



2021 Annual Conference

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Tennessee
Association of
Museums

ReVISION

March 17-19
Online Statewide

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60th Annual Conference

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Online for the
first TAM time!

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hashtags...



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too!

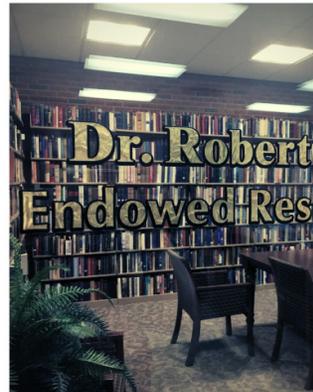
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FROM THE TAM PRESIDENT



Welcome to the 60th Annual Conference of the Tennessee Association of Museums (TAM). On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for participating in this year's conference. Whether you are a long-standing member, a sponsor, vendor, intern, emerging professional, donor, program partner, volunteer, or brand new member, **you are valued by this organization.** The work you do in your communities is important to the well-being and sustainability of your neighborhoods, and that has never been more evident than now. We are here to support the work of your institution and your individual growth.

For many years, I worked alongside a camp dean who so frequently began his sentences with, "Now we are going to do things . . ." that the campers would finish for him with a roaring rendition of "a little bit differently!" Throughout 2020, that was everyone's mantra. Our theme this year, "ReVision," stems from two things. First, TAM's theme for last year was "Museums in Focus," but the pandemic wave reached Tennessee one week before the conference was to open. We wanted to honor that theme but not reuse it. Second, last year would have been TAM's 60th conference; so 2021 is TAM's 61st year but 60th conference. Words such as pivot and unprecedented have been overused, but they are still very relevant. Museum staffs are working to revise their operations and plans but still uphold their missions. The TAM Board had hoped for at least a hybrid model for this year's conference, but, alas, that was not possible. They have, however, built a wonderful itinerary for you to enjoy, learn, and remember. The hope is that you will fully engage with old friends, colleagues, and new friends as we learn about public engagement from the speakers and presenters.

The storm of 2020 brought with it some silver linings which many of you have polished to a beautiful sheen. We are excited that the session presenters will be sharing their journeys and successes with all of us. The plenary session will address how the museum field has been impacted by the movements of 2020, and the keynote speaker will address the impact of COVID-19 on museum visitation. Many museums are still closed and figuring out how to reopen; the conference is a great source of information and ideas.

Take a look at the Board of Directors listed in this program, and reach out to one in your region to find out how to become active in TAM or to give us suggestions on how we could better serve you.

I want to take this moment to thank the TAM Board, our State Coordinator, committee members, and the Past Presidents for their diligence, ideas, and support. They have been meeting and working all year to plan and build this conference for you. Some new committees were needed and formed, and TAM members stepped up to fill each need. Without everyone pulling together and working tirelessly, we would not have been able to hold a virtual conference. Thank you to each one of you.

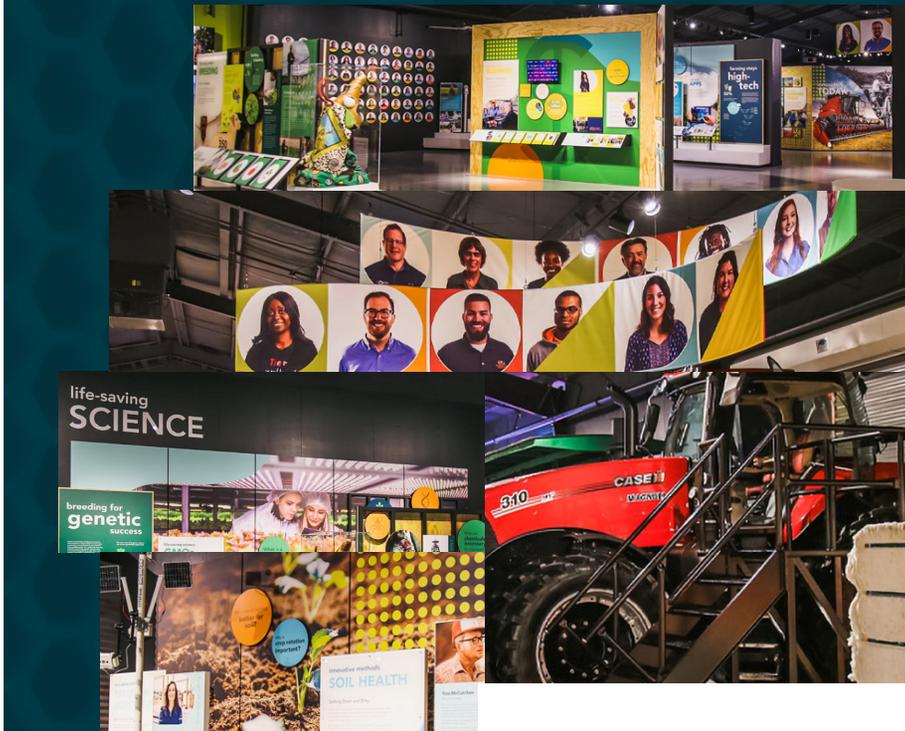
Together, we can pivot with the grace of an accomplished dancer. Let's go forward with the knowledge and experience of the past but with strength that comes from renewed vision—ReVision.



