



Reese Norris

A Mississippi native, J. Reese Norris, is in his thirteenth year as Director of Choirs at Hernando Middle School, and seventh year as the Director of Music, at Hernando United Methodist Church. Under Reese's direction, the

Hernando Singers have performed in many esteemed concert venues throughout the United States, including a performance in New York City's famed Carnegie Hall. J. Reese Norris received a BME from Delta State

University and an MME from Florida State University. Reese has enjoyed

the privilege of studying with Nancy Moore, Judy Bowers, Kevin Fenton, and Andre Thomas.

In 2005, Reese was named Delta State University's "Music Alumnus of the Year". Reese has served as President of the Mississippi Chapter of the Music Educators National Conference, and as Chair of the Mississippi chapter of the American Choral Directors Association. He has also served as Chair of the American Choral Director's Association Junior-High Honor Choir (Southern Division). Reese and his wife Joelle, reside in Senatobia, MS, with their pet snake Zeus.

Andrea Dismukes



Andrea Dismukes has worked with such reputable conductors as John Rutter, Dr. Sandra Willetts, Dr. Gerald Welker, Dr. George Mabry, Dr. Lonnie McCalister and Dr. David Holsinger. As a current member of Choral Arts, she sings under the direction of Dr. William R. Green.

Dismukes received a Bachelor of Music Education from Lee, having studied privately with Virginia Horton, soprano. At Austin Peay State University, she studied with Dr. Sharon Mabry, mezzo-soprano, a featured writer for the NATS Journal. While attending the University of Alabama, Dismukes studied

voice with Dr. Susan Fleming, mezzo-soprano.

An Assistant Professor of Music, Andrea Dismukes has served in the Department of Vocal Music of Lee University's School of Music since 1992. From 1993-1999, she conducted the women's chorus (Ladies of Lee), which toured Israel, five Abaco Islands of the Bahamas, 27 states of the U.S. including Alaska, and produced four recordings. The Ladies of Lee performed annually for the Biltmore Estate Candlelight Christmas Evenings in Asheville, North Carolina.

Serving as Chair of the Department of Vocal Music from 2001-2005, Dismukes was responsible for building a highly qualified and experienced voice faculty. She assisted in the development of two new performance degree programs—the Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and the Master of Music in Vocal Performance. She also assisted in the preparation of the NASM review and site visit (2003-2004) that resulted in the full accreditation of the School of Music.

Andrea Dismukes currently teaches Diction for voice majors (English, Italian, German, French), maintains a sizable private voice studio, and continues to pursue performance and ministry opportunities as Assistant Professor of Voice in Lee University's School of Music.

Dr. Jamila McWhirter

Associate Professor, Choral Music Education

Jamila L. McWhirter serves as Associate Professor of Choral Music Education and Coordinator of Music Education Studies at Middle Tennessee State University where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in choral music education and music education methods. She holds degrees from Southwest Baptist University (B.M.E.), Central Missouri State University (M.A.) and the University of Missouri (Ph.D.). Before coming to Murfreesboro, McWhirter taught choral music and served as a fine arts department chair in the public schools of Missouri and served as adjunct faculty for Central Missouri State University, Stephens College, and Missouri Baptist University. She was also awarded a position as a doctoral teaching assistant at the University of Missouri – Columbia.

McWhirter currently serves as the SMTE State Chair, TMEA Higher Education Chair, and MTVA Collegiate Chair. She has also served as the TMEA CMENC Faculty Advisor through which she founded/organized the first Tennessee CMENC State Wide Fall Kick-Off. As TMEA Higher Education Chair, she has also initiated and organized the first Tennessee All-Collegiate Choir and All-Collegiate Band performances. In the past, she has served on the boards of the Missouri Choral Directors Association, Missouri Music Educators Association, Missouri Fine Arts Academy, and festival rating committees for the Missouri State High School Activities Association.



McWhirter serves as a presenter, clinician, guest conductor, and adjudicator throughout the United States. Her music education research has been published in the Journal of Research in Music Education and presented nationally including the National MENC Conventions in Salt Lake City and Anaheim, the MTNA National Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Symposium in Oklahoma City, the Society of Music Teacher Education National Symposium in Greensboro. Recently she had served as a guest conductor, adjudicator, or clinician in Alabama, California, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Tennessee. Over the years her choirs and voice students have been selected for many honors, including the ACDA National High School Honor Choir, ACDA National Women's Honor Choir, Missouri All-State Choirs, and MMEA State Convention. In 2009, the MTSU Women's Chorale was selected by audition to perform at Carnegie Hall for the 70th Anniversary Gala Celebration of Shawnee Press and also was invited to sing at St. Malachy's The Actor's Church while in New York. She has been named numerous times to Who's Who in America, Who's Who Among American Women, Who's Who Among America's Teachers, Who's Who in American Education and the National Chancellor's List. She was recently honored as one of the 100 Most Beautiful People of Murfreesboro by the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Her music education research has been published in the Journal of Research in Music Education and presented at the National MENC Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. She was also recently a presenter at the MTNA National Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Symposium in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

McWhirter's memberships include Pi Kappa Lambda, ACDA, MENC, SMTE, TMEA, MTVA, CMS and patroness member of Sigma Alpha Iota. She is in her 22nd year of teaching and 6th year at MTSU.

