



# Crime & Grits

ISSUE X | FEBRUARY 2025

## OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN CRIMINAL JUSTICE ASSOCIATION

### Welcome From the Executive Board

The chilly weather has been hitting many of us in the SCJA region, but we are nevertheless excited to warmly welcome you to the latest issue of Crime & Grits, our official newsletter. Since our last issue, Dr. Kathy Johnson has moved into the role of Immediate Past President (while enjoying her comfy blue SCJA socks from our 2024 annual meeting in Greenville, SC). Ascending into the role of President is Dr. Julie Baldwin, who will share an update and new Board business for 2025 later in this issue. Rounding out our presidential line are Drs. Shaun Thomas (1st Vice-President) and Ben Stickle (2nd Vice-President). The membership also elected two new Directors-at-Large for a three-year term: Drs. Andrew Denney and Sarah Harper. We are thankful for the dedicated service of our Directors-at-Large whose terms came to an end in September, Drs. Ben Stickle and Kristina Lopez. We have also welcomed a new editor of our journal (*American Journal of Criminal Justice*), Dr. J.C. Barnes, succeeding the esteemed tenure of Dr. J. Mitchell Miller. We are looking forward to seeing y'all next month in Denver at the ACJS annual meeting. We invite everyone to join us for our General Business meeting Wednesday evening and some mingling at our reception on Thursday night!

--The Board

### SAVE THE DATE

- March 11-15
  - ACJS annual meeting, Sheraton Downtown Hotel, Denver, CO
- March 12, 5:00PM
  - SCJA General Business Meeting, Governor's Square 11
- March 13, 6:30PM
  - SCJA Reception, Earl's Kitchen & Bar
- June 15
  - Abstracts due for SCJA conference
- September 9-12
  - SCJA annual meeting, Francis Marion Hotel, Charleston, SC

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# SCJA EXECUTIVE BOARD, 2024-2025

## OFFICERS



1st Vice President  
Shaun Thomas, Ph.D.  
University of Arkansas



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2nd Vice President  
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## EX OFFICIO



Webmaster/IT  
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Western Carolina University

# Message from the President



Happy New Year, SCJA! Since our conference in Greenville, the Executive Board has been busy achieving several accomplishments that the organization has been working toward for quite some time.

Most notably are the enactments of two policies. The Executive Board has been working closely with counsel to develop the Code of Conduct and the Policy for Handling Complaints. After months of meticulous work, each policy was enacted on 1/7/2025 by a unanimous Board vote. You can view these on the website under the "Executive" tab. I am sincerely grateful to Dr. Dave Camp and the Executive Board for their hard work and commitment to the SCJA that brought this to completion following the process stipulated in our Constitution and Bylaws.

We have also been working to update the sponsorship options for our annual conferences - 2025 and beyond! I want to thank Dr. Ben Stickle for his effort in spearheading this endeavor. If you are interested in learning about ways to support this year's conference in Charleston through sponsorship or other ways, please reach out to Dr. Shaun Thomas, our 2025 Program Chair, at [shaun@uark.edu](mailto:shaun@uark.edu).

Thank you also to Dr. Kathy Johnson and Dr. Brenda Vose for exploring options to archive our SCJA history. Our organization's history is rich, and we have prioritized identifying a path to preserve it. We are now in the process of updating the Election Code and the attachments at the end of the Policy & Procedure Manual. The Board looks forward to providing those updates and more at the Mid-year General Business meeting at ACJS in Denver.

I can't wait to see you next month at the two SCJA events below!

- SCJA General Business Meeting will be on Wednesday, March 12th from 5:00-6:15 pm at the conference hotel in the Governor's Square II room on the Plaza Concourse Level.
- SCJA Reception will start at 6:30-9:30p.m. on Thursday, March 13th at Earls Kitchen + Bar (1600 Glenarm Place).

