

Instructor Background



Herschel Wells

My wife, Mary, and I have two girls both married. One living in Atlanta, GA and the other in Tuscaloosa, AL

I am a native Memphian and other than 5 years spent in the U.S. Marine Corps have lived in Memphis all my life.

After leaving the Marines I attended the "Memphis College of Art" and graduated with a BFA degree. I worked for the "Baptist Brotherhood Commission" for 22 years (where I retired) . I was, for 15 years, the Graphic Arts Department Director of the commission and during the remaining 5 years served as Director of the "National Fellowship of Baptist Men.

I am a deacon and Sunday School teacher at Second Baptist Church, Memphis, TN, where I have been a member since 1972.

I have served Royal Ambassadors as a volunteer for over 36 years. I have served at my church as RA Director, RA Counselor for Lad, Crusader and Pioneer and Summer Camp Counselor. I also served as Royal Ambassador Associational Director for 12 years. I was the Director for the "Royal Ambassador Camp-O-Ree" for 29 years.

From 1974-1989 I was coordinator/director for a RA associational mission activity called "Missions West." This program, of Memphis and Shelby County, Tennessee RA leadership, took "Girls-in-Action" and "Pioneer Royal Ambassadors" in grades 9-12, on annual mission trips to Colorado, Wyoming and numerous points West.

I currently serve on the "Tennessee State Royal Ambassador Leadership Team" as representative from West Tennessee, Royal Ambassador Camp-O-Ree Coordinating Council and as a North American Mission Board, certified trainer for Royal Ambassadors.

I have served as a volunteer on 11 International Mission Board mission trips to Peru (4 times), Jamaica, Upper Volta, West Africa (3 times), Germany, Honduras and Albania.

I also had the privilege of co-authoring the "Leading Royal Ambassadors" book.

Instructor Background



Ken Cole

My wife, Connie, my youngest daughter, Cassie and I, live in Lakeland, TN. The Lord has blessed us with 5 daughters and 3 sons. We have also been blessed with 5 granddaughters and 3 grandsons and another granddaughter due in September.

I am the Senior Database Administrator for Inventory Locator Service. Inventory Locator Service is a worldwide company owned by Boeing with its home office in Memphis.

The Lord called me into the RA ministry 25 years ago. During that time, I have served as RA leader and RA Director at First Baptist Church, Collierville, TN, Faith Baptist Church, Bartlett, TN and Ellendale Baptist Church, Ellendale TN. I am a North American Mission Board, Certified trainer for Royal Ambassadors. I also had the privilege of co-authoring the "Leading Royal Ambassador" book.

Beginning in 2002, I have had the pleasure of working with Pastor James Williams who pastors Hope Fellowship Center in downtown Memphis. There I am able to work with inner city kids teaching them RA virtues, sharing RA stories and building crafts.

The Lord has blessed me with a love for woodworking. I have a shop set up in my garage where I cut out crafts for RAs and for my inner city kids.

We have a beautiful home that sits on 10 acres. We have horses, cats and dogs and whatever critters that shows up.

My hobbies include camping, riding bikes, hiking and working at home.

Instructor Background



Jennifer Holt

Jennifer J. Holt was born and raised in Rocky Mount, NC as an only child with two loving, Christian parents. Raised to attend church every time the doors were open, Jennifer knew from an early age that Jesus loves her. At age ten, she made the decision to give her heart to the Lord and follow His lead in her life. She graduated from Duke University in 1997 with a major in English, History, and Elementary Education certification. She moved to Nashville, TN that August to pursue her Master's degree in Elementary Education at Peabody College, Vanderbilt University. Following graduation in May 1999, Jennifer began teaching fourth grade in the Williamson County School district, which she did for four years. About that same time, she fell in love with a Nashville boy, and the rest is history. Jennifer and her husband, Brian Holt, live in Franklin, TN where they spend most of their time chasing their four-year-old son, Sam. He is their greatest blessing and the joy of their hearts. Brian and Jennifer are partners in parenthood and in ministry as she supports his love for the ministry of Royal Ambassadors by serving as an educational consultant. Jennifer currently works part-time for the Williamson County Schools in her 9th year as a Gifted Consulting Teacher at Edmondson Elementary. She teaches small groups of gifted and talented students in grades K-5 and works to provide materials and plans for teachers who work with bright students in the general education classroom.