Polly Brasher

President, Tennessee Association of Museums
Discovery Park of America

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2021 CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE

(All times are Central)

WEDNESDAY MARCH 17

9:00 am–10:00 am **Welcome, Orientation, and TAM Business Meeting**

10:15 am–11:15 am **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

- > Creating Community Partnerships During a Pandemic
- > Interpreting the Layers of History

12:30 pm–1:30 pm **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

- > A Tale of One State: Analyzing the Tennessee State Museum's New Collection Portal
- > Museums to Go: Reimagining Content

2:00 pm–3:00 pm **PLENARY SESSION:
Business as Unusual: How Do We Move On From 2020?**

4:00pm **TAM Awards of Excellence**

Thursday March 18

9:00 am–10:00 am **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

- > Restructuring the Educational Components
- > Revise for the Future: How Past Best Practices Translate Today

10:30 am–11:30 am **KEYNOTE ADDRESS : Susie Wilkening, Susie Wilkening,**

11:45 am–12:15 pm **Education Breakout Session**

12:30 pm–1:30 pm **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

- > Hands-On Learning in a Hands-Off World
- > REVISION: CEO/Executive Directors Roundtable

2:00 pm–3:00 pm **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

- > Hope for the Best, Prepare for the Worst: Disaster Preparedness at Cultural Institutions
- > Hosting Museum Internships: The Integration of Virtual Programming

6:00 pm **TAM Trivia Night**

Friday March 19

9:00 am–10:00 am **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

- > Creating Collaborative Collections and Community Spaces: How State Organizations Can Create Meaningful Partnerships During Difficult Times
- > Strategic Planning in Uncertain Times

10:30 am–11:30 am **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

- > A Rising Tide of History: Collaboration Between Museums, Libraries, and Municipalities
- > Responsive Programming and Adaptive Fundraising: Two Sides of the Same Coin

1:00 pm–2:00 pm **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

- > Time for Self-Reflection: Advice on Managing Your Museum Career
- > Textiles in Context: The Basics of Materials, Care, and Handling Textile Items in Your Collection



WEDNESDAY

MARCH 17

(All times are Central)

9:00 am-10:00 am

Welcome, Orientation, and TAM Business Meeting

10:15 am-11:15 am

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

> Creating Community Partnerships During a Pandemic

Creating Community Partnerships During a Pandemic With audiences staying at home for work, school and entertainment, this presented new opportunities for engagement. Many museums have needed to look outside their organization for community partnerships to deliver content and reach new audiences.

Mary Skinner, *Community Relations Officer, Tennessee State Museum*

Paul McCoy, *Program Officer, Humanities Tennessee*

Erin Holcomb, *Community Foundation of Middle TN, Manager, NowPlayingNashville.com*

Rosemary Brunton, *Community Engagement Manager and Educator, Nashville Public Television*

> Interpreting the Layers of History

This session will provide two case studies to demonstrate the benefits of interpreting the layers of history at historical sites. Dr. Brenden Martin will discuss interpreting the Old Stone Fort State Archaeology Park, from Native American site, Civil War, mills, and state park. James Manning will discuss the layers of history at the Oaklands Mansion as the beginning of suburban Murfreesboro, recognizing preservation efforts and rectifying the silences of the past.

