

Awards and Scholarships

Archie Motley Memorial Scholarship for Students of Color

By Yharnet Browne



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I am very honored to be a recipient of the 2021 Archie Motley Memorial Scholarship for Students of Color.

I recently graduated from St. Catherine University with my master's in library and information science (MLIS) specializing in archives and special collections. I took advantage of what the MLIS program had to offer both inside and outside the classroom. I joined the student chapters of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) and the American Library Association (ALA). I was treasurer of ALA for two years. I connected with several professors during my graduate program, including the former advisor for ALA, Dr. Sarah Park Dahlen, and my MLIS advisor, Heather Carroll, who recommended I apply for this scholarship. I appreciated that both professors of archives and special collections ensure that professional experiences are a core component in their classes. I gained experience in archival processing at the Vikings Museum & Archive in spring 2019 and in preservation at the George Floyd Global Memorial (GFGM) in fall 2020.

Serving at GFGM was an honor and very humbling because it represents a topic I care deeply about: the

continued police brutality against Black Americans. I struggled when racial tensions intensified throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. I am still terrified to be approached by a police officer to this day, and I do everything in my power to avoid it. After I learned about this project from Heather Carroll in August 2020, I jumped at the opportunity to use my educational and professional experiences as activism and resistance.

GFGM Caretakers bring offerings from the memorial at 38th Street and Chicago Avenue into the workspace at Pillsbury House and Theater. There they are preserved and/or conserved after they have lived out their life of protest in George Floyd Square. Offerings consist of flowers, letters, protest signs, rocks, protests, and other ephemera. Each offering represents how individuals were personally impacted by George Floyd's murder. As a reminder of the tragedy that sparked global protests, I assisted with inventorying the thousands of offerings and preparing them for storage. I want to diversify the archival profession so underrepresented communities can manage their own collections and express their stories authentically just like Minneapolis residents and the Floyd family have done—they intentionally took charge to preserve the truth.

I successfully graduated with honors as an awardee of the Sister Marie Cecilia Marzolf, CSJ Founder's Award for exceptional MLIS graduates and a nomination to join Beta Phi Mu, the LIS honor society. The Motley Scholarship helped lessen my financial burden by reducing my student loan debt, which increases money saved to move into my own apartment. For further professional development, I work as the Federal Cartridge Company Intern at the Anoka County Historical Society and the oral history intern at Minnesota Historical Society.

Again, I would like to reiterate how grateful I am to be chosen as a Motley Scholarship winner. Thank you, MAC, for supporting my education. I will continue to become an archivist who promotes social justice principles and diversifies archives by amplifying marginalized voices.