-- Julie Baldwin

SCJA President  
American University  
[jbaldwin@american.edu](mailto:jbaldwin@american.edu)



# AMERICAN JOURNAL OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE: EDITOR'S REPORT

Dear Fellow Southern Members,

As you may know by now, the American Journal of Criminal Justice officially moved to the University of Cincinnati in 2024. I am proud to serve as Editor-in-Chief for the journal of my hometown association. I was raised in the SCJA, so this role is more than a professional appointment; for me, it's a personal point of pride.

New to the Journal is our Managing Editor, Tom Moglovkin. Tom is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Cincinnati who has an extensive background in legal work. He and I have worked closely together for the past few years, even traveling to New Zealand to work on the crime data in the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health Study. I believe we make a good team and the Journal is in capable hands.

Please join me in thanking Dr. J. Mitchell Miller for his two outstanding terms as Editor. Dr. Miller took us to new heights, leading the American Journal of Criminal Justice to the top of the rankings and bringing international attention to our organization. Dr. Miller's Namesake Initiative ("make the American Journal of Criminal Justice the American journal") was wildly successful. Indeed, it is clear from submission rates (nearly 250 submissions in 2024!) that we have become a first-choice outlet. Congratulations Dr. Miller and thank you for your work!

Looking ahead, I am excited about several new initiatives that will begin to take shape in 2025. When I applied to be Editor, I laid

out a plan to create a "short report" submission option. This is popular in top-tier medical and general science journals (e.g., Journal of American Medical Association). My vision is that short reports in the American Journal of Criminal Justice will provide readers with a brief study that addresses one specific topic; this is, in a sense, a more contemporary form of what we know as a research note. But my vision for the short reports is more specific than a general research note. Short reports will seek to provide an estimate of the prevalence of some type of criminal activity or something relevant to a current issue in the justice system. Think of the leading causes of death studies that are updated every year in medical journals. We need something along those lines for the CJ discipline, and I intend to make the American Journal of Criminal Justice the home for those short, but highly citable manuscripts.

Other initiatives are in the works, and I'll let you in on those ideas as soon as they are finalized. Stay tuned. I look forward to seeing you in Denver!

Sincerely,  
J.C. Barnes, Ph.D.  
Editor-in-Chief, AJCJ  
ajcj@uc.edu



Impact Factor: 1.8

Days to first decision: 31

#2 Google Scholar in  
Criminology, Criminal  
Law & Policing Rank

#4 JCI SSCI Rank



# A Message from Your ACJS Region 2 Representative

I enjoyed seeing all of you at the Greenville conference in September, and I'm always looking forward to the next SCJA event. For those of you not familiar with my role, I'm an elected trustee of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences responsible for maintaining communication and cooperation between our organizations. Of course, my most important responsibilities are encouraging ACJS members to attend regional conferences and SCJA members to attend the annual ACJS meeting. That seems to be going well—SCJA is the largest of ACJS's five regional affiliates, it has the largest conference, and the southern region has more ACJS members than any other!

For those of you just starting to attend ACJS, make sure to attend the SCJA events (everyone is welcome at general business meetings and receptions) and take advantage of the opportunities to network outside of the region. The new member breakfast is a great place to start (drop by!). If that's too early in the morning for you, attend the general business meeting of one of ACJS's many sections; you'll meet people with research interests that overlap your own. I'll be at the Drugs & Alcohol Research meeting as well as the Teaching, Learning & Scholarship one, but seek out the one that fits you.

For those more seasoned ACJS members, drop by the general

ACJS meeting on Friday morning and get on one of ACJS's many committees and help plan for future conferences and events! We are kicking off the conference on Tuesday with Tours of the Ralph L. Carr Colorado Judicial Center (register online through ACJS), and closing out with an exclusive tour of Empower Field at Mile High Stadium for ACJS members at 10:30AM. My recommendations for the other days are included below. Feel free to reach out if you have any questions about attending ACJS this year!