When she isn't teaching, God has allowed Jennifer many opportunities to write magazine articles, curriculum, and devotionals for children. She sees her primary mission as one to share God's love and promises with children through her teaching and writing. She has written fiction, nonfiction, and teaching plans for various publications at NAMB and LifeWay over the past ten years, including *Lad* and *Crusader* magazines for RA's, *Bible Teaching for Kids* Sunday School (3rd and 4th Grade), VBS materials for *Outrigger Island*, *Boomerang Express*, and *Saddle Ridge Ranch*, *More and Adventure* children's devotional magazines, *ParentLife*, *HomeLife*, and *Mature Living*. God continues to use her love for writing and extensive teaching experience to shape materials that teach boys and girls about Jesus Christ.

In her spare time when she isn't teaching, writing, volunteering, and being wife and Mom, Jennifer loves to read, scrapbook, eat out, travel, and spend time at her family's lake house in NC.

Instructor Background



Mike Freeman

My wife Carla and I live in Oakland, TN, a small rural community just east of Memphis, Tennessee. I've never been one for the big city, but have lived near or around the Memphis area for most of my life. I spent most of my youth growing up in Nesbit, Mississippi, a small farming community just south of Memphis.

God saved me at the young age of 16 in a small church called Nesbit Baptist down the road from my home. I also met my wife there as a teenager, and we eventually got married there. During my 33 wonderful years of marriage, God blessed us with two daughters and four grandchildren.

For about 20 years or so, after leaving school, I worked mostly blue collar work in warehouses. Eventually I found my way to college where I received a computer science degree in Information Systems Technologies. I worked as a contract programmer for several years, but eventually found a home with Morgan Keegan & Co. My title is Associate Vice President of web development department, and I work with various development teams designing and developing websites for our company.

My wife and I attend Whiten Memorial Baptist Church and have been members there since 1984. My wife is the church pianist and I work with RAs. My involvement with RAs began at our previous church, Charjean Baptist Church, and has carried over to Whiten.

Working with RAs has led me to a wonderful lifelong calling. Even though I had no boys of my own, God has used me greatly. I currently serve as the Associational RA Director for Shelby County and the director of the volunteer organization, "Mid-South RAs". I am also the director of the RA Camp-O-Ree in Linden, Tennessee. I serve NAMB as one of their certified national trainers and have trained in areas as far away as Savannah, Georgia. I was also privileged to assist in co-authoring the "Leading Royal Ambassadors" training manual.

Instructor Background



Don Garner

Don Garner was raised in Raleigh, NC in a Christian home where he saw his parents as committed Christians and church leaders--his Dad was a Baptist deacon and his Mom was a leader in Woman's Missionary Union. The oldest of three brothers, Don was an RA at Forest Hills Baptist Church and points to that formative influence as instrumental in his later entering the ministry as a pastor and professor of Bible. A strong family and church helped to point Don in the direction of Christian service to others as the most meaningful way to live during one's time on earth.

Don teaches Old Testament and biblical archaeology at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, TN where he joined the faculty in 1980. He graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill and from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Don thought he was going to seminary to become a pastor of local Baptist churches and he took the Old Testament class that was required of everyone. But in that class, when the professor showed the value of the Old Testament to Jesus and to the earliest Christians, Don was "hooked." And, as a further response to God's call upon his life, he's been reading and teaching others what he has learned in "the Bible that Jesus used" ever since.

Don married Vickie Ringgold, who is also from Raleigh and from Forest Hills Baptist Church, right after he graduated from UNC-CH. Vickie recently retired from her career as a 2nd grade public school teacher in Jefferson County, TN. Together Vickie and Don raised three sons--Aaron, Andrew, and Adam--each of whom chose to attend Carson-Newman for his college education.

The lessons of family and faith that the Garners have learned from Aaron's life and death have helped shape them and their daily lives of service to others. Each day of life and health is a gift from God. And each person we meet may be carrying a burden that we might help to lift and make just a little lighter.

Don's message for you: "Your ministry as an RA leader for boys and men has the potential to change lives for now and eternity. May God bless you with wisdom and strength as you serve God by serving others in this significant and influential ministry in young lives."

Instructor Background



Dr. Hal Poe

(The following biographical information is derived from the web pages of Union University, Jackson, TN and in no way was chosen or selected by Dr. Poe to be used in this document. It is presented here solely so you will be more informed as to who Dr. Hal Poe is.)

