

Speaker Biographies

Keynote Speaker

Christopher D. Thorncroft

Chair & Professor, Atmospheric & Environmental Sciences, University at Albany



Dr. Thorncroft's research is mainly focused on improving our understanding of the nature and variability of atmospheric weather systems with a special emphasis on tropical weather systems over West Africa and how they impact Atlantic tropical cyclones. The research spans a wide range of timescales from diurnal-to-multidecadal and including climate change. Current research also includes an emphasis on the nature and causes of extreme weather variability in North-East US that includes a contribution from land-falling hurricanes. Dr Thorncroft is also co-PI for the NYS Mesonet – a network of 125 automatic weather stations that will make key weather observations across the whole State in support of protection of life and property.

Ian Berry

Ian Berry is Dayton Director of The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College and is responsible for the overall direction of the Museum's curatorial program. Berry has organized over 90 museum exhibitions for the Tang and for museums across the country. He is best known for curating exhibitions that showcase the Tang's pioneering interdisciplinary approach with recent examples including *Affinity Atlas* (2015), *I was a double* (2014), and *Lives of the Hudson* (2009), as well as monographic exhibitions with artists such as Terry Adkins, Nicole Eisenman, Nancy Grossman, Corita Kent, Martin Kersels, Nicholas Krushenick, Los Carpinteros, Fred Tomaselli, and Kara Walker. During his tenure, the Tang's encyclopedic collection has expanded through key acquisitions and gifts with recent significant additions to contemporary holdings. Berry received his MA from the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College and served as Assistant Curator at the Williams College Museum of Art before coming to Skidmore in 2000.

Eryl Wentworth

Eryl Wentworth has served as the Executive Director of AIC and FAIC since 2004, following a museum career spanning over 20 years. Her most recent museum position, held for six years, was Director of The Octagon, Museum of the American Architectural Foundation, a museum of architecture and design and an 1801 National Historic Landmark. Prior to moving to Washington, DC, Eryl spent ten years as Assistant Director and Director of Exhibitions & Special Projects at The Valentine, an urban history museum in Richmond, VA. While there, Eryl supervised the restoration and management of the Wickham-Valentine House, an 1812 National Historic Landmark, and served as principle coordinator for Valentine Riverside, a project to renovate four buildings and install indoor and outdoor exhibitions on an 8-acre site at the Tredegar Iron Works, a National Historic Landmark.

With an M.A. in anthropology and museum training and a background in conservation, Eryl has supported the care of collections throughout her career by working with conservators to plan and implement major re-housing, storage, treatment, and exhibition projects and by securing federal and private foundation grants for preservation and conservation projects.

Jessica Unger

Jessica (Jess) Unger is the Emergency Programs Coordinator at the Foundation of the American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (FAIC). In her role, she manages several programs that support emergency preparedness and response efforts among cultural institutions, including the national Alliance for Response initiative. Prior to joining FAIC, Jess had previously been on staff at Heritage Preservation, serving as Emergency Programs Assistant and Director of External Affairs. She holds a BA in Anthropology from The College of William and Mary and a MA in Public Humanities from Brown University.

Assemblymember Patricia Fahy

Patricia A. Fahy was first elected to the New York State Assembly in November 2012 to represent the 109th Assembly District from the City of Albany, and the Towns of Bethlehem, Guilderland, and New Scotland. Pat successfully ran on a platform of education and jobs, bringing over two decades of experience at all three levels of government and extensive community service. Pat was re-elected to a second term in November 2014.

A leading advocate for job creation and education, Pat has co-sponsored more than 200 bills and has been the prime sponsor of over 25 bills, including legislation to enact greater penalties for public lewdness, protect residents and businesses from potential petroleum disasters, increase safety precautions through traffic control devices; such as cameras, implement funding for Pre-K transportation, and provide tax relief for owners of undeveloped land.

Prior to serving in the Assembly, Pat was Associate Commissioner of Intergovernmental Affairs and Federal Policy for the state's Department of Labor from 2007 to 2012. As lead advocate and liaison for the Department's federal and congressional relations, Pat advocated for federal funding for New York State in the economic stimulus package, extended unemployment benefits, grant proposals, and youth training initiatives.