Dr. John Stogner  
[johnstogner@charlotte.edu](mailto:johnstogner@charlotte.edu)

Wed March 12	Thurs March 13	Fri March 14
7:30 AM New Attendee Breakfast Look for me, I'll introduce you to others in our organization!	9:30 AM Keynote speaker Dr. John Laub "Translational Criminology: Its Origins, Current Developments & Future"	8:00 AM ACJS General Business Meeting & Getting Involved in ACJS Committees session
9:30 AM ACJS Program Reviewer Training (at no cost for registered participants)	6:30-9:30PM SCJA Reception Earl's Kitchen & Bar	12:30 PM ACJS Awards Luncheon (arrive early as space becomes limited)
5:00 PM SCJA General Business Meeting Governor's Square 11	8:30 PM ACJS Talent Show Fundraiser (ACJS President challenged each region to enter a team!)	Afternoon ACJS hosted Japanese Tea Ceremonies (multiple sessions, register online in advance)
6:30 PM Dr. Bit Na Kim's Presidential Address & Reception		6:30 PM Research & Pictorial Showcase Reception (i.e., poster session)
8:30 PM ACJS pub-style trivia contest (register your team online in advance)		

# Grit & Growth:

## Imposter Syndrome, Hidden Curriculum & Stealing Canoes

As a new member of the SCJA Board (and the one with the youngest career thus far), the statement I wrote for the ballot this summer reflected on established members of this organization investing in me as a student and now as an assistant professor. SCJA has a unique authenticity and warmth to it, yet there can still be people feeling "out in the cold" because they are not sure how to get involved or connected. For those who have not met me, I'm known to be rather extroverted. Over time, I have found that many of my peers are more introverted and reluctant to dive right into a space or network. In truth, I relate to that reluctance and timidity far more than I show. With that in mind, I am introducing this recurring feature to *Crime & Grit*s called "Grit & Growth" that will be co-written by an early career SCJA member and their more established mentor. These collaborations will share how we take on challenges in our career with investment from others coupled with boldness from within ourselves. There will be times in our career, especially early on, when we feel lost about what we are expected to do in this field and how to go about doing it. This concept is sometimes called "hidden curriculum". I was fortunate to have a number of mentors who were willing to either tell me outright about these pathways to academic success or were willing to answer countless questions about it. That said, doors of opportunity require us to extend a hand to turn the doorknob or have someone show us where the door is and holding it open behind them for us to pass through. For the latter, a mentor's guidance and encouragement will make all of the difference. Fortunately, my mentors still required me to exert the effort to open whatever door I found in front of me. That process was integral to helping me build confidence that I could do this myself after leaving the proverbial nest. This confidence, however, may be tough to muster consistently. Younger generations embraced the phrase YOLO (You Only Live Once) as a rallying call for when they took a risk or pursued a significant opportunity. Maybe the chance could be once in a lifetime and what is the harm in trying? Though perhaps not the best approach for when we are considering, say, a neck tattoo (or vibrant hair color), YOLO may be a viable mentality for applying for a fellowship, sending out a manuscript, or self-nominating for an award or role in an organization

With a good mentor, the risks of a YOLO mentality can be mitigated through explaining the full ramifications of your audacity because they know more about what may be behind that door and what your capacity may be to take on the challenge.

My version of the YOLO mantra is something I came across on Reddit: steal the canoe. This mantra has become part of a tattoo on my arm. I share it with every student I mentor. "Steal the Canoe" is a parable of sorts that I read on the r/gradschool subreddit by u/DeathByGentleKicks, shared below. There are many moments where I embraced stealing the canoe, even though I get tinges of Imposter Syndrome all the time. Surely, people are going to figure out how often I Google what Robert's Rules of Order require or ask Co-Pilot to explain a stats concept to me like I am 15. When I ask around, though, it sounds like a lot of us can relate to "faking" confidence. Interestingly, even as we may tell ourselves we are faking confidence, it turns out the ability is already there. That's where my mentors have been so invaluable: they believe in me because they have seen what I am capable of doing in the most challenging moments. The tenacity they remind me that I have is probably more valuable to me than actually knowing how to do The Thing at the present moment.