Dr. Hal Poe holds the "Charles Colson Professor of Faith & Culture at Union University in Jackson, TN. Among his other duties and responsibilities Dr. Poe is also Special Assistant to the President, Administrative Office of the President. He is, while not teaching at Union University, interim Pastor at Second Baptist Church, Memphis, TN.

Dr. Poe has a B.A., from University of South Carolina, an M.Div. and a Ph.D. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and additional studies at University of Oxford, England.

Dr. Poe's wife Mary Ann, is a Professor of Social Work and BSW program director at Union University.

He has authored, at a minimum, two books, "The Inklings of Oxford: C.S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien and Their Friends" and "Edgar Allan Poe: An Illustrated Companion to His Tell-Tale Stories." Dr. Poe has contributed to more than 88 other scholarship publications including such esteemed subjects as: "Christian Witness in a Postmodern World;" "Handbook on Youth Evangelism;" "Christian Witness in a Postmodern World;" "Designer Universe: Intelligent Design and the Existence of God;" and "The Gospel and Its Meaning: A Theology for Evangelism and Church Growth."

A special project which Dr. Poe has been involved in is "The Inklings Fellowship." The Inklings Fellowship is a community of Christians from all walks of life dedicated to the transformation of higher education through teaching and writing, and by encouraging young Christian scholars to bring a Christian perspective to their disciplines.

Instructor Background



David Helms

My wife, Jill, and I have two adult children. Our daughter is married and lives in Lawton, Oklahoma. She has two sons, Jaylon (5) and Micah (3). Our son is not married and lives in Attalla, Alabama. I am a native of Alabama, but as the son of a pastor of small rural Southern Baptist churches moved around some. That pattern continued as an adult.

I graduated from UAB with a BS degree and worked at Southern Research in Birmingham. God called me into vocational ministry and I went to Southern Seminary where I received a MRE degree. I served as a children's minister at Third Baptist Church in St. Louis, as a state preschool consultant for Tennessee, as a preschool Sunday School editor and preschool Biblical Studies Specialist for LifeWay, and as an editor for the Mission Education team at the North American Mission Board. For the last three years I have served as the Content Coordinator for Mission Education products.

I was an RA as a boy and have been an RA leader and RA Ministry Leader. I have had the pleasure of editing both Lad and Crusader magazines.

I have participated in both international and North American mission trips. This summer I led a group from my church, Johnson Ferry, to participate in a Families on Mission trip to Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.

Instructor Background



Tobin Perry

My wife, Charissa, and I have two boys, Seth (4), and Luke (1). I serve as an editor on the Mission Education team at the North American Mission Board. I edit Crusader magazine for boys in fourth to sixth grade. I also edit other Mission Education resources, as needed.

I received a Bachelors of Journalism degree (with a magazine emphasis) from the University of Missouri School of Journalism. I also have a Master's of Divinity degree from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

Before coming to work at NAMB, I served for two years as a Journeyman missionary with the International Mission Board in Nicosia, Cyprus. During my time in Cyprus I served as an overseas correspondent for the IMB and traveled to more than 20 countries writing articles about international missions for various Southern Baptist publications (including Baptist Press and The Commission). I served briefly as a religion reporter for a daily newspaper in Washington state. Then I served for close to seven years as a writer and editor for Saddleback Church in Southern California. After my time at Saddleback, I served briefly as the pastor of a small church in Southern Indiana.

I'm a member of First Baptist Church of Woodstock, where I teach Sunday School and English as a Second Language.

Instructor Background



David Claunch

David Claunch was born in Somerset, Kentucky in 1961. After a number of moves, his family settled in East Tennessee and he graduated in 1979 from Daniel Boone High School in Gray, TN. He earned a degree in Mechanical Engineering from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia in 1986, and worked in the construction industry for the next twenty years until he discovered his true calling: that of storyteller and clown.

In October 2003, David attended the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough. Even though he lived only 20 minutes from Jonesborough when he was in high school, this was his very first exposure to storytelling and it changed his life; he fell in love with the art of telling stories.

David says he thinks the right side of his brain "woke up" at that first storytelling festival and demanded equal time with what had been given to the left side.