Pat served as an elected member of the Albany City School District Board of Education from 2001 to 2005, which included serving as President from 2003 to 2005. Before moving to Albany in 1997, she served as Executive Director of the business-led Chicago Workforce Board overseeing Chicago's workforce-related programs. Prior to her work in Chicago, Pat spent over nine years in Washington, in a number of capacities. She has a master's in public administration from University of Illinois at Chicago and a bachelor's in political science from Northern Illinois University.

Mary Jo (MJ) Davis *Paper Conservator & Preventive Conservation Specialist*

Mary Jo Davis graduated from the State University College at Buffalo in 1994 with a Masters in Art Conservation and a Certificate of Advanced Study in Paper Conservation.

In October of 2000, Ms. Davis was chosen to participate in the FAIC/National Task Force on Emergency Response *Train the Trainers* disaster workshop. Since that initial introduction into Emergency Response, Davis in conjunction with colleague Barbara Moore developed an emergency response training curriculum that they have taught for the past 15 years in local and regional workshops as well as for many of the major museums in the US. Of particular interest was their collaborative effort in 2007 with the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) in helping to develop and train the AIC National Heritage Response team. Recently, Ms. Davis was active with her own state's cultural response team during hurricanes Irene and Sandy and has a strong understanding of the Incident Command System and how cultural institutions can interact with local and state emergency officials.

Richard Lord

Rick Lord is NY's State Hazard Mitigation Officer and the Chief of Mitigation Programs for the NYS Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services (DHSES), which administers FEMA disaster recovery programs in New York. Key undertakings include mitigation projects protecting critical NYC infrastructure using World Trade Center funds, acquiring or elevating at-risk homes in floodplains using \$128 million received after Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, and resiliency projects utilizing nearly \$1.5 billion in mitigation funding provided as a result of Superstorm Sandy. After Irene and Lee, DHSES also oversaw grants creating 19 FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plans evaluating natural hazards and protecting 13.4 million New Yorkers.

Prior to joining DHSES, Lord spent 22 years with the NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). There he served as the technical reviewer for FEMA-funded projects, and served as office lead for the Rainbow Bridge Toll Plaza adjacent to the Fredrick Law Olmsted-designed Niagara Reservation (State Park) in Niagara Falls, the new U.S. Courthouse on historic Niagara Square in Buffalo, HUD's \$131 million Erie Canal Corridor Initiative, and NPS studies to rehabilitate the South Side of Ellis Island. Prior to that, he worked to develop low- and -moderate income housing in neighborhoods around the NYS Capitol in Albany. He received a B.Arch from RPI in Troy, NY in 1981.

William Davis

Bill Davis joined the NYS Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services (DHSES) in September of 2007 as the Office of Homeland Security's (currently the Office of Counter Terrorism) Fire and EMS Coordinator. He was one of the first fire service representatives at the NYS Intelligence Center and was part of the development team for "Crossfire" the first NYS intelligence product specifically for non-law enforcement first responders. Since 2013 he has held a number of executive level positions within DHSES including Director of the Office of Emergency Management, Special Assistant to the Commissioner and currently, Deputy State Fire Administrator for Education for the Office of Fire Prevention and Control

(OFPC). In his current role Bill is responsible for all of OFPC's education related projects and initiatives and serves as Director of the New York State Academy of Fire Science in Montour Falls, NY. Immediately before joining DHSES, Bill served with the City of Albany Department of Fire and Emergency Services for 26 years, retiring at the rank of Deputy Chief.

Guy Swartwout

Guy Swartwout is a Fire Protection Specialist in the NYS Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services (DHSES), Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC). He holds the title of Branch Chief – Inspections & Investigations East: overseeing campus, State property, and group home inspections, campus fire safety education, public fire safety education, fire cause and origin investigations, and fire investigator training. He was formerly OFPC Branch Chief for Response Coordination. He is a former NYS fire instructor and holds national certification as a level II fire service instructor and level I Public Fire and Life Safety Educator. He is a 28-year veteran of the fire service, serving as chief of the Pottersville Volunteer Fire Department for the past 20 years. He has extensive experience in management and leadership. He is a nationally recognized speaker with many years of experience as a presenter, teacher, and leadership trainer, including safety education to groups from elementary schools through college and to faculty, staff and administrators.

Warren Abriel, Jr.

Warren W. Abriel, Jr. is a 44 year veteran of the City of Albany Fire Department. He currently serves as Chief of Department. He has over 29 years' experience in upper management with the Department. He is a fourth generation member of the Department.

