

A Day of Discussion on **Extreme Weather and Inequality**



September 28, 2017, after Hurricane Harvey. AP Photo/David Goldman

What do Southeast Texans think? And what do we do?

Beaumont—Port Arthur—Jefferson County

Saturday, November 5, 2022

Mary and John Gray Library, 8th floor, Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas



Organized by
the Ancient to
the Future Project
and hosted by

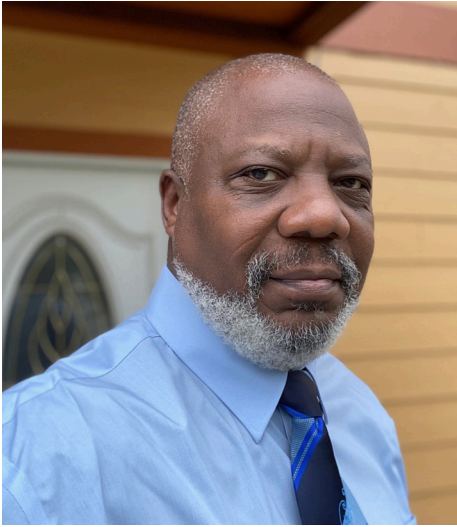


The WiFi name is "LUEvents" and there is no password.

Adjustments to the program

John Beard will move from the 2:15-3:30 pm panel to the 12:45-2 pm panel, "African American and Latinx Inequality."

Chris Jones and Hilton Kelley will join the 2:15-3:30 panel, "Extreme Weather." Their photos and bios are below.



Prior to starting his environmental justice journey, **Hilton Kelley** was in the U.S. Navy for six years. He was awarded Sailor of the Month aboard the USS Roanoke and honorably discharged in 1986. Mr. Kelley then pursued his passion in film and television including *Dr. Doolittle*, *Bicentennial Man*, TV and musicals, one of which he wrote. Ten years later, a disheartening trip home to Port Arthur inspired him to act. He founded Community In-Power and Development Association Incorporated (CIDA). Hilton and CIDA began to successfully challenge environmen-

tal violations of local plants, collecting scientific emissions data and educating Port Arthurites about the toxic burden on them. This has taken him and CIDA abroad to testify, lecture, organize, and protest. In 2011 Hilton was awarded the "Green Nobel"—the Goldman Environmental Prize—for reducing toxins put out by Port Arthur refineries. And he has continued in the arts: album producer, poet, and autobiographer (*A Lethal Dose of Smoke and Mirrors*).

Chris "Unc" Jones: A 42-year-old Beaumont, settled here age 9 with his family from Jennings, LA. Educated at Paul Laurence Dunbar, Ogden, Crockett, Central Ninth, Central Senior High School, Lamar U, and elsewhere. A proud U.S. Army veteran, medically discharged 2002, returned home, got involved in his neighborhood, the greater community, and later local politics. CEO/Founder of Diadem Enterprise (commercial and residential consulting and construction). BISD volunteer; mentored,



tutored, trained, and met the needs of many youths who have graduated and gone on to find their purpose. Ran for mayor 2011 to activate some of the same young people: "You too can be involved in your government!" For a decade brought forth issues plaguing the city and communities like his for years. Now regrouping South End Charlton-Pollard Greater Historic Community Association, shedding light on the history of the real South End to positively exploit its place in Beaumont.

