hiles, Bernice McCullar, Ethel de Liesseline, Dr. Dozier Cade, and Dr. Larry Rubin.

Cecil Cobb Wesley, former AWC president, was the winner of the Aurelia Austin Writer of the Year sterling trophy.

James A. Hayes was a real estate broker, developer and investor. He graduated from Georgia Tech, served briefly as a newspaper cub reporter, and for years, on the side, edited civic and church school papers. He wrote nonfiction articles for trade publications.

Ellen Weaver Lipham, AWC President, 1965-1967

This twenty-eighth president enjoyed the distinction of having led the Club to its peak membership since the Club’s founding. Free workshops in poetry, article, and short story were conducted by educators and outstanding writers, including Ms. Dora Byron, Emory University; Ms. Ruth Herbert; Ms. Wyly Folk St. John; James E. Warren, Jr., Head of English Department at Lovett Schools, and Dr. John Ransom Lewis, Jr.

For the first time, the Club offered scholarships to Georgia State College and Emory University, sponsored by Southern Bell Telephone Company, Rich's, The Coca-Cola Company, and Emory University. Other gains
were $1,800 in cash awards for the Annual Contests and a revised printed history of the Club.

Her distinguished speakers were: Carl E. Sanders, Governor of Georgia; Paul Hemphill, Atlanta Journal columnist; Dr. Kenneth England, Dean of Students, Georgia State College; Miss Carroll Hart, Director, Georgia State Department of Archives and History; Rev. William Self, Wieuca Road Baptist Church; Van K. Brock, Professor of Humanities, Oglethorpe University; Thomas Sharman, British Consul; Rev. Jim Langley, First Baptist Church; Pollard Turman, businessman; Benedict Keiley, Emory University; and Colonel Allen P. Julian, Atlanta Historical Society. W.E. Lewis was emcee of The Spoken Magazine.

Caroline Wyatt won The Coca-Cola Co. loving cup for her unpublished novel manuscript. Virginia Thurman and for AWC president General William E. Brougher won the Aurelia Austin poetry and prose awards, respectively, for published professional work.


*Aurelia Austin, AWC President, 1967-1969*

Ms. Austin was born on Austin Circle, DeKalb County, Georgia, the daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Herbert O. Austin. In her youth she studied piano, which gained her a gold medal when she was fifteen. She has also studied commercial art and oil painting, the latter at Emory University. She wrote her first poem when she was eight, and has published poems in the Georgia Review, The Country Poet, D.A.R. Magazine, and other magazines and anthologies. She studied creative writing with Anne Hamilton, the famous poetry critic, and in private classes.


She won many awards for her poetry, and also the Atlanta Writers Club award on her volume of poetry, *Bright Feathers* (1958). She edited two poetry anthologies, *Poetry Prisms* (1956) and *Leaves of Life* (1964). Two of her historical compilations were accepted for publication as well. She was honored as a Pen Women celebrity in 1959 and again in 1966. She was a member of the Atlanta Branch, National League of American Pen Women, the Georgia Writers Association, the Poetry Society of Georgia, and the Atlanta Writers Club. She was a past president and life member.
of The Manuscript Club (Atlanta). She was a member of the Atlanta Historical Society and Superintendent of the Intermediate Department, Jackson Hill Baptist Church.

Doris Percell Random, AWC President, 1969-1971
Ms. Random, following in her husband Harold's footsteps, became the 30th AWC president.

Flora S. Buffington, AWC President, 1971-1973
As AWC president, Ms. Buffington moved the monthly meetings to the Candler Estate on Briarcliff Road. She was an energetic leader and instrumental in establishing other literary organizations.

She was co-founder of the Dixie Council of Authors and Journalists, founder of the Southeastern Writers Association, and regional director of the Pan American League.

Ms. Buffington was born in Danielsville, Georgia. She was educated at Georgia State University and the University of Havana.

Jenny Lind Pettys, AWC President, 1973-1974
Ms. Pettys was born in Austell, Georgia and attended Randolph-Macon, Shorter College, and Georgia State University, where she earned a BA in journalism in 1973, at the age of 63.

She wrote her first book at age 11 in collaboration with her sister and a neighbor. At camp she wrote a weekly newsletter, was elected class poet for the first graduating class of Bass Junior High,
had stories and poems published in *The Atlanta Journal* in the young people’s section, and had a play presented by the drama club of Washington Seminary written by her sister and herself. Later, Ms. Pettys had articles in *The Atlanta Constitution, The Atlanta Journal, Northside News,* and *Georgia Magazine.* The latter two also published her poetry. She won many writing contests, including a national contest at the end of World War II on “Peace in the Postwar World.”

Ms. Pettys appeared before several hearing committees at the Georgia State Legislature. She was one of two women on the Citizens Committee for the Study of the Atlanta Public Schools in 1955.

Two outstanding speakers during her AWC presidency were Dr. John Eidson, Vice Chancellor, University System of Georgia, and Agnes Cochran Bramblett, the first woman Poet Laureate of Georgia.

She published *Two Little Moon-faced Moodles,* a children’s book in rhyme, in 1967, with illustrations by AWC member Virginia Veal.

**J. Edward Lantz, AWC President, 1974-1975**

With broad professional and educational qualifications, Mr. Lantz’s qualities could be measured in many ways. First and foremost, he maintained a cheerful, gregarious, and dignified mien under all circumstances. Frequently called upon to deliver invocations on special occasions, his prayers were inspirational and eloquent.

Mr. Lantz set a high standard for personal philanthropy, including a joint pledge with his wife Ruth of $1 million to the Yale Divinity School.

**Dr. James Cecil Bryant, Jr., AWC President, 1975-1976**

My first fulltime teaching position with a Ph.D. degree took me to Florida State University where I taught Shakespeare each quarter for the next six years. After my second year on the faculty, the English Department chose me to teach a year in Florence, Italy, the cradle of the Renaissance.

Prior to going abroad to teach, I had pastored a small church in Quincy, Florida, near Tallahassee. Then, after returning from Italy, I pastored another church nearby.
In 1973 I accepted a position at the newly opened Mercer University in Atlanta as Chairman of the Division of Humanities and spent the bulk of my teaching career there until the Atlanta campus closed 18 years later. During those years, I pastored a church near Candler Park for six years and later a church in Decatur for 10, in addition to being a full-time English professor at Mercer and writing books.

Only a few months after I arrived in Atlanta I joined the Atlanta Writers Club, and two years later became president. During my presidency, we had several interesting speakers, including Celestine Sibley, and we had a great deal of emphasis on the American Bicentennial. Unfortunately, during the months prior to my becoming president, the Club had undergone an internal struggle that resulted in the loss of a few good members, but the Club prospered and gained favorable publicity while I was president. We met at the Atlanta Woman’s Club, displayed our books, enjoyed piano music during the social hour, and ate splendid meals before the programs, which were always timely and enjoyable.

We got the governor to proclaim Readers Week throughout Georgia, and we sponsored Poetry Reading in the Park, during which several of our members read poetry in Central City Park to people who went there on their lunch hour.

After my term ended, I taught several years at the Dixie Council Writers Workshop on St. Simons Island, later becoming a member and eventually chairman of the Board of Trustees and director of the writers conference and workshop. I have taught in several writers conferences and spoken at area high schools about the craft of writing.

I wrote several books during those years, principally commissioned biographies and institutional histories, and I have published professional articles in journals, and historical articles in magazines, devotional articles in denominational periodicals, and articles in newspapers.

The Mercer Atlanta College of Arts and Sciences, Mercer University College, hired me to teach an adult English education program in Douglasville and area prisons, including the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary. After a year I became Special Assistant to the President and then University Historian, a full-time writing position.

I am a member of the Atlanta Press Club and the Society of Professional Journalists. I am listed in Who’s Who in the South and Southwest. I am a member of the Atlanta Historical Society, Georgia Historical Society, and several others with a history interest. For the past 18 years I have been editor of the Atlanta Shriners’ monthly magazine.
Sarah Ely Ambrose, AWC President, 1976-1978
Under Ms. Ambrose’s leadership as the 35th president, membership in the Club reached 135. There were 17 members on her executive board and 13 committees to service the various functions of the organization. Of special interest were the fall and spring contests open to all members, with monetary awards for articles, short stories, poetry, plays, and unpublished book manuscripts.

Edward Davin Vickers, AWC President, 1978-1979
Mr. Vickers was a popular president, with his dinner meetings often topping the 100 mark in attendance. He brought exciting and innovative programs to the Club, and there was a sizeable increase in membership during his term in office.