Claunch discovered the art of clowning at the same time he discovered the world of storytelling, and has attended numerous clown conventions and educational workshops. He is also the official Clowns of America International Ambassador to the country of Bhutan. Clowning under the name of Dilly-Dally, he performs at regional events and he is a volunteer at both the Niswanger Hospital where he makes clown rounds as Dr. Dilly. David is also an accomplished balloon artist and can twist balloon sculptures that delight folks of all ages.

David completed his studies at ETSU in December, 2009. He has been a Performing Member of the Jonesborough Storytellers Guild since June, 2008 and tells at The Cranberry Thistle in Jonesborough with the Guild. In addition, he has told stories at The Unicoi Strawberry Festival, The Mountain Makins Festival, The Johnson County Fair, and the inaugural Pumpkin Festival in Mountain City in 2008 and returned in 2009. He has told stories in schools ranging from kindergarten through high school as well as university classrooms in Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Texas. He has facilitated workshops in clowning, sign language and storytelling.

Instructor Background



Brian Holt

Brian is a NAMB Certified RA Trainer from Franklin, Tennessee. He and his wife Jennifer have been married for 9 years and have a 3 year old son named Sam. He works for the Background Screening Division of Kroll Inc. as the Deskside Support Manager responsible for technology and support for all of it's North American offices.

Royal Ambassadors has played a very important role in Brian's life. Royal Ambassadors was his favorite thing about going to church as a boy. His father did not go to church with them when he was young and knew that he could easily get out of going if he would push hard enough but he wanted to go to RAs. While attending RA Camp here at Linden Valley in 1983 Brian asked Christ into his heart as Lord and Savior. That was the last time he was in RAs as a boy having moved to a new church that did not offer RAs. While in High School he helped start the RA chapter at his church and his best memory from that time was one Wednesday night when his mom came and pulled him out of the room and into the sanctuary to look up and see if father in the baptistry after accepting Christ into his heart.

In 1991 Brian began to work on the Tennessee Royal Ambassador Staff where he served in various roles for the next 4 summers. After that he served on the TRAC Committee writing and preparing curriculum until it was shut down in 2002. He also spent at least one week of his vacation working on staff and leading the camp canoeing programs. He has logged over 400 miles on the Buffalo River over the years in camp. His state work at that time included serving as a State RA Trainer and RA Congress Chairman.

In 1996 Brian "VOLUNTEERED to HELP" with RAs at Crieewood Baptist Church in Nashville and as most Ministers of Education do asked him to Direct. He took a glorified baby sitting service and turned it into one of Nashville's strongest RA Ministries. He has been the director there for the last 13 years. Additionally, Brian is the RA Director for the Nashville Baptist Association. In 2002 he and his Associate Director, Aubry Jones introduced a new event RA Wilderness Challenge which is an outdoor skills competition that encourages RAs to develop and use campcraft skills and teaches the importance of knowing those skills as missionaries even today.

Both he and his wife are active writers from RAs over the last 8 years. Brian has seen the impact RAs has made in his life and in the lives of boys and serves as a trainer to encourage and help leaders be the best godly example for boys they can be.

Instructor Background



Sandra Kelley

SAUNDRA KELLEY, STORYTELLER

Listen to the wind, find the story within

Sandra Kelley, storyteller and writer was born in Tallahassee, the capital city of Florida and graduated from Florida State University. She earned a masters degree in education with a storytelling concentration from East Tennessee State University. Now living in Jonesborough, Tennessee, the magical land of storytelling, Kelley tells stories, lectures and conducts storytelling and writing workshops.

A former newspaper writer, she is the editor of *Storytelling in Southern Appalachia: Interviews with Sixteen Keepers of the Oral Tradition* published by McFarland Publishers and due on shelves in the fall of 2010, and *Legends of the Wild, Tales of North Florida*, a CD.

Noted for her passion for the environment, Kelley's place-based stories inspire us to preserve, protect and save our natural and cultural heritage. Her stories reflect her family's rich southern heritage and her own relationship to the earth.

Sandra Kelley is available as a storyteller, lecturer and workshop leader. Workshops include: *Write Your Memoir, Tell Your Story*; *Interview and Story Collection Technique*; *Story-learning/storytelling for Creative people with Learning Challenges*; *Write like a Storyteller*; *So, You Want to be a Storyteller: Encouragement for the Timid Among us*.

saundrakelley@hotmail.com.....423-946-9359

Look for me on Facebook; www.professionalstoryteller.com and www.storytellersguild.org (may be under construction so check back)