

WILLIAM & MARY

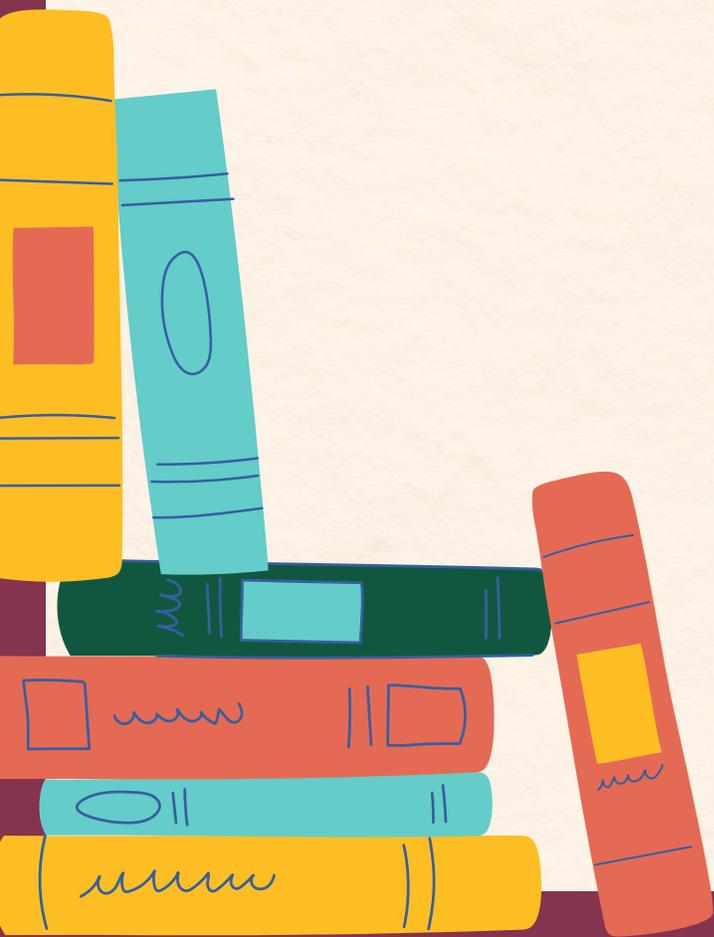
CAREER DEVELOPMENT &
PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

26th biennial

Ferguson Blair

PUBLISHING SEMINAR

Program of Events



26th biennial

Ferguson Blair

PUBLISHING SEMINAR

Thank you to the Ferguson Blair Publishing Seminar
and Scholarship Committee

Committee Chair:

Cristen McQuillan M.Ed. '15, Associate Director - Creative
Careers, Office of Career Development & Professional Engagement

Committee Members:

Liz Bellamy '13, Instruction & Research Librarian

Claire De Lisle M.B.A. '21, Director - Advancement
Communications, University Marketing

Lori Jacobson, Director - Writing & Communication Center

Addie Tsai, Assistant Teaching Professor of English

Kim Wheatley, Professor of English

Presented by:

W&M CAREER DEVELOPMENT &
PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Program of Events

DAY 1: THURSDAY, NOV. 7

W&M Alumni House

- 3:30 P.M.** Registration Opens
- 3:55 P.M.** Welcome Day 1
- 4:00 P.M.** Workshop: How to Write a Query Letter
- 5:30 P.M.** Keynote Panel: The Agent and the Editors
- 6:45 P.M.** Heavy Hors D'Oeuvres reception with networking
- 8:00 P.M.** Wrap Up

DAY 2: FRIDAY, NOV. 8

W&M Alumni House

- 8:45 A.M.** Registration & Breakfast Opens
- 9:25 A.M.** Welcome Day 2
- 9:30 A.M.** Panel: Career Paths and Roles in Publishing
- 10:45 A.M.** Panel: The Power of Storytelling
- 12:00 P.M.** Networking Lunch
- 1:30 P.M.** Panel: The State of Diversity in Publishing
- 2:45 P.M.** Panel: Young Alumni in Publishing: How to Break into the industry
- 4:00 P.M.** Wrap Up

Presented by:

W&M CAREER DEVELOPMENT &
PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Welcome!