Mr. Vickers was born in Grady County, Georgia, near the town of Whigham. He was educated in the Grady County Public Schools, and received a degree in mathematics from Valdosta State College. For three years he taught mathematics in the DeKalb County School System, then accepted a position as a computer analyst with the Southern Company in Atlanta.

His book of poetry, *Echo in the Woods*, was published in 1979 by Harvey Dan Abrams Publishers. In 1980, he was named Author of the Year in poetry by the Dixie Council of Authors and Journalists. His literary prizes were numerous, and included prestigious awards in various state and national contests. He served as an officer in several statewide writing organizations, and held various vice-presidential positions in the National Federation of State Poetry Societies.

He was the founding president of the Georgia State Poetry Society, Inc., the premier poetry organization in Georgia. Mr. Vickers founded and published *The Reach of Song*, the Society’s annual collection of prize-winning and members’ poems.

Commenting on his work as a writer and programmer/analyst, Mr. Vickers said, “To me, there is a balance in everything. There is a logical sequence in programming which one follows in developing a poem. The key to the similarity lies in the discipline required to produce both.”

Mr. Vickers was a man of wit, often regaling his friends with onslaughts of spontaneous and unpremeditated quips and puns. He was generous in sharing his time, talent, and wisdom with friends across the United States. After his tragic and untimely death, numerous people telephoned from many far-flung places to commiserate with his friends in Atlanta. So often, the bereft caller commented, “He was my best friend.”
Ms. Benbow was born in New Haven, Connecticut in 1914 and moved to Marietta, Georgia in 1950. In Marietta, she won awards for music and painting, was director of music for Parkview Presbyterian Church, president of the Marietta Music Club, and was on the State Board of the National Federation of Music Clubs.


Other books she has published are: *Lantern in the Moonlight* (1974) and *Beyond the Farthest Star* (1977). She was president of the Atlanta Writers Club (1979-1981) and there received the Daniel Whitehead Hicky Award for "Spring Symphony." She was a charter member of the Georgia State Poetry Society. As a member of the Poetry Society of Georgia, she received the Katherine H. Strong Memorial Award for poetry. As a member of the National League of American Pen Women (NLAPW), she received a national award for "Great Lakes in Winter:" (1986) and the Della Crowder Miller award for "Lilacs in the Spring" (1985).

She has taught poetry at Westchester School and Renfroe Middle School in Decatur, Georgia and conducted a poetry workshop at Brenau College in Gainesville, Georgia. For senior citizens, she taught poetry for Life Enrichment Services (LES) "Adventures in Learning" Classes. She published *Roses in the Rain*, an anthology representing her first five years teaching LES classes and was on the LES Education Committee. From 1990-1992, she was president of the Georgia State Association of NLAPW.
On April 17, 1980 AWC member Elizabeth Smith Jenkins wrote: What is the state of the Atlanta Writers Club? Before that question can be answered, the other needs to be asked. What is the Atlanta Writers Club? It is a social writers club that deals with writing especially and with the finer arts of writing generally. It is structured to bring together those who are interested in writing in a social atmosphere. On the social level, there is the coming together to share ideas and experiences at the Thursday night dinner meetings. These meetings have kept a certain amount of tradition, dignity and decorum over the years. To do this in a changing world where form and structure are discarded promiscuously has taken a lot of doing. The Atlanta Writers Club does not aspire to be too large nor too small, but somewhere in a range of growing not too large that a member is faced with losing identity and individuality, and yet not so small that variety and representation are lost.

David Lawrence Ogletree, AWC President, 1981-1983

Reverend Ogletree was born in Perry, Georgia in 1936. He attended Perry High School and was licensed to preach prior to graduation. He attended Emory-at-Oxford and, while there, was active in student organizations. He received his AB degree in history from LaGrange College and then entered the Candler School of Theology at Emory.

Prior to being appointed to Atlanta First United Methodist Church in 1970, he served on the staffs of Kirkwood Church in Atlanta, Sam Jones Memorial in Cartersville, and First Church in Gainesville. While in Cartersville, Reverend Ogletree was named Young Man of the Year by the Cartersville Jaycees.

At Atlanta First United Methodist Church, Reverend Ogletree has been Associate Minister and Minister of Youth.

He is the author of four books of poetry and was named Author of the Year in 1977 by the Dixie Council of Authors and Journalists. He served for two years as president of the Atlanta Writers Club. A lifelong collector of material on John Wesley and Methodism, his extensive collection is now housed in the Methodist Museum at Epsworth-by-the-Sea on St. Simons Island.
Reverend Ogletree has been an ardent admirer of Abraham Lincoln since high school days and for more than 25 years has done one-man Lincoln shows and impersonations for students and adult organizations throughout the metro Atlanta area. He is the owner of a very extensive Lincoln collection and holds membership in several Lincoln associations.

**Dr. Lexton Buchanan, AWC President, 1983-1985**

Dr. Buchanan was born in northwest Atlanta and resided there until his college years. Following graduation from West Fulton High School as First Honor Graduate, he earned a BBA degree and MA in Education degree at the University of Georgia. Between 1953 and 1964, he taught mathematics in high schools, the University of Georgia, and the University of Kansas. While at Kansas he earned an MA degree in mathematics and a PhD degree in the teaching of mathematics.

Thence, he became a professor of mathematics at the University of South Carolina. He taught courses at all levels, served as Director of Freshman Placement in Mathematics and as Visiting Professor to high schools in South Carolina, supervised the mathematics departmental offices and secretarial staff, as well as the graduate teaching assistants, and handled registration for the entire department.

Returning to Atlanta in 1971, he was the head of the mathematics department at Sandy Springs High School until the school was closed in 1975. For the next seven years, he taught in the talented and Gifted Students program in south Fulton County. He initiated in Fulton County student mathematics conventions, the first of their kind in the Southeast. He also taught mathematics at Kennesaw State College from 1986 to 1990.

From the 1950s to 1984, Dr. Buchanan served as newsletter editor, writer of articles, speaker and officer with several educational professional organizations. A member of the Georgia Council of Teachers of Mathematics (GCTM), he was privileged to serve as president-elect, president, newsletter editor, and program chairman of the Council’s statewide three-day conferences for the years 1975, 1978, and 1983. He initiated GCTM’s first regional conferences, which henceforth have flourished in six regions covering the state. In 1979, he was the state recipient of GCTM’s Annual Award for Distinguished Service in Mathematics Education in Georgia.

His textbooks, *Limits: A Transition to Calculus* (1966), and *Modern Trigonometry* (1973), published by Houghton Mifflin, were widely taught. Other publications include various chapters in Houghton Mifflin textbooks, articles in local and national publications, and teaching kits.

As president of AWC during 1983-1985, prestigious dinner speakers included Rosalynn Carter, Ferrol Sams, the late Olive Ann Burns, John Stone, and Herb Bridges (Atlanta’s historian for *Gone with the Wind*). Several well-known newspaper persons spoke. These two years featured reviews of a dazzling array of books authored by our own members.
Lex Buchanan led the club into a new era of structural and program changes, to be summarized under the 1986-1988 section of this book.

Dr. Valerie W. Harper, AWC President, 1985-1986
No information is available from or about Dr. Harper, the 40th AWC president.

Dr. Lexton Buchanan, AWC President, 1986-1988
Significant changes in many administrative procedures and the structure of the club’s activities occurred during Dr. Lex Buchanan’s third and fourth years as president, and these changes were a primary reason for his serving these two additional terms. A number of these innovations had been initiated in his 1983-1985 tenure, and a revision of the bylaws in January, 1988 culminated the transition. The previously mandated monthly Sunday forums were replaced by a flexible scheduling of workshops, forums, etc. The new bylaws featured a flexible scheduling of the contests. Changes were also made in various positions and duties of officers. A set of guidelines (detailed job descriptions) for all board members, begun in 1984, was completed. Accordingly, many standardized procedures were established, partly because of the need for placing newer members in responsible positions. The newsletter was refined and was named "The Quill."  

Lex Buchanan’s newsletter publishing commenced with the Atlanta YMCA and continued while serving in the US Army. He was subsequently responsible for newsletters with the Kansas Teachers Council, organizations in South Carolina, the Georgia Council of Teachers of Mathematics and related affiliates, and with AWC from 1983 to the 1990s.

Stage-struck at the age of ten, he acted in some 40-50 plays and staged readings in universities and with theater groups. Some stage plays in which he played leading roles were: Our Town, Hamlet, Ibsen’s A Doll’s House, The Hasty Heart (the role played by Ronald Reagan in the movie), Come Back, Little Sheba, Don Juan in Hell, and The Firebugs. Other plays included Othello, Funny Girl, and The Royal Hunt of the Sun. He also directed stage plays in high schools and with Talented and Gifted students.