Dr. Brenden Martin, *Professor of History, MTSU*

James Manning, *Executive Director, Oaklands Mansion*

12:30 pm-1:30 pm

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

> A Tale of One State: Analyzing the Tennessee State Museum's New Collection Portal

The Tennessee State Museum recently uploaded its respective public portal to allow the extensive collection to be online for the first time. Using analytics, the institution has studied the visitor data and then used the information to improve and revise the portal, as well as how the collection is organized. Understanding how the portal is used is vital in learning how visitors interact with our content in relation to museum closures and reopenings.

Sharon Osofsky, *Curatorial Assistant, Tennessee State Museum*

> Museums to Go: Reimagining Content

Before COVID-19, the Museum of Science and History in Memphis relied on in-person exhibits, live education programs, and traveling educational suitcases to present our content. In one month, we revised our approach to make content accessible and relevant in a digital-only environment. Panelists will discuss the challenges and opportunities faced as Digital Content Leads. Participants will gain an understanding of the planning, time, staffing, and monetary requirements needed to launch specific digital content formats.

Caroline Mitchell Carrico, *Supervisor of Exhibits and Graphic Services, Museum of Science and History*

Luke Ramsey, *Manager of Public Programs, Museum of Science and History*

Heather Kubitz, *Manager of School and Teacher Services, Museum of Science and History*



2:00 pm-3:00 pm

Plenary Session

Business as Usual: How Do We Move on From 2020?



Brigette J. Jones
Curator of Social History,
Tennessee State Museum



LaNesha DeBardelaben
Executive Director,
Northwest African American Museum



Dr. Learotha Williams, Jr.
Professor of History,
Tennessee State University



Tracy Lauritzen Wright
Chief of Operations,
ArtsMemphis

2020 was devastating for the museum sector for many reasons. How do we move forward from a year burdened by a pandemic, museum closures, layoffs across the field, systematic racism, a historically contentious presidential race, and more? And, most important, what is our role in helping our state, country, and field recover?

4:00 pm

TAM AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Thursday

March 18

(All times are Central)

9:00 am-10:00 am

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

> Restructuring the Educational Components

The year 2020 was literally a game-changer for the Discovery Park of America Education team. Come learn how we revamped our programs to balance fulfilling the museum's mission at no cost to the community while meeting state standards, providing hands-on activities in a hands-off environment, and encouraging revenue-boosting visits to the park.

Polly Brasher, *Education Director, Discovery Park of America*

Nathaniel Newlin, *Assistant Education Director, Discovery Park of America*

> Revise for the Future: How Past Best Practices Translate Today

There is a lot of best practice wisdom to be passed on to emerging professionals in an ever changing and evolving museum field. In order to "pass down" these insights, this panel session will engage experienced curators and directors in conversation on themes such as stewardship, communication and connections with community, staff/volunteer expectations, and inclusion.

Lisa Oakley, *Curator of Education, East Tennessee Historical Society*

Linda Caldwell, *Founding Executive Director, Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association*

Dan Pomeroy, *Chief Curator and Director of Collections, Tennessee State Museum*

10:30 am-11:30 am

Keynote Address

COVID Museum Research With Susie Wilkening, Inc



Susie Wilkening
Susie Wilkening, Inc.

Susie Wilkening, Susie Wilkening, Inc., will share about research conducted for the American Alliance of Museums regarding museum visitation and COVID. What do visitors need to feel safe when returning to museums? How should museums be preparing for their return?

11:45 am-12:15 am

EDUCATION BREAK-OUT SESSION

12:30 pm-1:30 pm

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

> Hands-On Learning in a Hands-Off World

In the age of virtual learning, students who learn primarily by kinesthetic means face an insurmountable challenge, making it more crucial than ever for museum educators to be cognizant of the learning techniques employed in their programs. This session will provide examples of virtual and on-site programs from museums around the world that address this need and offer insight into one education team's approach to hands-on learning in the era of social distancing.