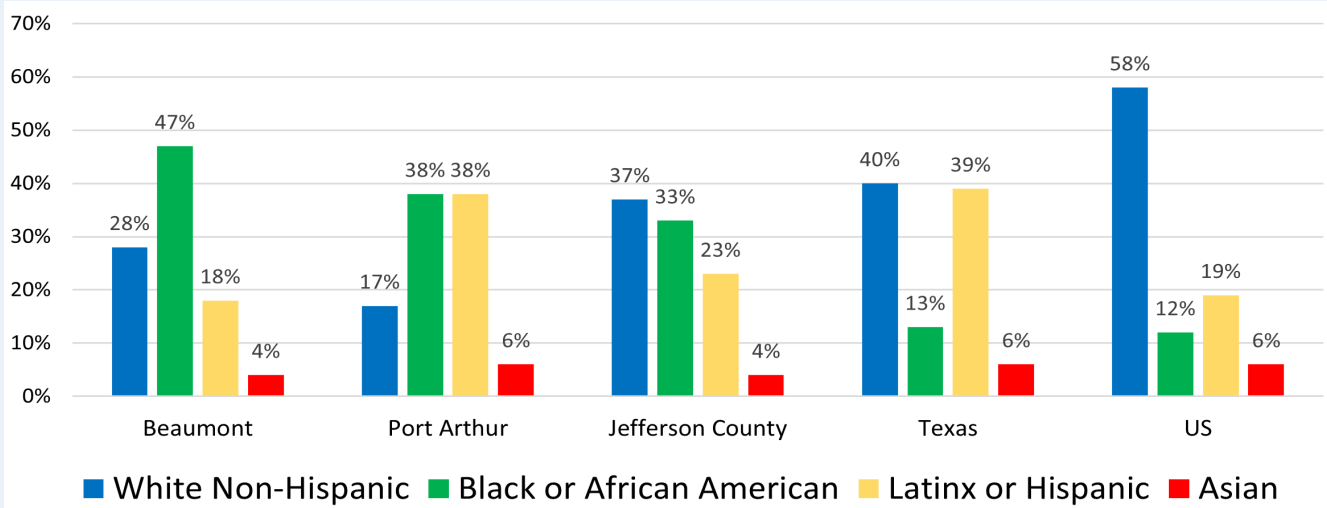


The Center for History and Culture acknowledges that Lamar University is located on the traditional territory of the Atakapa-Ishak Nation, and we recognize that the region our university serves includes the homelands of the Akokisa, Bidai, Karankawa, Alabama-Coushatta, and other nations. We further acknowledge that, as president of the Republic of Texas, Mirabeau B. Lamar, the namesake of our university, oversaw the forced removal of Caddo, Cherokee, Comanche, Delaware, Kickapoo, Shawnee, and other peoples from their homes. We affirm and respect tribal sovereignty in this land and in all territories.

A man believed to be Atakapa, in winter. Painted in 1735 by Alexandre de Batz. Image courtesy of Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University.

Beaumont, Port Arthur, and Jefferson County By the numbers*

Who are we? These population numbers are a foundation for thinking about the local area.



	Beaumont	Port Arthur	Jefferson County	Texas	US
Population	115,000	56,000	257,000	30 million	331 million
Median household income**	\$48,168	\$37,794	\$50,840	\$63,826	\$70,784
People in poverty	19%	27%	18%	14%	12%

*U.S. Census 2020. **Half of households are below this number and half above.

9:15-10:30 History

- Alex Perez/Strong Wind, Karankawa Kadla tribal historian and cultural advisor
- Judy Linsley, historian
- David Willard, Middle School Dean of Students, All Saints Episcopal School and Commissioner, Port of Beaumont
- Jim Sanderson, novelist and professor and chair of the English department, Lamar
- Kate Williams, chair

10:30-10:45 Break

10:45-12:00 Economic & Social Inequality

- Jeff Darby, Texas AFL-CIO Vice President, District Two
- Paula O'Neal, recently retired executive director, Some Other Place
- Fred Vernon, founder, KLV Enterprises
- Barbara Azalia Wilson, Owner, BAW Resale
- Dave Williams, Chair

12:00-12:45 Lunch

12:45-2:00 African American & Latinx Inequality

- Jesse Garcia, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Lamar
- Vernon Durden, 100 Black Men of Beaumont
- Michael Cooper, NAACP
- Abdul Alkalimat, chair

2:00-2:15 Break

2:15-3:30 Extreme Weather

- John Beard, Port Arthur Community Action Network (PACAN)
- Ellen Buchanan, Big Thicket National Heritage Trust
- Chanelle Stigger, Meteorologist, National Weather Service, Lake Charles, LA
- Margot Gage Witvliet, chair

3:30-3:45 Break

3:45-5:00 The Future

- Bryan Gross, United Steelworkers
- Jimmy Bryan, professor of history and director of the Center for History and Culture, Lamar
- Kaitlin Bain, *The Beaumont Enterprise*
- Dave Williams, *Ancient to the Future*
- Kate Williams, Chair

9:00-9:15

Welcome

Dann Brown, Lamar University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Chris Durio, Beaumont Mayor Pro Tem

Dave Williams, Ancient to the Future

Jimmy Bryan, Director of the Center for History and Culture at Lamar

Welcome to this Day of Discussion on Extreme Weather and Inequality!