During 1986-1988, dinner speakers included news media celebrity Webb Garrison; talented novelist Philip Lee Williams; perennial favorite Terry Kay; Atlanta magazine editor Lee Walburn; motion picture and TV magnate John Bitterman; and prolific novelist and literary leader Nancy Knight, who became a member of the AWC that evening and Club president in 1992. A lavish literary costume event highlighted the April, 1988 dinner meeting; members dressed and acted like famous literary characters.

Since 1982, Lex Buchanan has devoted full-time, each year, toward the prosperity of the Atlanta Writers Club. He was the first recipient of the Club’s "Outstanding Member of the Year" Award, in 1989.
Nancy G. Highland, AWC President, 1988-1989
I was introduced to Atlanta Writers Club through my writing teacher, Nelwyn Huff Dill, from Life Enrichment. The encouragement I received from the members and the various contests led to my first published article in 1985. As an actress and model, I have appeared in many television commercials and performed professionally on stage in Birmingham and Atlanta, and while working for a local talent agency, I have produced and coordinated fashion shows for local malls.

Currently enjoying semi-retirement with my husband, I am once again concentrating on writing. The Atlanta Writers Club is the impetus for the members a unique variety of imagination, intelligence and compassion. I was president during the Club's 75th (Diamond) Anniversary. I cherish the memories of meetings at the club, the friendship of the intelligentsia of the club, and my diamond-encrusted charm keepsake.

Here follows a resume of memorable meetings during my term of office:

Atlanta's hero, Clark Harrison, critically wounded in World War II, losing both legs, came home to graduate from Emory and then Yale Law School, and organized his life to become Chairman and CEO of Dekalb County, and a founding father of Shepherd Spinal Center. He took flying lessons and achieving his license he flew solo to Alaska and back. He wrote Long Way Home and was working on a second novel when he died in 1989.

David Ryback, PhD (AWC co-president, 2002-2004) and Letitia Switzer, co-authors of Dreams That Come True. A fascinating evening of dream research.

Nancy Dendy Ryle, a weekly columnist for the Marietta Daily Journal, brought her compilation, Catastrophes and Celebrations, and spoke of the ups and downs of a writer's life.

Sara Flanigan, author of two novels, Sudie and Alice which was made into a TV movie, Wildflower and is seen periodically on PBS. Ms. Flanigan had never written before and her first novel was conceived and written at her kitchen table in the evenings after her day's work. She is the recipient of an award from the National Epilepsy Foundation for her efforts to raise public awareness in Alice.

Dr. Kathleen Byers-Lindsey, AWC President, 1989-1990
The World Who's Who of Women, 1984 edition, reads "Kathleen Lucille Byers (Mrs. W. J. Lindsey), b. Oct. 28, 1916, anesthesiologist." In the 1940s she was one of a very few women to pioneer in this specialized field of medicine. That the only child of parents living in such a rural community as Pelion, South Carolina, should become a medical doctor was, indeed, a twist of fate.
Her maternal grandparents lived in Augusta, Georgia in a big house next to their Mom and Pop grocery store. Kathleen had lost an older sister to poor delivery techniques in Pelion. When her mom was ready to deliver her second baby she rode the train alone to Augusta to have her daughter in her parents' home with the assistance of a proper obstetrician.

Upon returning to Pelion, Kathleen was nurtured by a loving neighbor while both of her parents worked for the Southern Railroad as Morse telegraphers. Since there were few playmates she spent many happy hours at the train station with her mother and father.

Her elementary schooling was in Clearwater and high schooling in Langley-Bath, a little bit wider place in the road than Pelion. Since a talent for the piano was Kathleen's special gift, she enrolled at the Women's College in Greenwood, South Carolina, intending to be a music major. The difficulty of the required harmony courses and a serious case of homesickness combined to make her so physically ill that she had to drop out of school.

Back at home she decided to study medicine with a major in psychiatry hoping to determine what caused her failure in her first attempt at college. She spent two years at Augusta Junior College (pre-med) and two at the University of Georgia in Athens, earning a B.S. degree in Zoology in 1938. In her class at Augusta Medical she was one of three women graduates in 1943. Her family had moved back to Georgia in order that Kathleen might have the advantage of higher learning while living at home.

At last, cutting the apron strings, she spent one year's internship at Flowers Hospital in New York City. It was there she was captured by the drama of the operating room and turned to the new specialty of anesthesiology. In two year's residency at Bellevue (1944-1946), she learned to use the various types of anesthetics: ether, gas spinals, and sodium pentathol. Then followed six months in a Baptist Hospital in New Orleans before she came to Atlanta to work in the operating room at Piedmont Hospital at its old location on Capitol Avenue. She was the first woman anesthesiologist among very few men anesthesiologists (1947).

She was fortunate to find a home with a family in Ansley Park. Her residence was convenient to Rhodes Pharmacy, provider of her drug and cosmetic needs. Jay Lindsey was the handsome pharmacist who recognized a good thing when he saw it. Soon he and the beautiful MD were very much in love.

They courted at Mooney's Lake, Mammy's Shanty, the drive-in theater, and the Pickaninny Restaurant. Their marriage was in the Methodist Church on St. Simons Island with Kathleen's mother and a few friends from their hotel in attendance. The quiet festivities concluded with a romantic dinner at the Sea Island Yacht Club and a honeymoon to the North Carolina mountains.
Kathleen managed to juggle successfully marriage, motherhood to Anne and John, and her medical practice. With the help of a good maid at home she worked at Piedmont Hospital and then at the V.A. Hospital for four years as head of the Department of Anesthesiology. During this time, in 1952, Kathleen became a Certified Diplomate of the American Board of Anesthesiology at the same time her second child was born at Piedmont Hospital. Her parents brought the letter containing the certificate to the hospital, not knowing its contents. She was ecstatic over both achievements, feeling doubly blessed. Her last examination, which required three years of private practice plus residency, was finally complete.

After another stint at Piedmont she became Medical Officer for Adjudication for the V.A. and served there until 1982 when she retired to care for her husband who was in failing health and died in 1993. However, this energetic lady kept her finger in many pies: her church choir, Daughters of the American Revolution, Downtown Atlanta Senior Services, on whose board she sat, exercise classes, and the Morse Code Telegraph Club. It was through Fred Hester, Telegrapher and friend of her parents, that Kathleen became a member of the Atlanta Writers Club and in short order served in 1989-1990 as president.

Kathleen Lindsey says life is hard but it is really great if you live through it with a positive attitude, perseverance, and hope. She is, indeed, a survivor with a smile on her face and a hearty laugh just ready to break through.

**Mary Stripling, AWC President, 1990-1992**

I want to tell you about the fascinating glory days, the ambience, the wonder. I was mesmerized beginning with my first dinner meeting. We entered the beautiful old Wimbish Mansion and descended the grand staircase into the sunken chandelier lit ballroom where crystal sconces lit the walls. Flower arrangements adorned the linen draped tables. Crystal goblets and silver sparkled. Gentlemen in dress attire seated ladies dressed in Sunday Best, sometimes sequined. Their smiles were softly lit by candle glow, their voices lively and encouraging as each shared news of literary accomplishments. Writers rich with the love of words made conversation worthy of plagiarism! Tones from the grand piano, Bach, Cohen or Gershwin, flowed beneath their rippling chatter. Authors of nonfiction, fiction and poetry wove realities and fantasies into an evening of imagination. Creativity was at home. It was like make believe.

The tinkling of a silver bell brought silence and prepared us to receive The Selkirk Grace.

The Atlanta Womanâ€™s Club which owned the mansion, provided the same familiar kitchen staff for years. The full course meals, prepared on site, were always deliciously southern. As we finished dessert and sipped that second cup of coffee, the president rang the same tinkling bell. The featured musician was introduced. Through the years we heard operatic soloists, concert pianists, harpists, harpsichordists, flutists and violinists.
After this luxury, the speaker was introduced. There are too many to mention here, but included were Terry Kay, Celestine Sibley, and former first lady Rosalyn Carter. In the distant past Erskine Caldwell occasionally dropped by for dinner. Membership included famous authors and journalists of the Atlanta area.

The generosity of our members was demonstrated in their family sponsorships of contests and their gracious hospitality was shown in their hosting us in their homes for Sunday afternoon readings.

A favorite tradition was the Spoken Magazine, when once a year, we recited or performed a piece of our own work. The evening was pure entertainment.

During my tenure, our members graciously agreed to gift their own books to our speakers. Each speaker was personally presented a book by one of our authors.

1990 was the year that I came to hold a privileged position and to share a distinct heritage. Atlanta Writers Club asked me to serve as their president. I eagerly anticipated the majestic dinner meetings that I would preside over, the musicians and writers I would introduce.