It is with gratitude and excitement that we welcome you to the **26th biennial Ferguson Blair Publishing Seminar**, presented by the Office of Career Development & Professional Engagement.

We are thrilled to have you here today. Your enthusiasm, willingness to learn, and excitement to build connections are what makes this such a special event.

We're especially grateful to our eighteen esteemed alumni panelists who have returned to campus to share their advice and experiences. Their willingness to share their stories, along with their personal and professional insights are an inspiration to the William & Mary community.

The first publishing seminar at William & Mary was held in 1970, and since then the Ferguson Blair Seminar has offered high quality opportunities for students to learn about the world of publishing, discover careers, and engage with professionals in the field. This seminar is designed to help you explore career paths within the publishing industry, enhance your knowledge of the field, make connections, and have some fun! We hope this experience helps you gain the insights and inspiration you need to pursue a career in publishing.

The Ferguson Blair Publishing Seminar is made possible by the William C. Ferguson & Harry L. Blair endowments. We are forever grateful to those families for their legacy of support. We also want to thank the dedicated committee members who have worked tirelessly to organize this event for the past several months. Their efforts and ideas have made this seminar possible.

We hope you enjoy the seminar, learn something new, and take time to engage with panelists and fellow attendees. Together, we're building on a legacy of over 25 Ferguson Blair publishing seminars and over 50 years of inspiring the next generation of publishing professionals. Welcome to the Ferguson Blair Publishing Seminar!

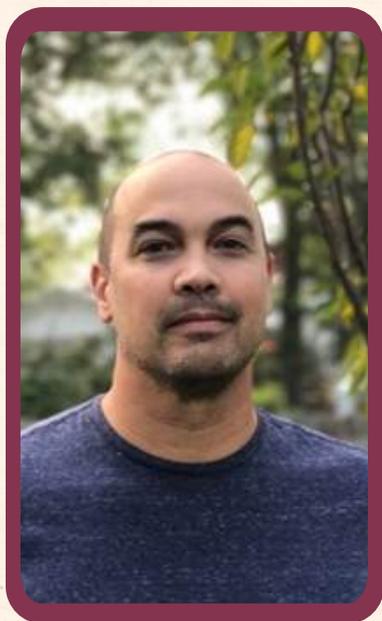
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PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

HOW TO WRITE A QUERY LETTER WORKSHOP

4:00 P.M. | Thursday, Nov. 7

Moderated by *Cristen McQuillan M.Ed. '15*, Associate Director - Creative Careers,
William & Mary Office of Career Development & Professional Engagement



JON PINEDA

Director of Creative Writing, Associate Professor of English, William & Mary

Jon Pineda is an American poet, memoirist, and novelist.

He is the author of six books: two novels, three poetry collections, and one memoir.

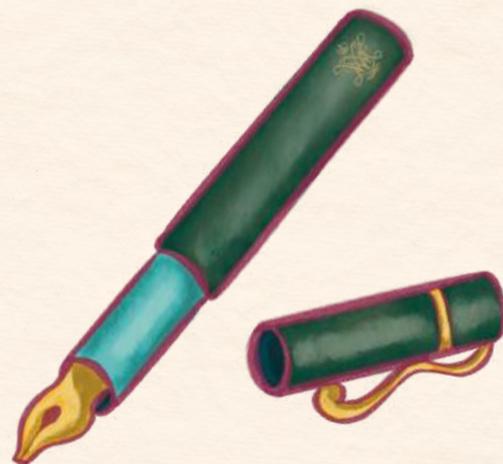
His work has appeared in numerous literary magazines and anthologies, including the “New York Times Magazine” and “Sierra Club,” and has twice received the Library of Virginia Literary Award (one for fiction and one for poetry). A core faculty member in the MFA program at Queens University of Charlotte, where he has taught in their Latin America MFA program in Rio de Janeiro and in Buenos Aires, Jon directs the creative writing program at William & Mary and has served on the teaching faculty at Kundiman, a “national nonprofit organization dedicated to nurturing generations of writers and readers of Asian American Literature.”



