



PHILOSOPHY
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JURISPRUDENCE
HISTORY OF THE ARTS
LANGUAGES
**ALABAMA
HUMANITIES
FOUNDATION**

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Executive Director

Alabama Humanities Foundation

Birmingham, AL

*Fostering learning, understanding, and appreciation of
Alabama's people, communities and cultures.*

THE OPPORTUNITY

The Alabama Humanities Foundation has been a committed leader in supporting and promoting the humanities in Alabama since 1974. Driven by the idea that knowledge of the humanities provides the ability to reason, question and to think creatively and critically, AHF champions programs that materially strengthen the community and more deeply engage its citizens. Through the celebration and study of literature, history, law, philosophy, and the arts, the foundation helps to enrich Alabama and promote its many cultural assets.

Given the challenges that surround civic dialogue in America at present, AHF can play a key role in



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celebrating how humanities make us better, serving to bring people together and build stronger communities.

AHF is at a critical inflection point. The new Executive Director will leverage leadership, creativity, cultural competence, and deep-seated passion for the humanities to help realize AHF's vision for the future. S/he will embrace change and organizational imperatives that include charting the course for the next chapter of the foundation's work, advancing organizational clarity and consensus among the board and staff, and raising the organization's profile, relevance, and impact throughout Alabama and beyond.



The opportunity for the Executive Director is bold and compelling: to advance the foundation as a vital part of Alabama's cultural fabric, thereby strengthening the state through captivating programs and support of important initiatives in the humanities. By championing the value of humanities as both an essential resource and sound public policy, AHF will further establish Alabama as a state rich with cultural, literary and historical assets for current and future generations.

AHF's aspirations require an Executive Director driven to advocate for humanities as a central part of the lives of Alabamians.

In partnership with a committed board and staff, the Executive Director will work to address several key mandates that include:

- Expanding AHF's visibility and the reach of its programs
- Leading strategic discussions of institutional goals and capturing them in an actionable plan
- Cementing the financial support needed to ensure long-term sustainability
- Advancing a thriving operating culture in which roles are clear, accountability is embraced and both staff and board members are empowered to leverage their talents and expand their reach.



THE ORGANIZATION

AHF began in 1974 as the Committee for the Humanities and Public Policy; its founders were University of Alabama President David Mathews, Auburn University President Harry Philpott, and a committed group of government,

business and professional leaders. Today, AHF is an independent nonprofit organization, one of 56 humanities councils nationwide that partner with the [National Endowment for the Humanities \(NEH\)](#).

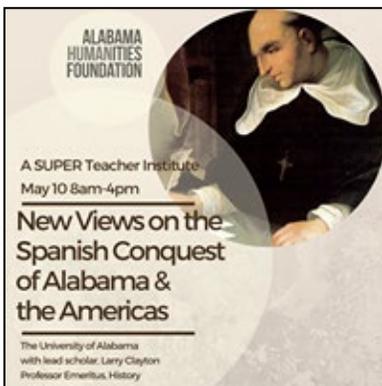
AHF is committed to making the humanities an integral part of Alabamians' thinking and lifestyle—*“enhancing minds and enriching lives.”*

The organization's most recent three-year strategy included a focus on community service, increased engagement, innovation in the humanities, and long-term sustainability, all of which remain relevant in 2020.



Programming is a core strength of the organization. Current initiatives of note:

- **[The Alabama Colloquium](#)**—an annual event showcasing the importance of the humanities and individuals who demonstrate humanities in action. 2019 Alabama Fellows included Marquita Davis, Fred Gray, Jody Singer and Howell Raines.
- **[Road Scholars Speakers Bureau](#)**—designed to educate and entertain and presented by some of Alabama's most enlightening university and independent scholars.
- **[SUPER teacher Workshop Series](#)**—fostering a collegial environment for Alabama's teachers to explore multidisciplinary approaches to the humanities at no cost to them or their schools. Through directed readings, exercises and visits to Alabama's many cultural and historic sites, SUPER increases Alabama teachers' subject knowledge and boosts their confidence, enthusiasm, and effectiveness as educators.