My presidency ushered in the closing decade of a century, even the closing of a millennium. We could not imagine the exciting changes to come to our writing lives. In 1990 Steve Jobs was quoted as saying, "Interpersonal computing is going to revolutionize human communications." It did.

Unfortunately, another change that would revolutionize the Atlanta Writers Club began with tragedy. In May of 1990, the wonderful historic Wimbish Mansion, owned by the Atlanta Woman's Club, burst into flames. The damage was extensive. Restoration was not possible until years later. We had rented this house for our Thursday evenings since 1923. Suddenly the Atlanta Writers Club was homeless.

My search for our new meeting place included these important factors: comfortable ambiance and good meals with opportunity for creative camaraderie that would encourage literary excellence. The luxurious Terrace Garden Inn offered all this. For one year we met there in the sunken dining room surrounded by expansive cascading fountains. We celebrated our 77th anniversary attended by a record crowd. The next year, at the request of some members, we met in The Bradshaw's Restaurant of the Campbell-stone Apartments. Later Bradshaw withdrew their management, service deteriorated and our membership dwindled. We struggled through the remaining nineties as we discontinued dinners and met at various places, more obscure.

Membership continued to fall drastically. We were dismayed to say the least. After all, we had always been an attraction, a desirable literary organization, drawing members to us. Now our future looked impossible.

Then came a person of vision with energy to match. He thought outside the box. He moved us from one promising location to another and when fish didn't bite, he tried another pond. He attracted friends of like mind to help him.
He did not wait for the world to come to AWC. He took AWC to the world. He offered to help other struggling writer groups, offered to help at book signings, struggling book stores, and book festivals. He would say, "I'm with the AWC and I have come to offer our help."

Soon all over Atlanta, folks were asking, "Who is the AWC?" And they wanted to become a part of us.

It is fitting that we ended up in a library, then a college, since our founder, Lollie Belle Wylie held the first organizational meeting in the Carnegie Library (now the Atlanta Public Library).

The rest is the present, soon to be history, which someone else will expand upon.

**Nancy C. Knight, AWC President, 1992-1994**
My memory of my years at the Atlanta Writers Club is that, in the earlier years, it was more of a social club than an organization dedicated to helping writers get published. Our evenings started with a networking and chatting session. And then came dinner. Oh, what scrumptious food they served. Wow. I can still taste those wonderful yeast rolls.

After dinner, we had a short business meeting, following by the announcement of coming events. Next on the agenda was our musical part of the evening. I remember such talented people coming and entertaining us with their magnificent musicality. Francis Patton Statham was always a favorite, but we had some stellar performers.

Our final event of the evening was our speaker. We always had some great writer who shared a bit of his or her wisdom with us. Terry Kay was one of my favorites. I asked Terry what he wanted me to say about him when I introduced him. He said, "Anything. You know me." Trust me when I tell you, he should never have said that. When I stood to introduce him, I held up his latest book, opened to his bio and photograph. I said, "This man is among the ten most wanted writers in the United States." He got a good laugh out of that. When he did his speech, he mentioned that his name was Terry Winter Kay. People always ask where his middle name comes from. His mother told him that she and his father were married by old judge Winter and, thence, his name. When he mentioned it to his father, his father denied it and said that he was named for the Winter Apple. Now, Terry has an older and a younger brother--one named for Martin Luther and the other, I believe, named for John Wesley, two ministers. "And," he said with a significant pause, "They named me after a rotten apple. Actually, an extinct apple."

I loved my time as president of Atlanta Writers Club. I particularly enjoyed our Spoken Magazine. I can remember very well, participating in the "performance" of Wil Carter's "Cliche Cinderella." What a hoot!
The members of this organization through the years have become good friends. I cherish them and thank AWC for making those connections happen.

It was during my administration that the first black writers attended a meeting. Three of my friends, published black women, were welcomed into our midst. My invitation to them caused quite a stir. In fact, I got a scathing letter from one of our older members who called me everything but a child of God. To my knowledge, he never attended another meeting. But, to me, the color didn't matter. They were friends. They were writers. Period.

And, my least fond memory is of having to find a new space for us. The Atlanta Women's Club burned. Gone were our wonderful yeast rolls. Gone was the elegant meeting space. Enter a new era in the Club, probably the beginning of our transition from a club into an organization devoted to helping writers move on into the next step in their careers. The transition has been long and hard, but finally we arrived. The meetings are now fact-filled with information vital to writers in today's challenging marketplace.

We're fortunate that one hundred years ago, those organizers started the "club" and that it has continued for all these years. Long live Atlanta Writers Club.

Sharon Dill Kaufman, AWC President, 1994-1996
During Ms. Kaufman's presidency the Club met at Bradshaw's Restaurant in Campbell-Stone Apartments. Accomplished musical artists performed at each meeting. Speakers included: Lee Walburn, Editor-in-Chief of Atlanta Magazine; New York Times best seller John Farris; and Mary Cobb Bugg, Director of the Evening at Emory program.

The "Spoken Magazine" meeting was lots of fun and a big hit. Also, The Quill began to include a column, "The History of the AWC."

Cecil Murphey, AWC President, 1996-1998
I had known Nancy Knight for years, and after she became the president of the Atlanta Writers Club, she invited me to attend. I went, liked the meetings, joined the AWC, and invited my good writer friends, Rich Stanford and Woody McKay.

After Sharon Kaufmann succeeded Nancy, I became the editor of the newsletter and Rich put it together and printed it. It had certainly been adequately done for its time but by the early 1990s we had entered the computer age and the newsletter needed a new look.

I revised the newsletters and, to my surprise, most of the older members liked the format. We focused on tips for writers, listed achievements, and encouraged annual contests. We also tried to emphasize the accomplishments of our members.
My special appreciation for AWC was for their helping me feel part of the Atlanta writing community. For a decade before I joined the club, I had earned my living as a writer (primarily as a celebrity ghostwriter), but I had only recently returned to live in the Atlanta area. I had lost contact with most of my former colleagues and AWC gave me an excellent opportunity to be with people of similar interests.

Eva Pauline "Polly" Hunt Neal, AWC President, 1998-1999
I decided on a theme for my presidency, because I was interested in the history of the club but didn’t know that much about it. My theme was let’s look back as we look forward. We usually had about 50 in attendance, including guests. We met in a nursing home, and we had a great dining room facility with a buffet. We started the meeting by welcoming everyone, and we had a member who was a past minister who said a short blessing. I also began to invite some of our elderly members to lead the prayers. They were so delighted to have the opportunity to come up to the podium, and everywhere I could I tried to be inclusive to those members, but not be overly obvious about it. We would recognize people prior to the meal who had been published or had an article written about them. The president presided at the podium and the board members sat on either side, and the membership sat at the tables. We were kind of formal in that way.

Some of the elderly people who lived at the nursing home would come to listen; we enjoyed having them there, and it was part of their entertainment. The business meeting was sort of an open discussion about what everyone was working on and ideas for speakers, and we also had formal speakers. The speaker would begin after our business meeting and meal.

We had speakers who were editors and authors, but we also just had a hell of a fun time. We had a theme for each of our meetings; one of our members had all these wonderful skills like table decorating, which upped the formality and the glamour. One time everyone came dressed as their favorite character and told why this character was their favorite, and it was just delightful. Every president put their own stamp on the club in a way, and it had to do with the president’s personality and the people they gathered around them. It wasn’t all strictly business, it was also fun and games. If the members didn’t have fun, they were sure great actors and actresses. Maybe it was a little disreputable, but it was so nice uncovering the talents of our members – we didn’t know each other as well as we thought we did, and that was a theme of my presidency too. Some of our members were so quiet, and occasionally we’d invite people up and just read a chapter. It was a joy to get to know them on a deeper level rather than as just fellow members of the writers club. I personalized the presidency from my point of view, but that was all I knew how to do. How I got elected I don’t know, but it was a little scary and a little thrilling. As I said when I was elected, I was the first president they had with no credentials.
Ginger Hawkins, AWC President 1999-2000

During Ms. Hawkins' presidency the Club met at Bradshaw's Restaurant in Campbell-Stone Apartments. The "Spoken Magazine" meeting was one of the highlights.

Ms. Hawkins introduced two new features to The Quill:

1. Poetry Corner, edited by Dorothy Worth, "to give insight into how our AWC poetry wordsmiths write."
2. Monthly articles featuring AWC member guest columnists "to examine the writing styles and thought processes of those successful in newspaper, magazine, biography, fiction, and non-fiction writing."

During her presidency, AWC Contest Chair, Brian Proctor, introduced the practice of commemorative plaques for our speakers and also designed award certificates and the AWC seal.