Beaumont and Port Arthur are majority Black-and-Brown cities with high levels of inequality. The same pattern holds in Jefferson County. It's a global petrochemical hub with attendant environmental impacts. It's got a strong culture and identity. And it's facing heavy storms and too much water.

The Ancient to the Future project works to combine and amplify local voices. The Lamar University Center for History and Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast works on telling local history and supporting local culture. We think the speakers today will make new connections and generate new ideas to address both inequality and extreme weather.

So please listen, speak up, and learn!

9:15-10:30

History

Alex Perez/Strong Wind, Karankawa Kadla tribal historian and cultural advisor

Judy Linsley, historian and former director of the Center for History and Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast

David Willard, Middle School Dean of Students, All Saints Episcopal School, and Commissioner, Port of Beaumont

Jim Sanderson, novelist and Professor and Chair of the English department, Lamar

Kate Williams, (Chair), Ancient to the Future

For perhaps 15,000 years, Indigenous people lived in and near what became Beaumont. European arrivals then forcibly removed them to take control of the land. So began a colonial period based on the slavery of African people. After the Civil War, acres and acres of timber was harvested and sold through Beaumont; but the Spindletop oil discovery really launched Beaumont's industrial period. Jobs and companies have fled, as across the US, so that we can see a post-industrial Beaumont, even as oil petrochemical refining and shipping continue.

1. What are the most important historical events that define Beaumont, the history all of us should know?
2. What is new in 21st century Beaumont and what continues from the past?
3. Do we know the real history of Beaumont?

10:45-12:00

Economic & Social Inequality

Jeff Darby, Texas AFL-CIO Vice President, District Two

Paula O'Neal, recently retired executive director, Some Other Place

Fred Vernon, II, Founder, KLV Enterprises

Barbara Azalia Wilson, Owner, BAW Resale

Dave Williams, (Chair), Ancient to the Future

The basis of economic life is the human labor that produces goods and services, so the majority of people in and around Beaumont are workers who live on wages. But almost half the population is living from paycheck to paycheck or are otherwise trapped in poverty. This economic inequality in society produces multiple forms of social inequality. As inequality increases, a social crisis begins to tear society apart. The question is, can public and private policy end this?

1. What are the differences between rich and poor in Beaumont?
2. Does Beaumont pay fair taxes?
3. Are trade unions respected in Beaumont, and do they represent all workers?

12:45-2:00

African American & Latinx Inequality

Jesse Garcia, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Lamar

Vernon Durden, 100 Black Men of Beaumont

Michael Cooper, NAACP

Abdul Alkalimat, (Chair), Ancient to the Future

Beaumont and Port Arthur are both majority African American/Latinx cities. This challenges the local, regional, and national legacy of racism and colonization. Quality of life depends on confronting and ending this legacy. This includes reducing inequality in all its forms. Every institution can take stock of how it has benefited from this legacy and what it can do. Black and Latinx people are responsible to be change makers as well. The goal is to repair the structural inequality of the past so that the future opens a good life for all.

1. How do we contend with racism in Jefferson County?
2. What needs to be done to begin a process of change?
3. Are Black and Latinos being listened to?

2:15-3:30

Extreme Weather

John Beard, Port Arthur Community Action Network (PACAN)

Ellen Buchanan, Big Thicket National Heritage Trust

Chanelle Stigger, Meteorologist, National Weather Service, Lake Charles, LA

Margot Gage Witvliet, (Chair), Center for History and Culture at Lamar

Weather has become more extreme. Storms are bigger and flooding more devastating. This impacts everyone. Working class and poor people get hit harder: health, housing, insurance, jobs. “Get you an insurance policy and a boat” can only work for some and for so long. Half the year spent in dread—living through a real disaster every so often—takes a toll on everyone, especially children and elders.