- **[Prime Time Family Reading Time®](#)**—a six-week program of reading, discussion and storytelling normally conducted within public libraries. Featuring award-winning children's books, Prime Time stimulates discussion of humanities themes and problems encountered in everyday life. Each 90-minute session includes a storyteller reading of up to three books and a facilitated discussion with a humanities scholar.

AHF has a full-time staff of seven and an annual budget of about \$1.6 million. The organization is governed by a statewide board of some

two dozen members drawn from academia, businesses, philanthropic interests and the public sector. Six board members are appointed by the Governor of Alabama, with the balance being elected by the board itself. AHF also benefits from a ten-person Young Professionals Board, a group of culturally savvy professionals from across the state that cultivates potential leaders with a strong understanding of the benefit of the humanities.

Roughly half to two-thirds of AHF's annual funding comes from federal grants; the remainder derives from individual donors, corporations, foundations and special events. In turn, AHF offers [competitive grants](#) to promote the appreciation and understanding of history, literature, philosophy, civics and culture throughout the state.

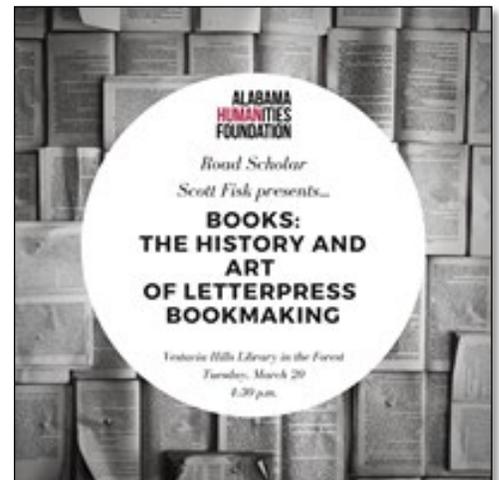
For additional information about the Alabama Humanities Foundation and its programs, please go to www.alabamahumanities.org.

THE MANDATE

The new Executive Director will be a visionary leader with an authentic passion for the humanities and the right balance of gravitas, humility, and credibility. S/he will have a compelling presence, persuasive communication skills, proven expertise in developing a strong organizational culture, and a penchant for cultivating productive relationships.

The Executive Director can expect several overlapping mandates:

- 1. Strategic leadership.** AHF's leader must be an inspiring strategist who steers the organization with passion and purpose while championing the humanities. Building upon the staff's commitment, the ED will support and encourage the staff's potential, with strategic direction, highlighting team performance, transparent processes and collective accountability for results. S/he will develop a sound operational infrastructure and implement strategies and processes consistent with AHF's strategic plan in support of optimal success.
- 2. Financial and business acumen.** The Executive Director must manage the business with a steady hand, thoughtfully balancing mission and margin. Consistent with board-approved policies and strategies, as well as those of the NEH, the Executive Director will ensure effective administration and



oversight of AHF’s budget and finances. S/he will be directly accountable for AHF’s financial soundness, making certain that internal and external resources are sufficient and well-managed.

- 3. Relationship-building.** As the face of the organization, the Executive Director must be a compelling ambassador for the humanities and an uncommonly good relationship builder. Accordingly, the ED must lead AHF’s efforts to enhance public awareness of its programs and its commitment to Alabama’s people, communities and cultures and seize opportunities for proactive engagement with national, state and local government officials, community groups and other relevant stakeholders.
- 4. Funding.** The Executive Director must inspire broad support for AHF and the humanities. That requires effective stewardship and expansion of current relationships and development of new support to undergird the future of the organization and reduce dependence on public funding.