Ms. Hawkins had, for years, been a regular writer for The Quill and served in multiple offices of the club.

Adrian D. Drost, AWC President 2000-2002

I was the 50th president of the AWC, born in Indonesia in 1931 of Dutch parents, educated in The Netherlands after WWII, and moved to Canada in 1957. Having lived 14 years in Indonesia, 11 in Holland, 11 in Canada, almost three in Germany and two-and-a-half in Thailand, my varied life was not limited to these countries alone because my international assignments with Kimberly-Clark Corp. brought me to many other countries for shorter stays. On and off I lived in the U.S. since 1968 and became an American citizen in 1998 after having been a Canadian citizen for 23 years.

My writing experiences go back at least 20 years, writing technical educational materials for my company's foreign subsidiaries. In 1990 I started an in-house technical quarterly publication, called The Mousetrap, with motivational and informative articles. This quarterly is still published within Kimberly-Clark. Writing stories about my grandchildren got me started as a short-story writer since retirement in 1997. Most of these short stories are in a private family collection. After my retirement my wife encouraged me to take a writing course for seniors at Kennesaw State University. This got me hooked on writing my life history, children's stories and short humorous works. In early 2003 I graduated from The Institute of Children's Literature. These studies gave me much encouragement resulting in the publication of two stories in an anthology. I like to include photographs within these stories, photographs obtained from my private collection, as photography is one of my hobbies besides gardening, being in nature, and collecting interesting facts.
Every morning I am thankful for being allowed another beautiful day to live, thankful for all the wonderful blessings received and extremely grateful for still being around. I enjoyed having served as president of the Atlanta Writers Club because it gave me so many wonderful contacts with creative and interesting people.

When I think back about my AWC presidency, the first thing I think of is that I was petrified. I got this phone call that the committee had looked at my capabilities and that I would be a good president. I declined. They continued to pester me. The biggest problem that I had was what I was supposed to doâ€”I didnâ€™t have a mentor. I got some guidance from Polly and other people, but the first thing that I didnâ€™t find was a set of guidelines. There were no bylaws, so I did a lot of research and went to Cecil Murphy (Cecil got me into Atlanta Writers because I took a course from him). I was able to piece together the by-laws and create a job description for the presidency, and I worked hard on that first part. Being an engineer, it came naturally. I thought the second year is a lot easier.

As president I was absolutely in favor of keeping the dinners, because I liked the social aspect of the club. We had, in my first year, 50 to 60 attendees at each meeting. It petered down to maybe 20 as the atmosphere changed to more of a seminar, and the old members were less interested in this than going to a social club to exchange ideas and talk about their own works.

What am I proudest of? I am an engineer who has a foreign tongue and has no literary background, and who was asked to be the president of the Atlanta Writers Club. I was really impressed by that, and I’m grateful it worked out.

Sara Martin, AWC Co-President 2002-2004

In the years that I served as co-president with David Ryback, the club could have had as its theme song, Willie Nelson's "On the Road Again." We continued to search for a permanent meeting place, keeping us "on the road."

That factor gave the club some instability plus the fact that our meeting on a weeknight in downtown Atlanta (with the horrendous traffic) blocked our growing in membership. The time had come to make major changes (hoping that those who founded the club in 1914 weren't turning over in their graves).

I applaud the club for moving into the 'burbs and eliminating the evening dinner meeting. The phenomenal growth of the club has shown the rightness of those changes. And the best is yet to be!

The Atlanta Writers Club made significant contributions to my life as a writer, for which I will always be grateful.
David Ryback, AWC Co-President 2002-2004
At a meeting of the AWC Board, as we were looking to reorganize for a new board, I recommended George Weinstein for the presidency. George declined initially for some personal reasons. I persisted and asked him to talk about his concerns and reconsider. He did both, talk and reconsider, and decided to go ahead and try being president. He has been one of our most successful and productive presidents, remaining highly involved over the years even after his presidency expired. He has been so important to the AWC. The point I’m making is that sometimes it is worthwhile persisting when someone declines a position of importance because of modesty or other reasons.

Good government is not always from the most audacious. Sometimes it is from the humble of heart yet strong of spirit.

George Weinstein, AWC President 2004-2007
I joined the Atlanta Writers Club in 2001 and found an organization with a long and storied history—fancy-dress dinners each month with musical programs and fellowship with gifted and productive authors—but I also witnessed waning participation and barriers to recruiting the next generation of members. One could hear about Flannery O’Connor, Erskine Caldwell, Carl Sandburg, Celestine Sibley, and other fabled authors addressing the Club during dinner meetings or at its annual conferences and award ceremonies. However, the current speakers were not of that caliber, the conferences and awards were a thing of the past, the cafeteria-style dinners were unappetizing, the meeting location was a nursing home, and the drive into Atlanta at the height of the evening rush hour left one feeling agitated and exhausted.

In addition to the history of the venerable organization, though, some of the 15-20 members who attended each meeting did inspire me to keep coming. They demonstrated a love of writing and a keen wit, and had histories as interesting as the Club’s. The average age of the membership at that time was almost 70; I was half that age, but I always loved hearing the stories of earlier generations. Their tales pulled me in deeper and made me want to get involved, to help shore up the places where the organization had gaps, so we could keep the Club afloat and I could develop deeper friendships along the way with this small but fascinating group of writers.

At the start of 2004, I had held every office on the board except president, and I had volunteered to manage the 90th Anniversary celebration that April. I had made firm friendships through the Club, which I thought I could maintain even without the September-May meetings. I had been writing full-time for a year, a dream I had since my youth in Laurel, Maryland,
which my wife made a reality by telling me she'd pay all the bills so I could be a "kept man" and try out the writer's life. I had just landed a literary agent with my first manuscript, and I was feeling good about my new writing career. I'd keep going to Club meetings, certainly, but I'd given a lot of myself already and it was some else's turn to step up.

The co-presidents' term would end in May 2004, a few months away, and no one could be found to take the battered reins. The way presidents had been elected for years was for the outgoing president and a committee to find someone who had been coming to the meetings regularly and showed some spark and ask that person to be president; if that person agreed, everyone would vote in favor if only because they were relieved they hadn't been tapped. I had said, "No." on a number of occasions when the co-presidents and committee members approached me, but they persisted: no one else was as involved as I was, 90 years of history was at stake, they would be there to help, it would only be for a year. In 2004, we had only 48 paying members, a mere dozen people would reliably come to a meeting, and we had less than $250 in the bank. Still, they overcame all of my objections, but I also was defiant. "OK, I'll do it," I finally said, "but I'm going to change everything." It didn't happen overnight in fact I served for three years until I found a fabulous successor in Marty Aftewicz, who shared my irreverent, iconoclastic streak and continued the improvements but my board and I did change many basic aspects of the Club. Some presidents from the 1980s told me I ruined the Club, but they had not been attending for years and I think they still carried visions of tuxedoed men and elegant women dining at Wimbish Mansion.

The goal of my presidency was recruitment and retention: to give potential members reasons to join and to engage the current ones with new activities that so they would keep renewing. Our founders, Kate Ross Peters and Lollie Belle Wylie, had the same goal but stated it with more style: "to bring about a helpful and more intimate acquaintance among Atlanta writers, to promote their talents and market their writings." We brought in speakers to teach the craft and business of writing, and we gave members the opportunity to network and build friendships.

By the end of my term, we had moved the meetings from Thursday evenings to Saturday afternoons and decamped from Atlanta to the northern perimeter, where a great many potential members lived or could drive to in a reasonable period of time. These two changes alone helped to swell our membership by the time I made way for Marty, and contributed to the more than 700 members we can claim during our centennial year. We have members from all races and ethnicities, and age groups that span from teenager to octogenarian.

The dinner meetings with music, lovely clothes, table decorations, and so on were a thing of the past. Many of the older members parted ways with the Club as a result of eliminating the dinners,
but those meals were no longer the sumptuous extravaganzas of bygone days, and they did not fit with the demands on current and potential members’ schedules nor their budgets.

We fostered critique groups around metro Atlanta to help our members improve their writing and build their networks. Twelve months of programming, including an annual picnic in June and a major workshop each July, supplanted the old September-May "Club year. We launched the Club website in 2004 so more potential members could discover us and took The Quill newsletter online as The eQuill to avoid postage charges and expand the content. At local bookstores, longtime member Patricia Patterson and I presented free seminars on writing. To help members show their solidarity and advertise the Club to the wider world, we created AWC tees and, later, polo shirts.