I believe discussing the hidden curriculum of academia and encouraging people who have been stumped by it could be valuable for other early career peers and students. People I look up to were willing to tell me that they have been (or still are!) decked in the face by Imposter Syndrome; usually either tinged with regret for not pursuing something they wanted or thankful that they went for it. Their stories keep me reaching for the next door, whether the last one slammed or was still locked, even when the door seems out of my reach. I look forward to sharing more mentor/mentee stories of overcoming Imposter Syndrome and navigating the hidden curriculum in future issues in hopes that it will build more confidence and audacity in the people who read it. Our first collaboration is forthcoming.

In the meantime...Steal the canoe!

--SARAH HARPER, PH.D



### On canoe thievery and being audacious

"I met someone a few years ago who shoplifted a canoe. Apparently, it was really easy. They just hoisted it up with a friend and walked out of the shop. It was so bold that all the shopkeepers just assumed they bought it, and I guess they just loaded it up in their trunk and drove off. Lately, I've been thinking about that story a lot, as I prepare for an incredibly ambitious field season (8 months of almost nonstop work). It gives me a weird sense of inspiration for grad school. I think sometimes if you're just audacious enough about doing something that you shouldn't be capable of, you fool everyone around you into believing you can do it too. The next thing you know, the canoe is in your truck.

Anyways, don't steal canoes. But maybe consider doing the impossible with a bit of (possibly pretend) confidence. Walk into the conference like you're excited to impart the wisdom of your project to worthy question askers. Go to the proposal defense as if your committee is lucky to have you. Prepare for your fieldwork as though you're Jane Goodall on a summer vacation. Be a bit audacious. Maybe you'll fool other people, but most importantly, maybe you'll fool yourself a bit too."



Join us for the 2025 Annual Meeting  
of the  
Southern Criminal Justice Association

# Charleston, South Carolina

September 9-12, 2025

“Bridging the Gap: Advancing Research to Practice”

Dr. Julie Baldwin, President  
American University

Dr. Shaun Thomas, 1st VP & Program Chair  
University of Arkansas

Deadline for abstracts is June 15, 2025.

[Click to enter submission portal.](#)

\*\*Due to planning requirements, there will not be a submission extension.\*\*

Please email questions to Shaun Thomas at [shaun@uark.edu](mailto:shaun@uark.edu)



[Click to access SCJA  
conference webpage](#)



[Click to access SCJA group  
rate at Francis Marion Hotel](#)

# Call for Nominations

## SCJA Awards

### Student Awards

Deadline: July 7, 2025

#### Tom Barker Outstanding Undergraduate Student

- Chair: Dr. Dave May (dmay@soc.msstate.edu)

#### Outstanding Masters Student

- Chair: Dr. McKenzie Jossie (mjossie@lsu.edu)

#### Outstanding Doctoral Student

- Chair: Dr. John Boman (jboman@bgsu.edu)

#### Outstanding Student Poster Award

- Chair: Dr. Jeff Smith (23jsmith@gmail.com)

SCJA recognizes exemplary student achievement through four awards. Eligibility for each award is limited to students currently enrolled (or graduates who were enrolled through May 2025) in schools within the Southern region. Each nomination must contain a description of the nominee's accomplishments in areas such as scholarship, leadership, and public service. The nomination should include the nominee's grade point average and additional information sufficient to answer the following question: "In what ways has this student contributed to his/her academic program, college and/or community?"

- Student award winners receive a travel stipend and must attend the conference to claim the funds.
- Master & Doctoral awardees receive a free 3-year membership, which may upgrade to a lifetime membership by paying the difference.
- Poster competition does not require nominations. Students must register as the lead author (faculty co-authors allowed) and present at the conference. Two winners will each receive \$500.

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#### Outstanding Educator Award

Chair: Dr. Jeff Walker (jeffw@uab.edu)

Deadline: July 7, 2025

This award recognizes one criminal justice educator for outstanding academic achievement in teaching, research, and service. The recipient of the award is selected on the basis of overall contributions to higher education in criminal justice. Nominees must be members in good standing of SCJA. Nominations should include the nominee's Curriculum Vitae and supportive letters. The winner will receive a lifetime membership to the association.