1. What is the weather telling us?
2. What should we expect?
3. ExxonMobil raised part of its refinery 7 feet; what should the rest of us do?

3:45-5:00

Future

Bryan Gross, United Steelworkers

Jimmy Bryan, Professor of History and Director of the Center for History and Culture, Lamar

Kaitlin Bain, *The Beaumont Enterprise*

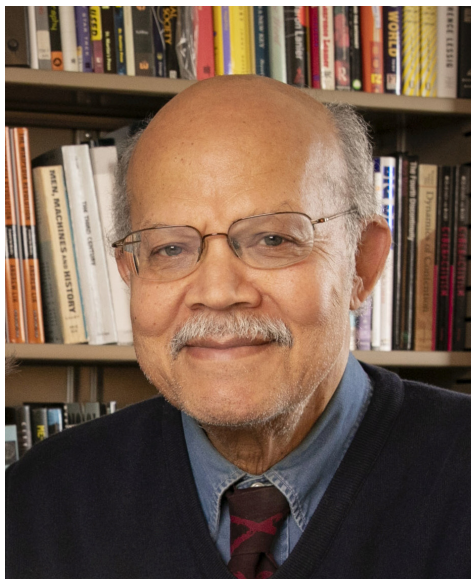
Dave Williams, Ancient to the Future

Kate Williams, (Chair), Ancient to the Future

The greatest test for everyone is to develop a vision of the future we want to live in, and the paths to make it so. A community-wide process of sharing knowledge, working together by sharing resources, can build a culture of community solidarity. The future we want will require changing how we live today, as individual families, as governmental agencies, as non-profits, businesses and corporations, especially the refineries. Health and safety have to be our top priorities, while including all the interests that help to sustain us all. We are the possibility for a sustainable future.

1. How can we decide what kind of future we want to have?
2. Can Beaumont survive the coming weather challenges?
3. Who else do we need to hear from on this?

Panelists and Chairs



Abdul Alkalimat is Emeritus Professor of African American Studies and Information Science at the University of Illinois. His background reflects decades of work in the social justice movement in civil rights, electoral politics, and global struggles to end colonialism. He wrote the first textbook in the academic field of African American Studies that is now on display at the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC. His recent books are *The History of Black Studies* (2021) and *The Future of Black Studies* (2022). He is an active part of Ancient to the Future.

Kaitlin Bain is the editor of *The Beaumont Enterprise* newspaper in Southeast Texas. A nearly lifelong Gulf Coast resident with stints in West Texas and Central Washington, Kaitlin has seen her fair share of extreme weather events.

From hurricanes to drought to wildfires that span hundreds of thousands of acres, much of her news coverage has focused on these events and their long-ranging community impact. Some of her coverage or that which she's led has involved the five-year recovery from Tropical Storm Harvey, leading *The Enterprise's* breaking news coverage of Tropical Depression Imelda, the pitfalls of state and federal programs when rebuilding from a storm and the mental health impacts of living in a near-constant state of recovery. Kaitlin was named Texas' Star Reporter of the Year in *The Enterprise's* circulation class in 2020 and now in her leadership role has created one of the first environmental reporter positions at a newspaper of this size. She's also created a "Hurricane Central" web portal to allow all Southeast Texas residents to stay up-



to-date on all things tropical weather.

John Beard, Jr., is the Founder, Chairman, CEO of Port Arthur Community Action Network. After working in the oil industry for 38 years, Beard turned to holding the industry accountable and became a community ad-



vocate in his hometown of Port Arthur, Texas. He founded the Port Arthur Community Action Network to fight for health and safety protections in an area teeming with refineries, export terminals, petrochemical plants ... and cancer. In the past year, Beard has emerged as an environmental justice leader on the national and world stage. He is a recipient of the 2021 Rose Bratz Award from the Center for Biological Diversity and the Community Sentinel Award from the Halt the Harm Network. A member of the Region 5 Flood Planning Group for the Neches River area ... one of the frontline

leaders of October's historic Peoples Versus Fossil Fuels week of action in DC ... a keynote speaker at Seventh Generation's 2022 corporate assembly ... spoke on petrochemical populations at Bennington College ... met with Congresspeople during the "No More Sacrifice Zones; STOP MVP!" rally which led to the successful removal of Manchin's permitting provisions from the 2022 budget bill.