HANNAH STROUTH '19

Associate Literary Agent, Sanford J. Greenburger Associates

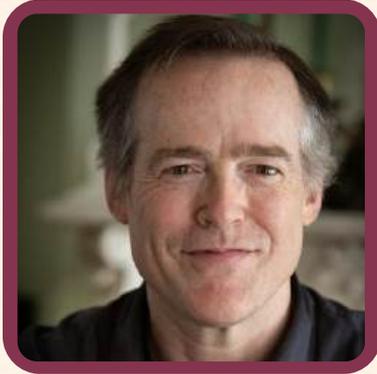
Hannah Strouth joined Sanford J. Greenburger Associates in early 2024 after spending over four years at the Jane Rotrosen Agency. She’s had the pleasure of working on the teams of bestselling authors such as Kristin Hannah, Sarah Addison Allen, Katy Hays, Dana Schwartz, and many more. While at William & Mary, she earned her B.A. in English with a minor in Marketing and graduated from the Columbia Publishing Course in 2019. Her focus is on literary and upmarket fiction, as well as select nonfiction.



KEYNOTE PANEL: THE AGENT AND THE EDITORS

5:30 P.M. | Thursday, Nov. 7

Moderator: Kim Wheatley, Professor of English, William & Mary



SCOTT MOYERS '90, M.A. '91

VP & Publisher, **Penguin Press, Penguin Random House**

Scott Moyers is the Vice President and Publisher of Penguin Press. A native of Virginia, he received BA and M.A. degrees in English from William & Mary, attended the Radcliffe Publishing Course in 1991, and began his publishing career that year as an editorial assistant at Doubleday in New York. He has also held editorial positions at Scribner and Random House and was the director of the New York office of the Wylie Agency. He lives in Brooklyn with his family.



CARRIE THORNTON '97

SVP & Publisher, **Dey Street Books, HarperCollins**

Carrie Thornton is SVP and Publisher of Dey Street Books. She joined HarperCollins in 2011 after high-level editorial roles at Dutton and Crown in the PRH Group. Thornton specializes in media driven non-fiction publishing, with a focus on memoir, lifestyle, humor, and music. She has acquired and edited dozens of New York Times bestsellers. A few of her titles include *The Storyteller* by rock legend Dave Grohl, *The House of Hidden Meanings* by the Queen of Drag RuPaul, *You Never Know* by beloved actor Tom Selleck, *Paris: The Memoir* by tastemaker Paris Hilton, *The Office BFFs* by The Office co-stars Jenna Fisher and Angela Kinsey, *Open Book* by pop star and fashion mogul Jessica Simpson, *Perversion of Justice* by lauded Miami Herald reporter Julie K. Brown, international blockbuster *Finding Freedom* by royal reporters Omid Scobie & Carolyn Durand, *We're Going to Need More Wine* by actor and activist Gabrielle Union, *Not My Father's Son* by actor and activist Alan Cumming and many more. Her upcoming titles include *Fahrenheit-182* by Mark Hoppus of Blink-182, *Heartbreak is the National Anthem: How Taylor Swift Reinvented Pop Music* by award-winning Rolling Stone journalist Rob Sheffield, and a two-volume memoir from global icon, Cher.

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GARY MORRIS '89

Literary Agent, David Black Literary Agency

Gary Morris has been a literary agent at the David Black agency for almost three decades. He has sold fiction and non-fiction, specializing in working with journalists, academics, politicians, and critics. His clients have won major prizes such as the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Critics Circle Award and have been New York Times and national bestsellers. Several of his books have been adapted for the screen, most notably Lindy West's *Shrill*, which became a series for Hulu starring Aidy Bryant, and the forthcoming feature film *Gonzo Girl*, based on the novel by Cheryl Della Pietra, directed by Patricia Arquette and starring Willem Dafoe and Camilla Morrone.