He received his Masters of Science Degree in Public Administration from Russell Sage College. He is an active member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, National Fire Protection Association, and the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs. Serves as member of the Fire Science Advisory Board, Schenectady County Community College. Since 1987 has served as Tutor/Advisor for Empire State College, SUNY. In this capacity teaches upper-level college courses to students in the United States, Canada and overseas. This program is the National Fire Academy's "Degrees at a Distance" program.

Developed the City of Albany Fire Department Hazardous Materials Plan. Designed, implemented and maintained the computerized data, scheduling and personnel system for the Albany Fire Department.

Has been point person at nearly every Arbitration over the past 25 years. Chaired the Apparatus Committee, writing specifications for apparatus purchased during the last 15 years. Coordinated the preparation and submission of several of the Department's "Fire Grant" requests.

Deborah Costa *(FEMA Region II: National Preparedness Division – Analysis and Integration Branch)*

Deborah currently holds a position in FEMA's National Preparedness Division as a specialist in preparedness and continuity of operations. In this position she supports state, local,

tribal and territorial partners in educating individuals and families about the importance of preparedness by encouraging the use of preparedness principals to make a safer, more secure society. She provides technical assistance and education about preparedness policies and programs which allow the community to be less vulnerable during a disaster and more able to rebuild afterward.

Ms. Costa promotes Continuity of Operations (COOP) planning to state and local entities. Providing guidance on COOP planning and the tasks required to develop, test, train, exercise and implement a plan. She prepares and supports key activities for all hazards COOP training including the facilitation of tabletop exercises. Collaboration with the emergency points of contact, providing guidance for establishing essential functions to ensure operations and resources continue with minimal disruption during emergencies.

Ms. Costa's past positions at FEMA include Recovery Coordination Specialist in the National Disaster Recovery Support Cadre at FEMA's Sandy Recovery Office in NJ. In this capacity Deborah played an integral role in the development of NJCAR (New Jersey Cultural Alliance for Response) and has continually helped guide them in achieving their statement of purpose by building relationships within the cultural community and with state and federal partners to create a collaborative network of stakeholders committed to strengthening New Jersey's cultural community. She was recently awarded the FEMA 2016 Administrator's Award for this effort.

Deborah is a graduate of New York University (NYU) where she received a Bachelor of Science with a double major in *Management & Organizational Behavior* as well as *Marketing*.

Lori Foley

Lori Foley is an emergency management specialist at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and is detailed to the Smithsonian Institution. She's the administrator of the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, a partnership of 42 national service organizations and federal agencies, co-sponsored by FEMA and the Smithsonian, and founded to protect cultural heritage from the damaging effects of natural disasters and other emergencies. Lori was previously VP of Emergency Programs at Heritage Preservation, where her responsibilities included connecting cultural stewards with emergency managers at all levels of government through such programs as Alliance for Response and the State Heritage Emergency Partnership. Following Heritage Preservation's dissolution in June 2015, she helped settle Heritage Preservation's emergency programs into their new home, the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation (FAIC). Lori previously worked at the Northeast Document Conservation Center and has lectured and conducted numerous workshops on emergency preparedness and response across the U.S. and internationally. She is a member of the statewide cultural heritage emergency network COSTEP Massachusetts (which evolved from an AFR Boston forum in 2003), a member of FAIC's National Heritage Responders, and serves on AFR's advisory committee.

Barbara Lilley

Barbara is currently the Program Officer for the New York State Program for the Conservation and Preservation of Library Research Materials at the New York State Library which provides over \$2 million in grants for the preservation of mainly paper based materials. She also provides consultant services regarding preservation throughout the state. She is also the State Aid Coordinator for approximately \$90 million in state aid to libraries and library systems.

Previously she was the Head of the preservation Reformatting Department, Preservation Division for Columbia University Libraries, and Project Coordinator for the Foundations of Western Civilization Preservation Project, an NEH funded project, also at Columbia University.

Barbara has also worked at Northwestern University Library in Evanston Illinois as a Preservation librarian and she began her career in preservation as a Mellon Foundation Preservation Intern at Columbia University.

She is a graduate of the University of Michigan, College of Literature, Science and the Arts and School of Library and Information Studies.