The most influential member in the Club at that time wasn’t me, though; it was my vice president, Barbara "Ginger" Collins. She had all the big ideas to boost membership and resume our place as a leader in the Atlanta arts community. We participated in the first Decatur Book Festival in 2006 largely on a dare by one of our members—Ginger and I each paid half of the booth fee because the Club still was poor—and Ginger charmed the Festival leaders. Through her efforts, we have become important partners with the Festival and recruit many new members at that venue each year. She also enlisted more important speakers to come to our Club meetings and workshops, most notably Terry Kay, Joshilyn Jackson, David Fulmer, and Jedwin Smith, all of whom have provided vital insights on the craft and business of writing and have mentored a number of our members. Ginger also introduced the concept of the two-speaker meeting to increase the value of those events, which we continue as of 2014, and she was responsible for developing a longstanding partnership with a bookseller for our meetings, George Scott, and with Georgia Perimeter College in Dunwoody, which became the location for our meetings during Marty's presidency and enabled us to partner on the Townsend Award for Fiction, given to a Georgia novelist every other year.

In addition, Ginger pioneered the idea of the Atlanta Writers Conference where, unlike the Georgia Writers Conferences of the last century, participants would have a chance to pitch agents and publishers and learn about the business of writing, as well as improve their craft through workshops. The first conference was launched during Marty's presidency as well and these have
become my passion in my Officer Emeritus role. As of 2014, I have managed 10 of these conferences; we are now doing two each year, and they provide a reliable means to boost membership even higher, earn revenue for the Club, many other activities, and, most importantly, help our members gain representation and publishing contracts. In 2013-2014, two members who signed with conference agents each received multi-book, six-figure publishing deals. All thanks to Ginger and the remarkable ideas that leaped from the top of that red head as fast as sparks from a welding torch.

She would have made a fantastic Club president, but, as an ardent sailor, the seas beckoned and carried her to other adventures far from Atlanta. Let the record show that the Atlanta Writers Club is in the fabulous shape in which we find it at its centenary because of Barbara "Ginger" Collins. God bless her.

And bless Marty, too. He remains my best friend and provided a great role model for the presidents who have followed him. We still handpick our presidential successors, but now we mentor them for a period before they take over. Thanks to Marty, we also have a third President’s Cup. Over the course of 90 years, the two small silver vessels were covered with the names of all of the presidents who came before. Take a look at the photo on the right and you’ll see the gigantic loving cup Marty acquired for the Club. It’ll take a while to fill that one, a good thing since I think AWC will be around for another hundred years at least. I’m flattered that my name is at the top. I have excellent company etched there: Marty Aftewicz and Clay Ramsey. At the end of Valerie Connors’ term, her name will be added as well, and I will be sharing space for posterity with three of my dearest friends.

I’m now the author of two historical novels, Hardscrabble Road and The Five Destinies of Carlos Moreno, and a children’s book, Jake and the Tiger Flight, with more fiction likely on the way so far, all the result of the writing I did back in the mid-2000s when I was a "kept man" living the writer’s life. Except the two historical novels finally were published in 2012 and 2013 respectively. The writer’s life didn’t work out nearly as well as I thought it would. I ended up going back to work full-time in 2008 but my tenure with the Atlanta Writers Club has been more fulfilling and important to me than I ever could have guessed. It has been the source of my deepest friendships, and it continues to provide me with a means to help our members develop as writers and as people. Moreover, all three novels were published only because of friendships and connections I made in the Club; in fact, Jake and the Tiger Flight was co-written with Marty. Personally and professionally, the Atlanta Writers Club is the most important organization in my life.
In 2005, in the midst of the changes we were undertaking, Edna Hawkins (1913-2006) wrote the following open letter to the Club:

I am one year older than Atlanta Writers Club and have been a member for half a century. It has outlived several similar clubs. So have I. Although I will not be around deep in the new century, the club will survive, and will continue to benefit writers and shed its gleams over the south. For the writer is the seer, ahead of his time, the prophet in each generation.

Most of the lifetime of the club was spent at the Atlanta Woman's Club on Peachtree Street. We lost a gem when it burned. The members who did not share in the pomp and ceremony of its elegant ballroom know certain poverty and those who did have a nostalgic ache for a time that will not come again. But there is today's work to do with even more subjects to cover and a new and capable leadership will promote other writers waiting in the wings.

So many of our great Georgia writers died early: Margaret Mitchell, Mac Hyman (No Time for Sergeants), Byron Reece, Allen Bryant, John Pennington. The list goes on. I remember the steel blue eyes of Erskine Caldwell, whose output like Tobacco Road was controversial but he got a standing ovation every time he dropped by. Ollie Reeves, Ralph McGill, Marel Brown and Ann Lewis all faces in my memory.

The 60's were the decade of the "Hippies." Peachtree and 14th was a hangout for hundreds of "flower children." Sometimes while meetings were in progress we could see the strange faces looking through the window. We didn't walk down Peachtree alone. Now with children killing children, road rage and habitual sins in high places, although it was the beginning of the drug craze, the hippy lifestyle seems mild by comparison.

As Newly Huff Dill mentioned recently, the Sunday afternoon meetings in members' homes were well attended. Did we gamble? Yes. Each member tossed in 25 cents. Some assignments were given in advance; other masterpieces were composed during the meeting. The winner got the jackpot. One I remember was at the Reuben Garland mansion on West Paces Ferry Road with his wife, Fauntleroy, as hostess.

Some past presidents simply lived to encourage fledgling writers Ellen Lipham, Harold and Doris Random, Gladys Massey and Flo Buffington, to mention only a few. Flo and Random organized and headed up two seminars, Southeastern Writers and Dixie Council of Authors and Journalists, held every year on St. Simon's Island and were active in them until their deaths. Other seminars sponsored by Atlanta Writers were at DeKalb College and Emory-at-Oxford. I was honored to be on the staff of all four and miss the friendship of those who encouraged us all. As I remember Ellen Lipham's tenure of office, I recall the super prizes for contests such as scholarships.
to Emory and Georgia State, gift certificates to Rich's, J. C. Penney's, jewelry stores, and photography studios. Banks, bookstores, Lockheed, and others shared their wealth.

There are 111 names, including past presidents, in our directory, which means we've lived about 6,000 years. We've written millions of words in fiction, non-fiction and poetry. We have so many aids at our disposal and subjects are multiplying. Much will be expected of today's scribe.

There will be criticism and discouragement but the world cares little about how many shipwrecks one has known. It only wants to know if we've brought the ship into port. Remember the eagle whose wings allow it to soar on high does not worry about how it will cross a river. The writer has spiritual wings and talent and must use, abuse or lose them.

**Marty Aftewicz, AWC President, 2007-2009**

I'm not certain who derived the most benefit from my tenure as President and board member at the AWC. My appointment as President came to me at a dark time in my life, and I dove into my responsibilities with a fervor that generated plenty of new activity within the Atlanta Writers Club.

We had approximately 125 members when I first accepted the presidential gavel, and when my tenure ended, we exceeded just over 600 members within our ranks.

But the membership numbers were not achieved just with sales pitches and my charming personality. Rather, I started to build a strong supporting cast on the AWC board, and often teamed with George Weinstein to brainstorm, and then create activities that tempted local writers and aspiring writers to want to participate with AWC activities.

Here are just a few events which contributed to the explosion of our membership population:

**Decatur Book Festival** - My tenure as president saw the AWC participate in our second DBF and we became an integral part of those Labor Day weekends. As the DBF crowds grew each year, so did our membership ranks. We sponsored the Emerging Writers area, and assisted with volunteers in other areas. Our approach from our booth was not to attract members to enroll, but rather invite attendees to their first AWC meeting free, view the activities we offered, and then decide if they wish to join. That approach still stands today, and is responsible in part for our continued success. My favorite days of the year consisted of my standing in front of the AWC booth and snagging passing pedestrians to inquire of their
interest in writing. One of my prized captives joined and became our current president, Valerie Connors!

Â Youth Workshop - We started the writers workshops that were dedicated to interested youths ages 8 - 16 who wanted to learn more about writing professionally. Our first efforts attracted nearly 100 participants, and I could never have survived those days without the guidance and support of AWC member and volunteer Lisa Heidle, who embraced that concept and made the AWC appear professional and caring for those who might have a literary future.

Â Dinner with Author events - Atlanta is the target of many popular authors, and I wanted to introduce the AWC to them, and also permit a small number of our members the opportunity to relax in a different setting with some of the most successful authors of our times. My favorite dinner was with Michael Connelly, who was most gracious with his time during a hectic book tour. The Dinner with Author events could not have happened without George Weinstein, our special events Vice President at that time, and George Scott, now with Books for Less, who remains as one of the most well-known booksellers in the Southeast.