Dann Brown is Lamar University's Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, having come to Lamar in 2020 as Associate Provost of Academic Affairs. Before that, Brown served as dean of University College at Texas State University. He has also researched the effects of high-impact practices on student success in college, serving as principal investigator on five federally funded programs while at Texas State with a combined grant portfolio of nearly \$15,000,000. Earlier, Brown served as dean of

the University at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. There he authored and served as principal investigator on three Title V / CCRAA Hispanic Serving Institutions grant projects.

Jimmy L. Bryan Jr. is a professor of history at Lamar and director of its Center for History and Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast. He is the author of *The American Elsewhere: Adventure and Manliness in the Age of Expansion* (Kansas, 2017) and editor of *Inventing Destiny: Cultural Explorations of US Expansion* (Kansas, 2019) and *The Martial Imagination: Cultural Aspects of American Warfare* (Texas A&M, 2013).



Ellen Buchanan grew up and attended schools in Silsbee, then graduated from Texas A & M University (BS in Recreation and Parks). She retired from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department/State Parks in 2013 after 32 years caring for iconic Texas cultural and natural resources. Ellen currently serves as Presi-

dent of the Big Thicket Natural Heritage Trust, a local non-profit land trust that conserves, protects and restores the natural, ecological, historic, and cultural resources located in the Big Thicket. This means advocacy, conservation projects and growing the preserve's boundary. Ellen also serves as Chair of the Golden Triangle Sierra Club Group and the Texas Black Bear Alliance and represents environmental interests on the Tex-



as Water Development Board Neches River Flood Planning Group. Ellen is a Past President of the Big Thicket Association and serves on the Big Thicket Biosphere Reserve Board. Interests include conserving Texas' resources for this and future generations and keeping Texas, Texas.

Rev. Michael Cooper earned a bachelor's degree in business with a minor in social work and a master's degree in psychology, both from Lamar. He attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is founder and pastor of The Church of I Am ... President of



Man 2 Man Mentor program ... President of the Get On The Bus With Us all-youth program ... Former Executive Manager at Kinsel ... Former President of Southeast Texas Toyota Dealers ... Current Board Member of Champion Oaks Ranch Youth Mentor Group ... 2018 candidate for Lt. Governor and 2020 candidate for US Senate ... Currently a candidate for Governor of Texas and President of the Beaumont Chapter NAACP.



Jeff Darby is a lifelong resident of Jefferson County, Texas and a 1988 graduate of Lamar University (BA in History with a minor in French). He has 33 years' experience enforcing labor laws in Southeast Texas.

For the past 25 years, Darby has been an officer in many labor organizations at the local, regional, and national levels: American Federation of Government Employees: President of Local 2139 and Secretary of National Council 73 ... Texas AFL-CIO: Vice President ... and Sabine Area Central Labor Council (SACLC), AFL-CIO: Delegate, Vice President, and President. Darby has been President of the SACLC since 2019, and for 20 years before that served as vice president. The SACLC is the voice of the AFL-CIO in eight Southeast Texas counties, including Jefferson and Orange.



Vernon Durden was born in Beaumont and graduated from Hebert High School. He holds bachelor's and associate degrees from Lamar University with concentrations in business. He retired from ExxonMobil after 33 years of service. He is today president and CEO of Training & Diversified Development, LLC, consulting. Vernon is past president of the Southeast Texas Food Bank ... president emeritus of 100 Black Men of Greater Beaumont ... member

of the executive board of 100 Black Men of America ... past president of the alumni board of Lamar ... and has received numerous awards as a board member of United Way, IEA, Diversity S.E. Texas and the Southeast Texas Food Bank. He mentors at BISD and Lamar and is an avid traveler. He is a 2011 Distinguished Lamar Alumni, the University's highest award. He is a trustee of the Lamar Foundation which manages and oversees an \$88 million budget. And he is the president of the JCARB recently appointed by a district judge to oversee a \$25 billion budget to support Jefferson County.