Maria Holden

Maria Holden is Director of Archival Services at the New York State Archives, where she manages the State Archives repository of the archival records of state government and coordinates support services and funding to New York's historical records community. Disaster preparedness and response for records and cultural collections has been a focus throughout her career. In her current job, she takes a lead role in outreach to and advocacy for the historical records community statewide when disaster strikes. She serves as an agency liaison to the New York State Office of Emergency Management and in that role, helps staff the Emergency Operations Center and works to raise awareness of the needs of the cultural heritage community. Maria was a member of the team that created the Council of State Archivists Emergency Preparedness Initiative, which arose in response to the devastating hurricanes in the gulf region in 2005.

She is a graduate of Brown University and the Cooperstown Art Conservation Program.

Karen Kiorpes

Karen Kiorpes is the Head, Alice Hastings Murphy Preservation Department, University at Albany Libraries, a position she has held since 2001. In this capacity she is responsible for managing the preservation laboratory, including budget, grant programs, staffing, materials repair and reformatting, and equipment maintenance; the repair and conservation of collections for the University Libraries; managing the Libraries' brittle and irreparable books program, including selection, microfilming, photocopying, and scanning; participating in emergency preparedness and response, environmental control, staff training, and other

preventive activities; coordinating preservation initiatives with other departments and units; and participating in digital initiatives, including serving as a resource person for the preservation of digital assets.

Karen holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Cooper Union in New York City and a Master of Art Conservation from Queens University in Kingston, Ontario. After working for 5 years as a conservator for the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, in Fredericton, New Brunswick she went on to complete her MLIS at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Prior to coming to Albany Karen was the Field Service Representative at the Northeast Document Conservation Center in Andover, Massachusetts (1997 to 2001).

Eric Trahan

Eric Trahan has never lived outside of the Mohawk Valley. He grew up on a dairy farm near Fort Plain and has lived for over 20 years on the Brimstone Creek in Ames. From 1992 through 2012 he was the Director of the Canajoharie Library and Arkell Museum. Since 2012 he has been the Director of the Mohawk Valley Library System. Eric has direct experience with several flooding events including the June 28, 2006 federal 1650 disaster, tropical storms Irene and Lee and other more local flash floods in Fort Plain in 2013 and Ames in 2014.

Ellen McHale

Ellen McHale, Executive Director of the New York Folklore Society, Schenectady, oversees the statewide non-profit organization that provides technical assistance and professional development opportunities relating to the scholarship and presentation of oral history, folk arts, and traditional culture. A resident of the Schoharie Valley, she is currently engaged in an ongoing documentation project to capture the narratives of flood experiences during Irene and Lee.

McHale serves as a trainer for the Veteran's History Project for the Library of Congress and has assisted the LOC in developing a guide for "best practices." In 2012, she received an Archie Green Fellowship from the Library of Congress to collect oral narratives in the stable areas of several thoroughbred racetracks, for inclusion in the LOC digital collections. McHale has served as a Fulbright lecturer at the Institute for Folklife Studies at the University of Stockholm, Sweden and currently teaches geography for Utica College.

Nicole Doherty

Nicole began as the Records Retention Coordinator for Schoharie County's local government in May of 2013. As coordinator, she oversees records of all media content created by twenty-two county offices, agencies and departments. Through the Records Management program, Nicole ensures that records are retained per established retention periods, provides off-site storage for inactive local government records and coordinates certified destruction of all obsolete records. Additional components of the program include guidance on proper records management procedures and policies, ensuring security and accessibility of records, and focusing on improvements to and migration of electronic records creation,

storage and disposition. She has created and implemented into the program a quarterly issued newsletter, *For The Record*. Assistance is also provided to village and town clerks when requested. Through the Archives program, she assists in the identification and preservation of historical/archival records. Nicole's most recent accomplishments as the Records Retention Coordinator has been to prepare and submit a Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund (LGRMIF) grant through the NYS Archives and has just recently been awarded the Wheeler B. Melius Award for Excellence in Records Management by the New York Association of Local Government Records Officers (NYALGRO).

Nicole resides in the town of Schoharie NY along with her husband (Matt), son (Jacob) and daughter (Marion). Her family also includes their golden retriever (Jaxson), two cats (Katy Ann and Simon) and two Flemish giant rabbits (Thunder and Bullet). In her spare time, Nicole enjoys reading, canvas painting and writing poetry.