LEE BOUDREAUX '90

VP & Executive Editor, Doubleday Books, Penguin Random House

Lee Boudreaux, Vice President and Executive Editor, joined Doubleday in 2018 and publishes exclusively fiction, seeking out unexpected stories and original voices. She edited the #1 New York Times bestselling *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus, which has sold over eight million copies worldwide, as well as the bestselling debut *The Most Fun We Ever Had* by Claire Lombardo. Her current list of authors also includes the prize-winning and critically acclaimed Margaret Atwood, Kate Atkinson, Percival Everett and Ron Rash. She edited both of Madeline Miller's million-copy bestsellers *The Song of Achilles* and *Circe* as well as Andrew Sean Greer's Pulitzer Prize winner *Less*. Other works she has edited have been selected for the national book clubs of Oprah Winfrey, Good Morning America, Jenna Bush and Reese Witherspoon, and have won or been nominated for the National Book Award, the Booker Prize, the Orange Prize, and numerous PEN awards.

PANEL: CAREER PATHS AND ROLES IN PUBLISHING

9:30 A.M. | Friday, Nov. 8

Moderator: Scott Moyers '90, M.A. '91, VP & Editor, Penguin Press, Penguin Random House



ERIN CLARKE '98

VP & Publisher, Clarion Books, HarperCollins

Erin Clarke is Vice President and Publisher of Clarion Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Children's Books. Her first job was as a publicity assistant at Random House Adult, where she quickly realized she was not a publicist, and moved to editorial at Knopf Books for Young Readers. After spending over two decades at Knopf, she moved to Clarion in early 2024. Authors with whom she has worked include R.J. Palacio, Markus Zusak, Julia Alvarez, and Louise Erdrich. She received the Ferguson Blair scholarship to attend the Radcliffe Publishing Course in 1998 after graduating with a degree in English and government from William & Mary, where she spent a lot of time in the halls of Tucker and Morton (RIP), along with running many miles on DoG Street.



LIZA BUELL '19

Publicist, Celadon Books, Macmillan

Liza Buell is a publicist at Celadon Books, a division of Macmillan. She works on adult fiction and nonfiction titles, and has collaborated on the publicity campaigns for several *New York Times* bestsellers by authors including Steve Martin, Alex Michaelides, Henry Winkler, and Stephen Colbert. Before joining Celadon, she worked as a publicity assistant for Atria Books at Simon & Schuster.

Raised in a small town in Idaho, Liza moved to Brooklyn, New York after graduating from William & Mary and attending the Columbia Publishing Course. Besides reading, her other interests include long-distance running, travel, and live music.

PANEL: CAREER PATHS AND ROLES IN PUBLISHING

9:30 A.M. | Friday, Nov. 8

Moderator: *Scott Moyers '90, M.A. '91, VP & Editor, Penguin Press, Penguin Random House*



MEILAN SOLLY '18

*Senior Associate Digital Editor: History, **Smithsonian Magazine***

Meilan Solly is a senior associate editor at Smithsonian magazine, where she oversees the online history section. Her work has also appeared in “Kiplinger’s Personal Finance” magazine and “Washington City Paper.”



LAUREN WENGROVITZ '18

*Associate Marketing Manager, **Macmillan***

Lauren Wengrovitz is an associate marketing manager at Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group (MCPG). She currently works on the picture book marketing team, and previously spent two years in account marketing at MCPG. Lauren started her career in publishing at Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) as a marketing assistant, before joining HMH Books for Young Readers (now part of HarperCollins) as a marketing associate, with a focus on school & library marketing. Lauren graduated from William & Mary in 2018 with a self-designed major in Contemporary Publishing and Digital Media. On campus, she was a member of the William & Mary Symphony Orchestra and Alma Mater Productions (AMP).