Nathaniel Newlin, *Assistant Education Director, Discovery Park of America*

> REVISION: CEO/Executive Directors Roundtable

A candid and confidential round table conversation for museum CEOs and Executive Directors to compare notes, benchmark, and connect with peers in an informal and candid facilitated conversation. This session will allow leaders to engage in dialog that will result in key learning from which they will be able to draw in the months to come. Open to museum CEOs and Executive Directors only.

Scott Williams, *President and CEO, Discovery Park of America*

2:00 pm-3:00 pm

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

> Hope for the Best, Prepare for the Worst: Disaster Preparedness at Cultural Institutions

Recent years have seen flooding, fires, and tornados impact our state. It is time museum professionals reassess disaster preparedness plans to better protect human lives and the collections held in trust for the public. This session will share expertise to best prepare your site, staff, volunteers, and governing authority in case of numerous emergency situations. Attendees will gain the resources to reconsider their disaster preparedness plans, or the foundation to create one if necessary.

Sarah Williams, *Museum Program Coordinator, Tennessee Agricultural Museum*

Adam Alfrey, *Assistant Director for Historical Services, East Tennessee History Center, Knox County Public Library*

Bethany L. Hawkins, *Chief of Operations and Programs, American Association for State and Local History*

> Hosting Museum Internships: The Integration of Virtual Programming

Technological advances and the integration of online education has made it possible, and in many cases necessary, to implement virtual internship programs. The transition of in-person to virtual can be done successfully through methods that give the intern the ability to fulfill their degree requirements while also disseminating the museum's mission. By changing the way in which we offer upper-level educational programming, virtual internships can increase accessibility to our collections and programming for everyone.

Adriana Dunn, Curator, West Tennessee Delta Heritage Center

6:00 pm TAM TRIVIA NIGHT

Friday

March 19

(All times are Central)

9:00 am-10:00 am CONCURRENT SESSIONS

> Creating Collaborative Collections and Community Spaces: How State Organizations Can Create Meaningful Partnerships During Difficult Times

As budgets are smaller and staff is limited, the need to share our expertise, ideas, and resources is more important than ever. We will show how two organizations—the Tennessee State Museum and Tennessee State Parks—envision a collaborative partnership that aids Parks in developing their own collections over time and gives the Museum physical spaces to allow for community engagement and programming across the entirety of the state.

Amanda McCrary Smith, Curator of Textiles, Tennessee State Museum

Hobart Akin, Cultural Resource and Exhibits Specialist, Division of Interpretation and Education, Tennessee State Parks

> Strategic Planning in Uncertain Times

Does your organization have a current strategic plan? Has it become completely irrelevant due to the pandemic? Or, do you think strategic planning is impossible during this uncertain time or out of reach because your organization is small? This session will introduce you to planning using a strategic framework that is nimble, focused on your mission, and reachable for organizations of all sizes.

Bethany L. Hawkins, Chief of Operations and Programs, American Association for State and Local History

10:30 am-11:30 am CONCURRENT SESSIONS

> A Rising Tide of History: Collaboration Between Museums, Libraries, and Municipalities

The Bristol Public Library, the Washington County, TN Public Library, the Birthplace of Country Music Museum, Heritage Alliance of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia, and the Town of Jonesborough, TN, have collaborated to share information and support one another with complementary projects and public programs over the past two years. Presenters will explore the collaborative projects, lessons learned and positive outcomes, adaptations made to the projects during the pandemic, and original motivations behind these collaborations.

Anne G'Fellers-Mason, Executive Director, Heritage Alliance of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia

Dr. Rene Rodgers, Head Curator, Birthplace of Country Music Museum

Dr. Brenda G'Fellers, Manager of Avoca Branch, Bristol Public Library

> Responsive Programming and Adaptive Fundraising: Two Sides of the Same Coin

The speakers, Joe Spiker and Dr. Megan Cullen Tewell of the Heritage Alliance, will be discussing the importance of flexibility in the design and execution of programs and fundraisers. We will share specific examples of how flexibility allowed us to be successful in 2020 and how we can sustain that in 2021 and beyond, and discuss the basic themes and applications of flexibility.