For 31 years, **Chris Durio** served Beaumont as a fire fighter, retiring with the rank of Captain. On May 11, 2021, he was sworn in as City Council member for Ward 4, where he has lived for most of his life.



On July 26, 2022, Mr. Durio was elected as Mayor Pro Tem of the City of Beaumont, performing the duties of the mayor in her absence. Chris has a passion for our community and uses his leadership skills to

advance Beaumont and make it an even better place to live and work. Before retiring from the Beaumont Fire Department in 2017, Chris served for over 15 years on the IAFF 399 executive board. Chris Durio graduated from Hebert High School in 1980 and attended Lamar University. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1980 to 1985.



Dr. Margot Gage Witvliet serves this year as Interim Assistant Director of the Center for History and Culture at Lamar. She is a social epidemiologist, assistant professor in the Sociology Department, and Advisory Board member for the Center. Dr. Gage Witvliet earned her PhD in social epidemiology and public health from the University of Amsterdam/Amsterdam Medical Center and held post-doctorate fellowships there and at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. She has written over 17 peer-reviewed journal publications and has over 100 citations. She was invited to address President Biden's COVID-19 Task Force Team and recognized by Health magazine as one of the seven African

American women unsung heroes of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Gage Witvliet has been featured in People, Washington Post, NY Times Magazine, and ABC News for her long COVID advocacy work. She has organized several programs at Lamar, most recently "Campus and Community Violence: Exploring Strategies to Reduce Crime in Beaumont." She teaches courses in research methods, epidemiology and global health, global health disparity, medical cannabis, recognizing bias in healthcare, social psychology and human interaction, sociology of education, human rights and civic life.

Jesse Garcia earned his doctoral degree from Texas A&M



in sociology with specializations and research in sociological theory, philosophy, criminology, race/ethnic relations, Immigration, critical methods and education.

Bryan Gross Born and Raised in Orange, Texas. Currently live in Orangefield, Texas. Married to Gina. Two children, Marissa and Ryan. Two associate degrees from Lamar Institute of Technology



(Advanced Engine Technology and Machining Technology). Currently attending the USW Leadership Scholarship Program. Worked 6+ years as a heavy equipment/truck mechanic and 16+ years as a machinist at a Local Oil Refinery; since 2021 serves as United Steelworkers International Staff Representative. Previous USW positions include Committee member, Committee Chair, Committee Vice President, Local 13-423 Executive Board - Trustee, USW District 13 Vice President for Texas, and USW National Oil Bargaining Program Region E Alternate.

Historian **Judith W. Linsley** has deep roots in Southeast Texas. She was formerly Curator of Interpretation and Education at the McFaddin-Ward House Museum and Director of the Center for History and Culture at Lamar University. She has authored or co-authored numerous historical works, including the prize-winning *Giant Under the Hill: A History of the Spindletop Oil Discovery* and *Charlton-Pollard: The Story*

of a Neighborhood, a history of Beaumont's oldest African American neighborhood. Her interests are in 19th- and ear-



ly 20th-century Texas history, focusing on African Americans and women. She is currently completing a Centennial history of Lamar University.



Paula O'Neal is a native Beaumont and Texan: Attended Beaumont schools K through 12, South Park High School '65, Lamar '69 BA in Government and '79 M.Ed. in Guidance/Counseling, Post

Graduate work at Sam Houston University, Criminal Justice. Worked in social service for the Texas Department of Public Welfare 1969-72. Substitute Teacher 1972-79. Owner of That's Cute Gift Shop 1979-1983. Director of Some Other Place from 1983 until retiring on October 1, 2022. Her past and present volunteering covers a wide range of organizations and causes, just a few of which are Calder Baptist Church deacon, past Sunday School teacher, Sunday School Class officer, and various chairperson positions/committee member positions ... Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters past secretary ... and Beaumont Community Players volunteer usher. This has come with many special recognitions from 1991 to 2022.