Â Georgia Perimeter College - Of course, the AWC success would have been stymied if we had no venue to hold our meetings, and we were fortunate to be embraced by this local college. I am still thankful to Rob Jenkins and Jack Riggs for their foresight and confidence in our organization. Eventually, the AWC was able to create a scholarship fund as part of our commitment to the continued excellence in education at GPC, and we are still honored to use their Dunwoody campus for our monthly meetings.

Â Life's a Picnic - Well, so it seemed each of my years as president. My era introduced Hammond Park in Sandy Springs as the venue of choice for our annual AWC picnic, and we had great attendance. Of course, the fact that I was the chef for many of the entree items did influence the decision of many members to drag themselves to the venue to sample some my Gullah Baked Beans with Pineapple, Barbecued Chicken Wings, and the all-time favorite Sloppy Toms, which were a variation of sloppy joe sandwiches but made with ground turkey and rolled in tortillas. I may not have been the best writer at the AWC, but I sure could cook!

Â Guest Speakers, Workshops, and Conferences - Wow! While I may have held the title of president, it was George Weinstein who was considered by many as the face of the AWC. That's because of his tireless efforts to bring well-known authors, literary agents, publishers, and others related to the literary industry to our stage each month. In addition, we held numerous workshops, (usually free of charge to our members), and George introduced our first ever Atlanta Writers Conference so our members could pitch their works of fiction and non-fiction to visiting agents. Now I don't want to give all the credit to George, since we
worked so well as a team during those glory years of the AWC. He at least permitted me to meet some of these sensational authors and guests, and I cherish many fond memories as a result. I recall one blockbuster Saturday program where our guest speakers were Natasha Trethewey followed by Karin Slaughter. George allowed me to shake hands with numerous other talented authors, and I now consider some of them friends. Thank you for that, George. I cannot recall each and every speaker or trainer during my tenure, but I thank the following list, for they were all unique and made a mark in the history of the Atlanta Writers Club.

- Terry Kay
- David Fulmer
- Cassandra King
- Karin Slaughter
- Natasha Trethewey
- Joshilyn Jackson
- Hollis Gillespie
- Steve Berry
- Kathryn Stockett
- Lauretta Hannon
- Carol O'Dell
- Lynn Cullen
- Karen White
- Patti Callahan Henry
- Robyn Spizman
- Haywood Smith
- Many, many others

As I look back, I thank Ginger Collins and George Weinstein for taking the chance on a depressed widower and giving him the opportunity to contribute his time and efforts to such a terrific organization. I’m still not certain if the Atlanta Writers Club or I got more out of my presidency, but I know we were both reborn in a sense, and will always appreciate our times together.

Clayton H. Ramsey, AWC President 2009-2013

On a sultry morning in September of 2006, I was accosted by two members of the Atlanta Writers Club at the first annual Decatur Book Festival. They had spied my Emory t-shirt and wanted to know if I was a writer. While I stumbled for a response, my wife answered in the affirmative. I joined the AWC at their next monthly meeting and haven’t for a moment regretted that decision. Over the course of the past seven years, I have served as both the inaugural VP of Operations and as President for two terms. These have been life-changing years for me.
My first year as President we had an 11% increase in membership and our roster only grew in the subsequent three years. Our email list ballooned from 1,700 to 3,600. Our budget expanded to meet the growing needs of our members, who represented increasingly diverse populations of writers in the city. These figures, though, merely hint at the development and improvement of our programs. We hosted an international conference my first year, the Write-in-Atlanta event, with authors who came from Brazil and the UK to participate. My last year in office we held our first annual AWC Book Fair, in which over sixty of our author-members promoted and sold their books. Between these two programmatic bookends, we hosted such luminaries as Steve Berry, Rick Bragg, Kathryn Stockett, Brian Jay Corrigan, and Terry Kay. We had workshops in screenwriting, technology, short story writing, and poetry.

For students we created a scholarship for a deserving Georgia Perimeter College English major and developed relationships with GPC’s Writers Institute and later their new Southern Academy for Literary Arts and Scholarly Research, in addition to Ivy Hall at SCAD-Atlanta. One of our members, Lisa Heidle, founded and directed the AWC Youth Creative Writing Camp during summer vacations to teach and encourage the next generation of writers.

To increase our involvement in the wider community and local literary scene, we co-sponsored the biennial Townsend Award for Fiction. We increased our involvement with the Decatur Book Festival, keeping a booth presence, hosting the Local Prose Stage for area authors, and contributing participants and moderators for presentations and panel discussions. We made inroads into the Writers’ Track at Dragon*Con.

Under the stellar leadership of former AWC President George Weinstein, we brought in agents and other professionals twice a year every year from across the country for the Atlanta Writers Conference and created an event that has led to numerous contracts and widening publishing opportunities for our members. Structurally, we created the new Board positions of VP of Community Outreach and VP of PR/Marketing and Publicity, and the honorific title of Officer Emeritus. We are increasingly using social media to advertise our programs and improve communication among our members. We continue to add critique groups to serve the needs of our members around the city. I genuinely believe the future of the AWC is bright and our potential for growth and development in the years to come is limitless.
Those are the sorts of things you put in a business report, the listing of accomplishments that any leader must make to demonstrate his or her competence and success. However, when I mull over my time as President, what I value the most, perhaps even more than the items in this accounting, are the friendships I have forged along the way. Over the past seven years I have been able to make connections with some exceptional people local authors like David Fulmer, Jedwin Smith, and Terra Elan McVoy, as well as a host of immensely talented writers who may not (yet) have national name recognition, but who are nevertheless skilled, dedicated, and talented and have significantly influenced my life and writing more than many of the professional writers I have encountered.

What is so special about the Atlanta literary community is what I think is special about Atlanta in general. Atlantans are a gracious and generous people. In my experience, Atlanta writers translate this legacy of Southern culture into their writing lives. Among the writers I have met in and through the AWC, I have yet to encounter the cut-throat competition and sabotage that seem to be the hallmark of life in New York and L.A. Writers in Atlanta are anxious to help each other, to give a blurb, to offer a contact name, or provide a word of encouragement. It is less about publishing at all costs and more about contributing to the welfare of all writers in the area, with the recognition that we are all a part of the same kinship of those who love words.

The Atlanta writing community, primarily in the form of the Atlanta Writers Club, has enhanced my writing and my life in innumerable ways. You gave me the permission, freedom, encouragement, and support to write. You taught me what makes a story work and what the life of a professional writer is like. You pulled back the curtain on the publishing industry and showed me just what is involved in the process that runs from initial conception of a book to sending it out into the world. You provided opportunities to improve technical aspects of my writing and helped me build a foundation that could support a lifetime of writing. You introduced me to some incredible people in the business. In a solitary enterprise, you offered a community, and with the privilege of service, you have made me a better leader and better collaborator. You have become friends who have enlarged and enriched my world.

Thank you. You have made me a better writer, indeed a better person, because of my association with you. I look forward to many more years of affiliation with you and wish you all success in your books and in your lives.

Valerie Connors, AWC President, 2013-2015

The similarities between the paths down which my predecessor and I made our way to the presidency of the Atlanta Writers Club are many. I too learned about the Club at the Decatur Book
Festival, and when asked if I was a writer, was hesitant to answer, because although I had already completed and self-published my first novel, *Give Me Liberty*, I hadn't come to think of myself as a writer yet. And like Clay, my spouse answered the question for me. Otherwise I might have just smiled, shaken my head no, and continued walking. I joined the Club in 2010 and attended the September meeting, the first one following the Decatur Book Festival, and have rarely missed a meeting since.

In January of 2011, just three months after becoming an AWC member, I joined the board of directors and assumed the role of VP of Operations, just as Clay had done some years before. While having lunch with George Weinstein about a year after joining the AWC board, he suggested, much to my surprise, that I should consider assuming the role of President at the end of Clay's second term when the bylaws would require him to step down. It had never occurred to me that I would be considered for such a position, much less sought out for it, but I was extremely flattered and promised to think it over. Several weeks later, I had lunch with Clay, who spent four hours talking to me about the Club, its history, and what being the AWC president meant to him. I had never considered myself a 'club type of person, and I'm fairly certain the Camp Fire Girls was the last club I belonged to back when I was about eleven years old. But in the short time I had been a member of the Atlanta Writers Club, I already knew that it was an organization I wanted not only to be a part of, but one that I wanted to have an impact on and contribute my time and energy to. So I agreed, and over the next year and a half, Clay, George and Marty all spent time preparing me for my new role, assuring me I could manage it, and even talking me off the ledge during moments of panic when I wondered how I could fit the additional responsibilities into my already busy schedule.