PANEL: THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

10:45 A.M. | Friday, Nov. 8

Moderator: Carrie Thornton '97, SVP & Publisher, Dey Street Books, HarperCollins



ABIGAIL COVINGTON '10

Contributing Editor, Esquire Magazine

Abigail Covington is a writer and contributing editor at Esquire magazine. Her journalism, essays, and criticism have appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Daily Beast*, *The Washington Post*, *Slate*, *The Nation*, *Them*, *Oxford American*, and *Pitchfork*. Her story for Oxford American's annual music issue, titled "When the Fire Broke Out," was included in The Best American Essays 2016. Longreads selected her feature "What Do We Do With Robert E. Lee?" as a Story of the Week in 2019. Her 2023 investigation into book banning in North Dakota was nominated for an Eli M. Oboler Memorial Award. With a B.A. from William & Mary and an M.A. in Journalism from Columbia University, Abigail was awarded a narrative nonfiction fellowship by the Delacorte Center for Magazine Journalism. She is a member of the NLGJA and the Author's Guild.



TOMMY GILLESPIE '09

Senior Director, Content Production, PBS KIDS

Tommy oversees the PBS KIDS production slate, collaborating with producers, PBS station programmers, and co-production and distribution partners from greenlight through premiere and distribution. He serves as Executive in Charge of signature PBS KIDS series, including *Arthur* and its companion podcast, *Odd Squad*, Peabody-winning *Molly Of Denali*, *Work It Out Wombats!*, and *Alma's Way*. Prior to his current role, Tommy was Director of Children's Programming for PBS, leading broadcast and rollout strategy for the national children's service and launching the 24-hour PBS KIDS channel and livestream in 2017. Tommy won an Emmy in 2020 for his work on the special "PBS KIDS Talk About: Race and Racism." Originally from eastern Kentucky, Tommy joined PBS in 2009 after stints at the U.S. Senate and NPR.



CHRISTINE JOHNSTON '16

Publicity Manager, Penguin Random House

Christine was born and raised in New York and graduated from William & Mary in 2016. She currently works as a Publicity Manager at Penguin Random House, where she has worked at the Crown, Random House, and Penguin Press imprints. While at William & Mary, she was involved with Camp Kesem, Alpha Phi Omega, Pi Beta Phi, and spent most of her time at the Daily Grind coffee shop reading for her English and Psychology majors and hanging out with close friends.

PANEL: THE STATE OF DIVERSITY IN PUBLISHING

1:30 P.M. | Friday, Nov. 8

Moderator: Liz Bellamy '13, Instruction & Research Librarian, William & Mary



EMILY FERNANDEZ '18

*Associate Agent, **The Bright Agency***

Emily Fernandez joined The Bright Agency team in 2022 and has worked in many aspects of the publishing industry, including eBooks, textbooks, medical journals, and trade marketing. She has a B.A. in English and a minor in Business from William & Mary, as well as a graduate certificate from the Denver Publishing Institute. Emily has always aspired to be either an artist or an agent and loves that she can bring her two passions together.



BEZAWIT YOHANNES '18

*Assistant Marketing Manager, **Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing***

Bezi Yohannes currently works as Assistant Marketing Manager for Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, where she organizes marketing and advertising campaigns for board books, chapter books, middle grade and young adult novels such as the bestselling and award-winning *Legendborn Cycle* series by Tracy Deonn. Previously, she was the Digital Marketing Assistant at Penguin Random House, creating content across Penguin Young Readers social channels. She received her B.A. in English and Medieval & Renaissance Studies from William & Mary, and graduated from Georgetown University in 2020 with her M.A. after writing her thesis on the "colorblind" casting of Black women in fantasy media. She also received her certification in publishing from the Denver Publishing Institute. Her #bookstagram platform highlights exciting Black speculative fiction and has over 17K followers, and she has been featured on Goodreads Spotlight, NetGalley's "20 Black Women To Follow on Bookstagram," and The Stripe's "18 Cool Women in Publishing to Follow." You can follow her on Instagram and X @beingabookwyrms promoting new book releases by Black authors, discussing the latest fantasy adaptations, and re-watching her favorite early 2000s media.