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#### Outstanding Professional Award

Chair: Dr. Fred Williams (frederick.williams1@kysu.edu)

Deadline: July 7, 2025

This award recognizes a practitioner in the field of criminal justice for outstanding contributions. Nominees must currently serve in a criminal justice-related position within the Southern region. Nominations should include a nomination letter detailing the nominee's record of achievement and the nominee's resume. The winner will receive an honorarium to attend the conference.

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#### Student & Untenured Faculty Travel Awards

Chair: Dr. Tasha Youstin (tjyoustin@wcu.edu)

Deadline: July 28, 2025

SCJA has set aside funds for a number of students (undergraduate and graduate students are eligible) and untenured faculty to receive a two-night stay at the conference hotel. Preference will be given to applicants currently enrolled in schools within the Southern region. All applicants must be 1) current members of SCJA at the time of application, 2) lead author on a paper or poster at the conference (it is okay if you have not submitted your paper yet), and 3) available to stay for two nights at the conference hotel. Applicants will be asked to demonstrate the need for travel funds and how attending the conference and presenting their research will enhance their careers and professional development in 250 words or less. A form is available on the SCJA awards website.



# Congratulations to the 2024 SCJA Award Winners!

## Outstanding Masters Student

Ellee Jackson  
University of Tennessee  
at Chattanooga



## Tom Baker Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Abigail Curran  
Clemson University



## Outstanding Doctoral Student

Zachary Buckner  
University of Mississippi



## Outstanding Professional of the Year

Angelo Della Manna, Director  
Alabama Dept. of Forensic Sciences



## SCJA Educator of the Year

Dr. Bryan Miller  
Clemson University

## Outstanding Student Poster Award Winners

“Gunshot Victims & Fire Stations: How Close are Fire Stations to the Crime Scene?”  
Tatyana Martin & Dr. Jeffery Walker, University of Alabama at Birmingham

“Geographic Trends in EPA Criminal Prosecutions, 2011-2020”  
Gage Carlton, Rylie Wartinger, & Pierce Greenberg, Clemson University

## Student & Untenured Faculty Travel Awards

Savannah Doherty, University of Alabama at Birmingham

Godwin Egbe, University of Mississippi

Annabelle Frazier, University of Southern Mississippi

Shelby Gilbreath, University of Mississippi

Abigail Novak, University of Mississippi

Zoe Robinson, University of Southern Mississippi

Laura Whitsett, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Ellie Yates, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

# 2024 SCJA Annual Meeting Recap

## Greenville, SC



**Dr. Kathy Johnson**  
Presidential Address

Delivering her Presidential Address, Dr. Kathrine Johnson shared her adventures with AI and the issues researchers are combatting with the prevalence of “fake news” and media myths. In total, there were 210 registered attendees who made their way to Greenville for the conference.



**Dr. Ralph Weisheit**  
Keynote Speaker

The Keynote Speaker for the 2024 conference was Dr. Ralph Weisheit, Distinguished Professor of Criminal Justice at Illinois State University. Dr. Weisheit discussed the relationship between crime, news, and consumers.



**Magnolia House**  
2024 Philanthropy

The proceeds from the raffle and fundraising at the 2024 conference were donated to Magnolia House, an inpatient recovery facility for women located in Walhalla, SC. Our attendees and the organization’s cost match yielded a donation of \$2,002!

### Receptions, Art, & Axes



## HELP WANTED

Our Historical Committee has been on the hunt for long-lost programs from past conferences to complete our collection! Can you help? We are still missing the following years:

Pre-2000  
2004 2007 2009

## DON'T FORGET!

SCJA Reception during  
ACJS @ Earl's Kitchen  
+ Bar

1600 Glenarm Place,  
140, Denver, CO 80202

Thurs. 3/13  
6:30-9:30PM



*Thank you for reading!*

[www.southerncj.org](http://www.southerncj.org)

Crime & Grits Newsletter designed and produced in Canva

by the

Records & Communication Committee

Chair: Dr. Sarah Harper

&

Dr. McKenzie Jossie