Joe Spiker, Head Docent, Heritage Alliance

Dr. Megan Cullen Tewell, Programming Coordinator, Heritage Alliance

1:00 pm-2:00 pm CONCURRENT SESSIONS

> Time for Self-Reflection: Advice on Managing Your Museum Career

Having trouble breaking into the field? Looking for a change or just some good advice? During this question-and-answer style session, we will discuss common questions, concerns, and challenges that all museum professionals face. Topics will include: professional development, hiring practices, salary/role negotiations, workplace culture, work/life balance, and avoiding burn-out. Through an honest and engaging discussion, this session will inspire you to focus on having a successful career in museums.

Brooke Garcia, Collections & Exhibitions Manager, The Metal Museum

Adam Alfrey, Assistant Director for Historical Services, East Tennessee History Center, Knox County Public Library

Brigette J. Jones, Curator of Social History, Tennessee State Museum

Raka Nandi, Director of Collections & Exhibitions, Stax Museum of American Soul Music

> Textiles in Context: The Basics of Materials, Care, and Handling Textile Items in Your Collection (AKA, How Not to be Afraid of Them)

Many museums have small textile collections without a person on staff with the expertise to handle them. Through learning the basics of materials, care, packing, handling, and preventative care, museums can ensure that their textile items are safe from deterioration and wear while also saving money in their conservation budget.

Amanda McCrary Smith, Curator of Textiles and Fashion, Tennessee State Museum

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VIRTUAL POSTER SESSION PARTICIPANTS

Curatorial Internship on Hoodoo in West Tennessee

Neecole Gregory worked as a curatorial intern at the **West Tennessee Delta Heritage Center** during the Fall 2020 semester. During this time, she prepared an incoming loan and organized an exhibition relating to folklore and the origins and practices of Hoodoo found in West Tennessee.

Neecole Gregory, M.A. Candidate in Museum Practices & Certificate in Museum Studies | University of Memphis, Memphis, TN

Historical Interpretation at Travellers Rest Historic House Museum

Nashville native Lucy J. Hamaamen is a history student at Lipscomb University. Her work as a historical interpreter at **Travellers Rest Historic House Museum** includes guided tours, research on women, and online content creation. Her 2020 research on antebellum Southern women's lives bridges her interest in women's history with her knowledge of Mary Overton of Travellers Rest.

Lucy J. Hamaamen, B.A. Candidate in History, Minor in Psychology | Lipscomb University, Nashville, TN

Curatorial Internship on Archaeology of West Tennessee

Jolynne Minnick worked as a curatorial intern at the **West Tennessee Delta Heritage Center** during the Fall 2020 semester. During this time, she prepared two loans (from the C.H. Nash Museum at Chucalissa and from Ron Bristler) and organized an exhibition pertaining to Native American archaeological sites around West Tennessee.

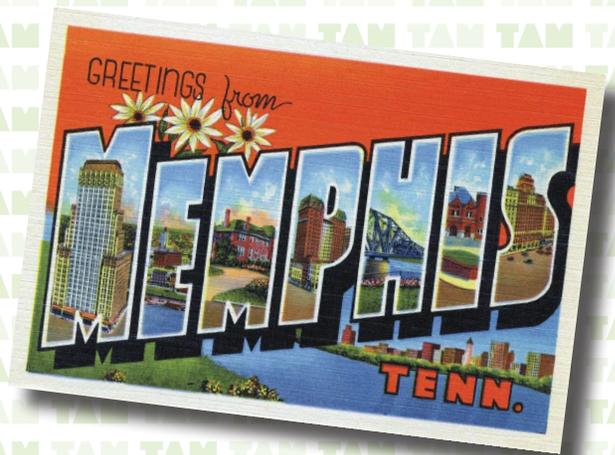
Jolynne Minnick, M.A. Candidate in Art History | University of Memphis, Memphis, TN

Hatchie River Collections Internship

During the Fall 2020 semester, Rachel Wilson worked with the **West Tennessee's Delta Heritage Center's** Hatchie River collection. Rachel's internship involved conducting condition reports, researching each object in the Hatchie River collection to expand the information for the museum's online database, and writing two research articles on some of the objects.