PANEL: THE STATE OF DIVERSITY IN PUBLISHING

1:30 P.M. | Friday, Nov. 8

Moderator: Liz Bellamy '13, Instruction & Research Librarian, William & Mary



ADDIE TSAI

Assistant Teaching Professor of English, William & Mary

Addie is a writer and artist of color, who lives in Richmond, Virginia and teaches Creative Writing at William & Mary, after teaching and living in Houston their entire life. Addie earned a Master of Fine Arts from the MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College and a Ph.D in Dance from Texas Woman's University. They authored the queer Asian young adult novel *Dear Twin* and the adult queer biracial Asian non-binary retelling of Frankenstein, *Unwieldy Creatures*. They are a Fiction co-Editor and editor of Features & Reviews at "Anomaly," as well as a Founding Editor and Editor in Chief at "just femme & dandy." Addie has sensitivity read for Penguin Random House, HarperCollins, and Macmillan, as well as independent authors, and offers freelance publicity and editorial services for marginalized writers.



KAYLA SHARPE '17

Deputy Newsletter Team Leader, Bloomberg Industry Group

Kayla N. Sharpe is a digital journalist based in the Washington D.C. area. She is the Deputy Newsletter Team Leader at Bloomberg Industry Group overseeing products across law, government, and tax. She previously worked as an Associate Editor at Axios – where she oversaw reporters in Washington D.C., Atlanta, Dallas, Charlotte, Philadelphia, and Twin Cities – at POLITICO as Engagement Editor for Subscriber Strategy and as a Digital Producer, and at the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting supporting student and freelance journalists covering under-reported global issues.

Kayla graduated from William & Mary in 2017 with a degree in Film & Media and American Studies and served as the Digital Media Editor for the campus newspaper, *The Flat Hat*. Her work has been recognized by the Society of Professional Journalists, receiving their 2017 Regional Mark of Excellence Award for In-Depth Reporting, and William & Mary, receiving their 2016 Rex Smith Journalism Award.

Kayla is proud to be an engaged William & Mary alumna and currently serves as the Co-Chair of the Young Guard Alumni Council and as the Vice Chair for the William & Mary Washington Center Advisory Board.

PANEL: YOUNG ALUMNI IN PUBLISHING: HOW TO BREAK INTO THE INDUSTRY

2:45 P.M. | Friday, Nov. 8

Moderator: *Bezi Yohannes '18, Assistant Marketing Manager, Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing*



LAUREN WILSON '22

Associate Publicist, Bloomsbury

Lauren Wilson is an associate publicist at Bloomsbury USA in the adult trade division. She graduated from William & Mary in 2022 with a B.A. in English Literature and a minor in creative writing. A Ferguson Blair Publishing Scholarship recipient, she completed the Columbia Publishing Course in New York. At William & Mary, she was a peer consultant at the Writing and Communication Center and an editor at The Gallery.



AZRAF KHAN '23

Editorial Assistant, Penguin Random House

Azraf Khan (they/them) is an Editorial Assistant at Random House, where they work on both fiction and non-fiction. Across these categories, they are looking for books that can showcase the depths of characters' interiority, explore individual agency, and present clear arguments about power systems—such as gender, sexuality, race, and empire—and the intersections between them. Before joining Random House in 2023, they interned at Aevitas Creative Management. Azraf majored in Government at William & Mary, where they worked at the Admissions Office and were a member of Someone You Know and 7th Grade Sketch Comedy.



STEPHEN RYAN '19

Associate Manager, Publishing, Penguin Random House

Stephen Ryan graduated from the St. Andrews William & Mary Joint Degree Programme with an English major and Classics minor in 2019. Afterwards, he attended the Columbia Publishing Course UK at the University of Oxford. He was then hired as a publishing assistant at Penguin Random House where he has worked for almost five years now. His current title is Associate Manager, Publishing, and his role includes working with international publishers who are publishing in tandem with the U.S. editions of PRH titles, overseeing the Print on Demand program within the Penguin Publishing Group, and helping to manage the F+W Books list, a group of instructional arts and crafts books that PRH acquired in 2019. He also supports the Executive Vice President, Publishing Management who oversees the Bookmaking teams (Managing Editorial, Production, Production Editorial, and Interior Design) across PRH.

Notes



Notes



*Thank you for
attending!*

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