

Awards and Scholarships

Archie Motley Memorial Scholarship for Students of Color

By Rebekah McFarland, Sisters of the Living Word

The Archie Motley Memorial Scholarship for Students of Color is dedicated to providing financial assistance to BIPOC students pursuing graduate education in archival administration and to encouraging ethnic diversity in the Midwest Archives Conference and the archival profession as a whole. The Archie Motley Memorial Scholarship Committee received three complete applications from which they unanimously agreed to award the scholarships to Yharnet Browne and Aparna Subramanian.

Yharnet Browne is a student at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minnesota, with a passionate interest in community archives and underrepresented histories. Recently, Browne was able to assist at the George Floyd Global Memorial in Minneapolis, cleaning, rehousing, assessing, and creating an inventory of items coming into the collection. This experience, as well as being able to attend the panel “The Revolution Will Be Archived” hosted by @blackwomenradicals on Instagram last June, invigorated Browne, who writes, “I desire to be an archivist with resources to succeed in preserving documentation from historical moments, social movements, and underrepresented communities. With my master’s degree as the theoretical backbone to archival administration, I hope to promote inclusion and recognition of diverse narratives by processing and understanding the materials in collections without bias. I wish to partner with community archives like those featured in the ‘Revolution’ panel to give power back to communities by owning their narratives and increasing sustainability of their collections.” In addition to Browne’s passion, she demonstrates a strong understanding of archival concepts and detail. Speaking of an assignment in which students were required to design a theoretical archive, one of Browne’s recommenders writes, “her description, documents and plans were so plausible and detailed that I often forgot her institution was fictitious and the work was that of a student.” The committee believes that Yharnet Browne will be an incredible asset to the profession and is happy to support her on her educational journey.

Aparna Subramanian is a student in New York University’s Moving Image Archiving and Preservation (MIAP) program. She is interested in the ways in which an increased focus on media preservation and archiving can enhance India’s cultural heritage and has done a great deal of work toward that end. With this in mind, Subramanian is no stranger to advocacy and outreach. One of her recommenders writes, “Aparna spearheaded renewed outreach to small historical organizations with hidden audiovisual collections on Long Island, Brooklyn, and Queens. She contacted over 50 organizations and managed to connect with nearly a dozen to help us pivot to a newly developed in-depth interview needed to continue gathering research information and identifying potential hands-on work. In addition, she organized our first project webinar and began the research for an audio digitization kit we will be using for select partners over the next year. Her work helped reinvigorate the project and move objectives forward.” Subramanian’s passion was made very clear in her application essay, as she discussed her focus on uplifting Indian cultural heritage and media. She writes, “India has a rich cultural heritage that has suffered from decades of disinterest in its preservation. I intend to advocate for a cultural shift in my country to focus on archiving and preservation, in order to prevent the loss of a vital facet of our history.” The committee is pleased to be able to support Aparna Subramanian as she continues her archival education and work.