

THE COLLEGE LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION



December 12, 2020

Dear CLA Colleagues,

I am honored and excited to serve as the Program Chair for the 80th annual College Language Association Convention hosted by my home city of Memphis and my alma mater, The University of Memphis, April 7-10, 2021.

We all shared deep sadness at the passing of Dr. Yvonne McIntosh, who served as Vice President and Program Chair of the 2020 convention, which was canceled due to COVID-19. We had been working together to plan a special 80th celebration that highlighted CLA's return to its founding city and included events at our founding institution, Lemoyne-Owen College. I wish that we could gather in person in April, but the Program Committee and the CLA Executive Committee have worked tirelessly to plan the first ever virtual convention, and it seems especially fitting that we would have it with the theme of Afrofuturism.

The 2021 convention program is an updated version of what we planned for 2020, and we ask that all previously confirmed participants verify their participation by completing the [Participant Confirmation Form](#). In addition, the Program Committee is presenting an opportunity for additional participants via a series of Special Sessions:

- In Memoriam: Legacy of Literary Scholar Cheryl Wall
- Coping with Coronavirus: Responses and Reflections on the Pandemic
- 2020 Turning Points in the Black Lives Matter Movement
- 2020 Pulitzer Prize Winner Jericho Brown: Reflections and Responses
- Teaching World Languages and Cultures in the COVID Era: Overcoming the Challenges of Remote Learning
- Silenced Voices of Africa and the African Diaspora Today

If you are interested in participating in any of these special sessions, please complete the 2021 Special Session Abstract Submission Form, which is on the [CFP webpage](#).

Finally, as we are unable to gather in person, I especially wanted to share with each convention participant a special opportunity to experience our host city. The Program Committee has partnered with [The 901 Box](#), a Black-owned Memphis business that seeks to transport box recipients to Memphis by providing a way to taste, touch, hear, smell, and see a little bit of the city through the experience of products from local Black entrepreneurs. Your 901 Box will be mailed to the address that you provide when you register for the Convention, and our newly designed [CLA website](#) powered by MemberClicks has a lot more information about all of the exciting features of the upcoming virtually reimaged convention, including an easy new registration system. So, please register today!

None of the work of CLA would be possible without the committed service of the CLA Executive Committee. My deepest thanks to President Reginald A. Bess and our entire leadership team. And to our members, thank you for trusting us to lead our beloved institution in these unprecedented times. We are thankful for you, and we hope that this upcoming convention experience will be one to remember.

All the Best,

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