My name is **Alexander Joseph Perez. Strong Wind, or Wol'Bah**, is my Karankawa *emnata*, or name. My family has existed on the coast of Texas from before the Spanish arrival. I am a council member, linguist and cultural and spiritual advisor of the Karankawa

Kadla Tribe of Texas. I'm a multi instrumentalist, inventor, singer, songwriter and author. I'm also a professional tradesman and amateur luthier. I enjoy walks in the park with my poodle :) except I'm the only one walking because she expects to be carried.



Jim Sanderson has published a mystery/crime series of novels involving West Texas and San Antonio: *El Camino del Rio*, *La Mordida*, *Safe Delivery*, and *Dolph's Team*. Brash Books, a unique publisher of new and classic out-of-print mysteries, republished the first three of these novels and included those three in one digital volume. In addition, he has published four other novels (*Nothing to Lose*-a literary mystery, *Nevin's History*-an historical novel, and *Hill Country Property*-a literary novel, *Gambled Dreams*-a literary noir); three short story collections (*Semi-Private Rooms*, *Faded Love*, and *Trashy Behavior*); one essay collection (*A West Texas Soapbox*); two textbooks (*Some Ways of Writing* and *Sanderson's Fiction Writing*

Manual), and over eighty short stories, essays, or scholarly articles. Most of his fiction takes place south of a line drawn from Lubbock to Beaumont. For a living, he is a professor of English and Chair at Lamar University.



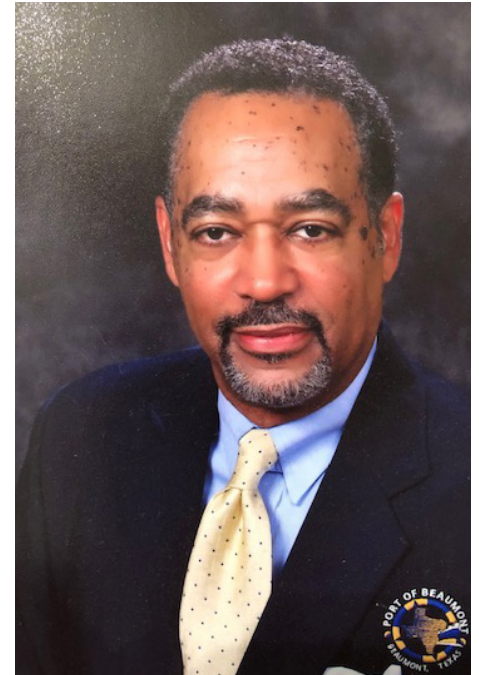
Chanelle Stigger is a 28-year-old meteorologist with close to 4 years experience working with NWS Lake Charles. Graduated from North Carolina A&T State University in Dec 2016. Majored in Atmospheric Sciences and Meteorology; double minored in Physics and Applied Mathematics. Has a passion for outreach, especially getting children interested in science. Chanelle is from Las Vegas (age 13-23 not including college out of state) and Atlanta (age 2-12). International traveler. Can hold a conversation in a few different languages. Lived and worked in Japan between graduation and getting into the Weather Service. First year primary school football official. 2nd LT in Civil Air Patrol. Alto saxophonist.

Fred R. Vernon, II, graduated from Port Arthur Memorial High School '06, Lamar State College Port Arthur '10, Lamar University B.A. Accounting '12, and MBA and Master of Science in Accounting '13. He earned a 2 year pipe welding certification from the Lamar Institute of Technology/Safety Star Industrial Co-Op program and a CDL in 2014. Fred is the founder and CEO of KLV Ventures Inc., a transportation