It was Marty who first approached me at the Decatur Book Festival back in 2010 and asked if I was a writer. He talked to me for a long time about the Club, the monthly meetings, and the conferences. Though neither of us knew it at the time, that conversation would change my life, and Marty would become a dear friend. When I went home that evening, I wrote the check for my first year's membership dues. Since joining the AWC, and as of this writing, I have traditionally published my second novel, *In Her Keeping*, which was released in August of 2013 by Bell Bridge Books, and have two more novels in the works. If you were to ask me today if I am a writer, I would answer without hesitation a resounding yes! It's far removed from what I do for a living, but it's how I see myself now. I'm a writer, with a very demanding day job.

I have the tremendous honor of holding the position of AWC President as the Club celebrates its one-hundredth anniversary, and for
that I am deeply grateful. I have inherited the responsibility for continuing the hard work of the fifty-four presidents who came before me, and while that seems at times a bit daunting, I know that I have the constant and unwavering support of at least three of them, George Weinstein (2004-2007), Marty Aftewicz (2007-2009) and Clay Ramsey (2009-2013), who are also my closest friends.

While the responsibilities of the AWC President are many, I have been blessed with an amazing board of directors who are hardworking, dedicated, and talented. When the position of Membership VP became available shortly after I had joined the board, I suggested Ginny Bailey as the replacement, and the rest of board members wholeheartedly agreed. She had been a constant and enthusiastic volunteer during my time as VP of Operations and volunteer coordinator, and has been a committed member of the board for several years now. Nedra Roberts, VP of Contests and Awards, joined the board at the same time I did, in early 2011. A retired English teacher, Nedra had past-president Clay Ramsey as one of her students back in the day, and brings not only her love of the craft and dedication to the Club, but her unfailing ability to make me smile.

Bill Black, the Club’s Secretary, is a playwright like Nedra, and has transcribed and delivered the board meeting minutes of the AWC for many years. Co-VP of Programming, Soniah Kamal and Anjali Enjeti had planned to cycle off the board in December of 2013 when their terms were up, but much to my delight, they each stepped into a new role and remained on the board. Anjali
became the VP of Marketing and PR, Soniah took on her new role as VP of Social Events, and Kimberly Garrett Brown transitioned into the Programming VP role. Jennifer Wiggins stepped into my former role as VP of Operations when I became President in May of 2013. Jennifer was also a constant and dedicated volunteer, and I was thrilled when she agreed to take over the responsibilities of volunteer coordination and meeting logistics. Kathleen Gizzi took over the role of AWC Treasurer when Kimberly Burkey retired from the role in 2013, and has done a wonderful job of handling the Club’s accounting and financial responsibilities. Initially, Kenneth Hamner held the volunteer position of Social Media guru, and at the end of 2013, we made VP of Social Media an official board position, and asked Kenny to be the first to fill it. While not an official member of the board, we have also welcomed Barbara Barth to the Centennial Planning Committee. Barbara brings her artistic flair, and the ability to transform an art gallery into a warm and welcoming place in which to celebrate tonight’s wonderful event. And of course, George, Clay and Marty, who all hold the non-voting board position of Officer Emeritus, and continue to serve on the board in an advisory capacity as well as with their own ongoing responsibilities. Clay is responsible for all things related to our meeting location, Marty is our official picnic chef and Decatur Book Festival new member recruiter, and George is the Atlanta Writers Conference Director. George’s twice yearly conferences bring in a large portion of the Club’s annual revenue, making it possible for us to continue providing great programs every month, and ensuring the Club’s solvency. These conferences have resulted in a growing number of members obtaining agent representation and publishing contracts. I consider all of these people part of my family, and it’s an honor and a pleasure to have the opportunity to serve on the AWC board with them.

The first year of my presidency has been an incredible learning experience, and extremely exciting. Outside of the regular responsibilities of the office, it has been focused on the Centennial Celebration, and trying to plan an event worthy of a club with such a rich and storied history. After reading through this Centennial Book, marveling at the combined efforts of all the administrations that have preceded mine, and all the programs they have implemented, I am both challenged and committed to add my contributions to the list.

During the remainder of my term, I hope to encourage the next generation of writers to become members of the AWC, in order to ensure that the Club will go on long after I am gone. I dream of things like an AWC Bookstore, an AWC Writers Retreat in the mountains somewhere, or even an AWC Publishing Company. When you have a group of like-minded individuals as large and talented as ours, anything is possible. As the president who will carry the torch into the Club’s second century, a bridge between the past and the future, I will do my best to carry on the work of those who came before me, and endeavor to leave my mark in its history. The Atlanta Writers Club is an amazing organization that has survived two world wars, our country’s financial ruin and recovery, and at times has dwindled to only a handful of members. But in the end, one hundred years later, the Club still remains. That is quite an accomplishment, and I’m proud, beyond words, to be a part of it. My heart is full, my blessings are many, and I am truly humbled by this opportunity.
2014 Board of Directors for the Atlanta Writers Club

Valerie Connors
President

Marty Aftewicz
Former President and Officer Emeritus

Kim Brown
Vice President of Programs

Kenneth Hamner
Vice President of Social Media

Nedra Roberts
Vice President of Contests

Ginny Bailey
Vice President of Membership

Anjali Enjeti
Vice President of Marketing

Soniah Kamal
Vice President of Social Events

George Weinstein
Former President and Officer Emeritus

Bill Black
Secretary

Kathleen Gizzi
Treasurer

Clay Ramsey
Former President and Officer Emeritus

Jennifer Wiggins
Vice President of Operations
Presidents of
The Atlanta Writers Club

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Temple Graves</td>
<td>1914 - 1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Francis Parkhurst</td>
<td>1914 - 1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. O. Parmalee</td>
<td>1916 - 1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lollie Belle Wylie</td>
<td>1917 - 1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dudley R. Cowles</td>
<td>1923 - 1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James B. Nevin</td>
<td>1924 - 1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrightman F. Melton</td>
<td>1925 - 1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dudley R. Cowles (second term)</td>
<td>1927 - 1928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Whitehead Hicky</td>
<td>1928 - 1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earnest Hartsock</td>
<td>1930 - 1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lida Wilson Turner</td>
<td>1930 - 1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anderson M. Scruggs</td>
<td>1931 - 1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrightman F. Melton (second term)</td>
<td>1933 - 1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ollie F. Reeves</td>
<td>1944 - 1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise Frederick Hays</td>
<td>1946 - 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gladys McCary Massey</td>
<td>1947 - 1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeanne Osborn Gibbs-Shaw</td>
<td>1949 - 1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duke Cole Meredith</td>
<td>1950 - 1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Fort Codington-Shaw</td>
<td>1951 - 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. William E. Brougher</td>
<td>1952 - 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold R. Random</td>
<td>1953 - 1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecil Cobb Wesley</td>
<td>1955 - 1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thelma Thompson Slayden</td>
<td>1957 - 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bertram Holland Flanders</td>
<td>1958 - 1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold R. Random (second term)</td>
<td>1960 - 1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Ransom Lewis, Jr.</td>
<td>1961 - 1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Morgan Slyer</td>
<td>1962 - 1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Adger Hayes</td>
<td>1964 - 1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen Weaver Lipham</td>
<td>1965 - 1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurelia Austin</td>
<td>1967 - 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doris Percell Random</td>
<td>1969 - 1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flo S. Buffington</td>
<td>1971 - 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Lind Pettys</td>
<td>1973 - 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Edward Lantz</td>
<td>1974 - 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. James Cecil Bryant, Jr.</td>
<td>1975 - 1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Ely Ambrose</td>
<td>1976 - 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Davin Vickers</td>
<td>1978 - 1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doris Reed Benbow</td>
<td>1979 - 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Lawrence Ogletree</td>
<td>1981 - 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Lexton Buchan</td>
<td>1983 - 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Valerie W. Harper</td>
<td>1985 - 1986</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presidents of The Atlanta Writers Club (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Lexton Buchanan (second term)</td>
<td>1986 - 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy G. Highland</td>
<td>1988 - 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Kathleen Byers Lindsay</td>
<td>1989 - 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Stripling</td>
<td>1990 - 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy C. Knight</td>
<td>1992 - 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon Dill Kaufman</td>
<td>1994 - 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecil Murphey</td>
<td>1996 - 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polly Hunt Neal</td>
<td>1998 - 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginger Hawkins</td>
<td>1999 - 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrian D. Drost</td>
<td>2000 - 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara Hines Martin (co-president)</td>
<td>2002 - 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Ryback (co-president)</td>
<td>2002 - 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marty Aftewicz</td>
<td>2007 - 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay Ramsey</td>
<td>2009 - 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valerie Joan Connors</td>
<td>2013 - 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>