Rachel Wilson, M.A. Candidate in Art History, Certificate in Museum Studies | University of Memphis, Memphis, TN

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TAM SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year the **Tennessee Association of Museums** awards three scholarships to its annual conference. One qualified recipient represents each of the three main regions of Tennessee. TAM established this scholarship program to encourage students to enter the museum field, to promote museum studies in Tennessee's higher education institutions, and to provide networking opportunities for new museum professionals. Scholarship recipients receive full conference registration, accommodations for two nights at the conference hotel, and a transportation allowance of up to \$50.



Congratulations to the 2020/2021 TAM Scholarship Winners:



Summer Apostol
East Tennessee



Janet Palmore
Middle Tennessee



Maureen Smith
West Tennessee



Raka Nandi
West Tennessee

HUMANITIES TENNESSEE SCHOLARSHIPS

Since 2003, **Humanities Tennessee** has offered a scholarship program for the Tennessee Association of Museums annual conference held every March. This initiative stems from a commitment to provide opportunities for professional and organizational development of Tennessee's museums and humanities community.



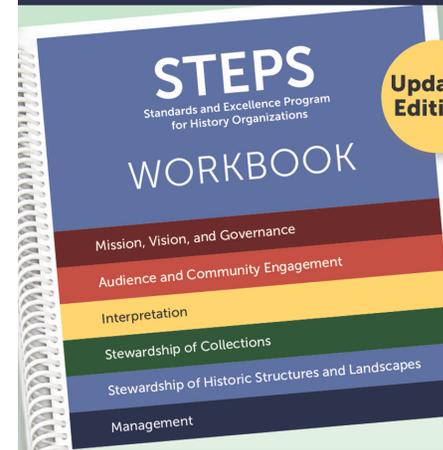
The scholarships are available to volunteers without museum-related backgrounds who work for a non-profit museum or organization that is starting a museum that has no paid professional staff. Each scholarship provides two nights lodging and conference fees for two people from up to fifteen organizations.

Congratulations to the 2021 Humanities Tennessee Scholarship Winners:

- > McMinn County Living History Museum (Athens): **Ann Davis**
- > Morgan County Genealogical & Historical Society (Wartburg): **Jill Jones-Lazuka & Barbara Langley**
- > Robertson County Historical Society (Springfield): **Danny Aitchley & Stacey Knight**
- > Broylesville Archives & Museum (Limestone): **Cheryl Christensen Bennett**
- > Surgoinsville Area Archives & Museum: **Lynda Skelton & Jack Pierce**
- > Granville Museum: **Lisa Huff**

The feedback received from scholarship recipients reflects how valuable they find their first TAM conference. This is often their initial exposure to a wider community network, to available resources, and to practical information such as exhibition design, museum governance, and artifact care. The scholarship program is announced each December with an application deadline each January. For questions about the program please contact **Melissa Davis** at Humanities Tennessee by phone, 615-770-0006, ext. 8016, or by email, melissa@humanitiestennessee.org.

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AMSE | K25 History Center
East Tennessee Historical Society
Museum of Science and History (Pink Palace)
Titanic Museum Attraction



Notice anything different? To celebrate its 60th anniversary, TAM received a new look with a **new logo!** The logo was designed by former Discovery Park of America employee and graphic designer **Joshua Massie** (<https://joshua-massie.com>). TAM would like to thank Joshua for contributing his time and talent in designing the new logo.

2020-2021 TAM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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melina.ludwig@tn.gov

Special Thanks from Polly: The first action I took after becoming president was to create an **Advisory Committee** composed of the **TAM Past Presidents**. Knowing there were many things I had not been trained on since this was an early shift in leadership, I looked to those who had the information and experience that was needed - the past presidents. Every single person responded favorably. TAM's Past Presidents stepped up to support you once again and have been a wonderful resource this past year. They have given their time, their money, their skills, and their knowledge to help us through this season of change. I am personally more thankful than I know how to describe, but please join me in issuing a heartfelt "thank you" to the past presidents for their contributions.

Adam Alfrey has again designed and produced a fantastic program. Thank you, Adam, for this ReVision conference program.

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