THE RELATIONSHIPS

The Executive Director reports to the AHF Board of Directors and manages a team of six; key relationships include:

The Executive Director reports to:	Board of Directors
The Executive Director directly manages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Operations • Programs Director • Communications Director • Grants Director • Programs Coordinator • Executive Assistant
Other key relationships include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHF board members and volunteers • Elected officials (local, state and federal) and their staff leadership • Key leaders and supporters in the Alabama State Legislature • Current and potential partners and donors • Key leaders in the humanities space • Corporate, civic, philanthropic and community leaders

THE CANDIDATE

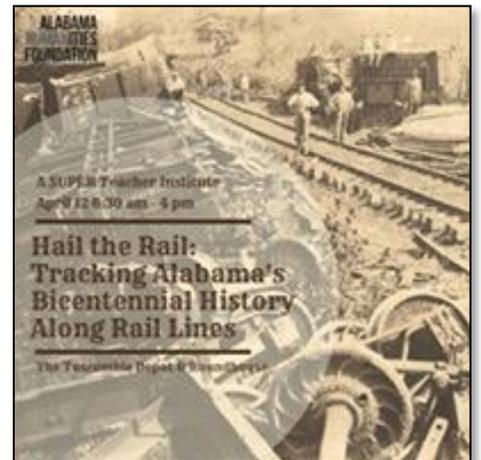
Alabama Humanities Foundation seeks a humble yet confident servant leader who embraces the need for a strong organizational culture as a high priority—an approachable, authentic manager whom people from all walks of life naturally trust and want to work with.

The Executive Director will be a leader, mentor and a proven developer of great talent, teams and infrastructure; s/he will build an environment characterized by shared vision, seamless communication, strong values, high standards and mutual accountability.

The ideal candidate will have excelled in contexts relevant to the Alabama Humanities Foundation. Previous organizational leadership experience in the field of humanities would be a considerable asset; passion for the humanities is essential.

Compelling candidates could come from a variety of backgrounds. AHF is an equal opportunity employer, and a diverse slate of candidates is being sought. Among the attributes being sought:

- Passion for the mission of Alabama Humanities Foundation and the commitment to champion the humanities
- Deep knowledge of and affection for the culture and history of Alabama and the region
- Solid financial and business acumen
- The ability to lead, inspire and mobilize people to accomplish important goals; a record of driving consensus around a common vision
- The courage to implement change
- A strong commitment to the professional development of staff
- The ability to create and grow a strong organizational culture that is reflected in productive, positive relationships with board, staff, funders and program partners
- An energizing and inviting presence
- A compelling communicator and a nuanced listener; a leader with high emotional intelligence and the ability to connect with a variety of audiences through all relevant media
- A vision for increasing AHF's visibility and awareness
- Experience working with nonprofit boards
- Strong results in fundraising, revenue generation or business development
- A Bachelor's degree in a relevant field of study; Master's degree preferred



THE LOCATION

With more than one million residents, greater Birmingham is the state's largest metro area and is experiencing a renaissance of commerce and culture. Sometimes referred to as the Cradle of the American Civil Rights Movement, the city is also home to the [Birmingham Museum of Art](#), the [Alabama Symphony](#), the [Birmingham Zoo](#), the [McWane Science Center](#) and the [Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame and Museum](#).

Widely known for leadership in medical research, banking and finance and biotechnology, the area is home to six major academic institutions, two major auto manufacturing plants, the [Southeastern Conference](#) and the [Birmingham Barons](#), the Chicago White Sox's minor league affiliate.

The city boasts more green space per capita than any other U.S. city, and its residents are proud of its local farms and gardens, which have helped Birmingham become known as a true city for food lovers and garner two James Beard awards. The area has received substantial publicity, including features in the [New York Times](#), [Forbes](#) and [National Geographic](#) magazine.



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For more information, go to www.birminghamal.org or www.birminghamal.gov.

For more information or to suggest a prospect, please email

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or call

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Any messages left on BoardWalk's main number (404-262-7392) will be forwarded as well.