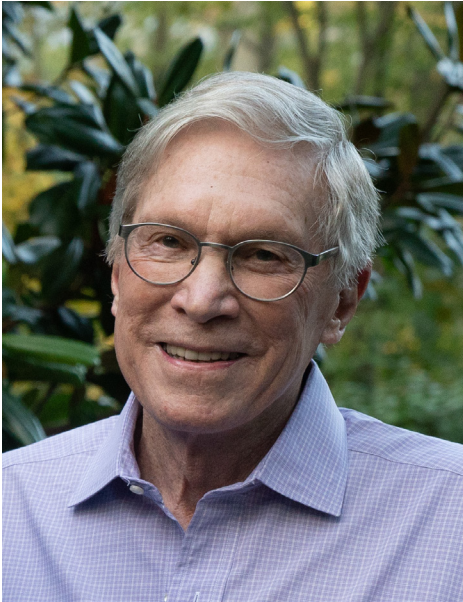


and logistics company that specializes in mid to last-mile delivery with a unique focus in transporting industrial applications and parcel mail. It has leased yards and offices in Port Arthur, Beaumont, and Houston. KLV and its affiliates have a fleet of over 100 units and a staff of 150 across three states. He established a Lamar endowment in honor of his mother, and this is just one of his civic activities.

David Willard is an award-winning educator, author, editor, and community servant. In his nearly 30-year career in education, he has worked in some of the nation's finest schools and currently serves as Middle School Dean



of Students at All Saints Episcopal School in Beaumont. In 2019, Dr. Willard was elected Commissioner At-Large for the Port of Beaumont. He also serves on the CHRISTUS Southeast Texas Health System Regional Board of Directors, Vice-Chair of Green Dot Public Schools of Southeast Texas Board of Directors, the Symphony of Southeast Texas Board of Directors, Beaumont Main Street Board of Directors, and Nutrition & Services for Seniors Board of Directors, among others. He strives to follow in the footsteps of his forebears as an advocate for Beaumont.



Dave Williams was born in Beaumont, TX, and grew up and attended public schools in Austin. He graduated from the University of Texas, served in the U.S. Navy, worked as an engineer at Esso's Baton Rouge refinery, and earned an MBA at Harvard Business School. His career in investment management spanned forty years on Wall Street. He has two daughters, Kate Hardin and Mary Vaughn. He and his wife live in Greenwich, CT and New York City, and he helped start Ancient to the Future.



Kate Williams is an associate professor at the School of Information Sciences at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign. I educate future librarians and study community in the digital age, which includes the challenge of inequality. When my students and I learned about climate librarianship, we saw a way to get active ahead of weather disasters to come. In Ancient to the Future I helped invent a project to listen to people across a community and foster sharing, clarity, and solutions. My family tree includes a Neches Lumber manager, a Magnolia Oil chemical engineer, and a Tyrrell Public librarian who was my grandmother Minnie Williams.



BAW stands for **Barbara Azalia Wilson** as well as Beaumont Antique Warehouse. Wilson is the owner of one of the largest antique shops in Southeast Texas. Originally from Miami, Florida, Wilson moved to Texas in 2012. She graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in Graphic Design and Art Education and taught art for 20 years in the private and public sector.



AF

The Ancient to the Future Project (<http://ancienttothefuture.org/>) works to tackle inequality and climate crisis by combining and amplifying local voices. This means discussions, publications, and where possible, art. Our first locale is Beaumont, Texas. Questions? Email Kate Williams at katewill@illinois.edu

Thanks to the Lamar University IT/Media Services, the Day of Discussion is being streamed and session videos will be posted online at our website.



Founded in 2016 by Dr. Mary Scheer as one of Lamar University’s “Visionary Initiatives,” the Center for History and Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast serves the diverse constituencies of Lamar University students and faculty, the communities of Southeast Texas and the greater Gulf Coast, and the scholars and creatives who explore the region’s past and present. The Center promotes the study of these regions with a commitment to multicultural, interdisciplinary, collaborative, and community-focused projects. To achieve these goals, the Center hosts programs that highlight the work of artists, authors, scholars, community leaders, and others who represent varied specializations and backgrounds. It also awards two annual book prizes and funds original research, creativity, and community outreach through its fellowship program.

For more information or to get involved contact center director Jimmy Bryan at jimmy.bryan@lamar.edu





Residing on the imperiled coast and within a global hub of petrochemical production, the region's diverse and economically vulnerable population will bear a disproportionate burden. This conference brings together community leaders, business members, scholars, and other stakeholders who seek to amplify local voices and advance solutions toward a sustainable and equitable future.