

Awards

Archie Motley Memorial Scholarship for Students of Color Essay

By Valeria Davila



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I am incredibly grateful and honored to receive the 2020 Midwest Archives Conference Archie Motley Memorial Scholarship for Students of Color.

Born and raised in Argentina by immigrant parents, my fascination with images began as a teenager, going through my family photo albums to access an elusive past that was yet part of my identity. That personal exercise, and later on, my undergraduate studies in photography and film, forged an understanding of images and archives as fragile yet powerful and complex devices, where personal and collective memories collide. During my last year in college, two experiences were critical to my involvement in audiovisual preservation: on one

hand, independently coproducing *Mamadua: Nacer en Conciencia*, a documentary film on women's rights during childbirth. Coproducing this film, I was able to explore the role of documentation in human rights activism. Additionally, I landed a job at Cinecolor Digital Argentina, where, over the course of four years, I would help digitally restore my home country's film heritage for posterity.

My journey in libraries began in 2016 at the Oregon State University Libraries and Press (OSULP) shortly after I moved to the United States, specifically to Oregon. There, I digitized and helped make materials from the Special Collections and Archives Research Center available online. At OSULP, I also preserved my first film collection—a 1959 film series on Oregon's prisons, hospitals, and schools for people with disabilities—after attending the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) 2017 Film Preservation and Restoration School Latin America. Serving underserved communities and better representing, preserving, and providing access to their stories is not only the focus of my current work as a 2019–2021 OSULP Diversity Scholar, but my drive as an archivist. I am currently pursuing a master of library and information science degree with an archives concentration hoping to further this work.

By financially supporting my education through this scholarship, MAC has offered a vote of confidence in me, my journey, and my destiny in archives, for which I am extremely grateful.