Mary Chapin Carpenter  
Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter

Bradford Cobb  
Partner, Direct Management Group, Inc.; originally from Tunica, MS, and a University of Mississippi graduate; manages careers of Katy Perry and Adam Lambert, among others

William Dunlap  
Award-winning artist and visual arts commentator for WETA-TV's "Around Town" on PBS

Eric Etheridge  
Editor for Rolling Stone, the New York Observer, and Harper's; website designer for the New York Times and Microsoft; photographer/author of Breach of Peace: Portraits of the 1961 Freedom Riders

W. Ralph Eubanks  
Author of The House at the End of the Road: The Story of Three Generations of an Interracial Family in the American South and Ever Is a Long Time: A Journey into Mississippi’s Dark Past; Visiting Professor of Southern Studies, English, and Honors, Center for the Study of Southern Culture, University of Mississippi; former Eudora Welty Visiting Scholar in Southern Studies, Millsaps College; former director of publishing, The Library of Congress

Morgan Freeman  
One of the most highly regarded talents in the film industry; Academy Award winner, recipient of three Obie awards and a Golden Globe award

John Grisham  
Best-selling novelist whose works have been translated into 40 languages with nine novels that have been turned into films.

Dan Jordan  
Historian and author; retired director of Monticello; former vice-chair of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; former chair of the Advisory Board of the National Park Service; founding partner, Bryan & Jordan Consulting, LLC

Mary Lynn Kotz  
Journalist and author/biographer whose subjects have ranged from civil rights and women's rights to art, including Upstairs at the White House, Rauschenberg: Art and Life

Ebony Lumumba  
Chairman, Department of English, Jackson State University; former Chairman, Department of English, Tougaloo College; 2013 Eudora Welty Foundation Graduate Research Fellow; 2014 Humanities Teacher of the Year for Tougaloo College; First Lady of Jackson, Mississippi

Margaret McMullan  
Award-winning novelist and writer of short stories and essays; former Melvin M. Peterson Endowed Chair in Literature, University of Evansville, Evansville, Indiana

Rob McQuilkin  
Eudora Welty’s literary agent, Massie & McQuilkin Literary Agents, New York, New York
Roger Mudd
Retired host of “The History Channel” and for many years a national television anchor and correspondent

Andrea Overby
Member, Board of Trust, Belmont University; Board Member, The Next Door, Inc.; Past Chair, Mississippi University for Women (MUW) Foundation; Past President, MUW Alumni Association

Charles Overby
Former Chairman, CEO, and president/ Freedom Forum and Diversity Institute and CEO/Newseum

Randall Pinkston
Adjunct Professor of Journalism, University of Mississippi Meek School of Journalism—Winter Session; Semi-retired; correspondent, Al Jazeera America; long-time news correspondent with CBS; recipient of three national Emmy awards

Clyda Rent
Rent Consulting Group; former president of Mississippi University for Women (MUW), where she initiated the Welty Symposium

Susan Shreve
Novelist, essayist; Professor of English at George Mason University; former president of the PEN/Faulkner Foundation

Lee Smith
Award-winning author of novels and short stories; charter member of Fellowship of Southern Writers; recipient of American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Literature, Thomas Wolfe Award, the Robert Penn Warren Prize for Fiction, and two O. Henry Awards

Kathryn Stockett
Author of best-seller The Help, her first novel; native of Jackson, Mississippi; graduate of the University of Alabama; lived and worked in New York for 20 years; now residing with her daughter in Atlanta, Georgia

Clifton Taulbert
Pulitzer Prize-nominated author; widely-known speaker and founder of The Building Community Institute; most recently, the author of The Invitation

Tate Taylor
Actor, director, screenwriter, and producer; director of “The Girl on the Train”; writer, director, and producer of “Get On Up” (The James Brown Story) and “The Help,” which received four Academy Award nominations and Best Supporting Actress Award

Alfred Uhry
Award-winning playwright; the recipient of both a Pulitzer Prize and an Academy Award for “Driving Miss Daisy” and Tony Awards for “The Last Night of Ballyhoo” and “Parade”; adapted Welty’s “The Robber Bridegroom” for Broadway

Gayle L. Wicker
Mississippi Director, Visions to Learn; literacy advocate; served as the co-chair and chair of the Reading Is Fundamental Gift of Reading Gala; former Coordinator of Student Services at the University of Mississippi in Tupelo; community volunteer