

## Awards and Scholarships

### Archie Motley Memorial Scholarship for Students of Color

By Mary Lodu



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I am sincerely honored to have been selected as the recipient of the 2022 Midwest Archives Conference Archie Motley Memorial Scholarship for Students of Color. I will be attending the University of Wisconsin–Madison this fall to begin my master’s in library and information science with a concentration in archives.

My interest in archives developed in 2011 after South Sudan gained independence from Sudan and became the youngest country in the world. My family fled to the United States in 1995, and, up until the secession, I had limited knowledge about Sudan’s long and complicated history. My eagerness to learn more led me on a

never-ending quest to uncover digitally available materials on Sudan, which has proven to be difficult at times. Due to the legacy of colonialism, the bulk of the records documenting Sudanese history are housed across institutions in London and Khartoum—rendering a significant portion of collections inaccessible to South Sudanese communities in the diaspora.

The Sudan Open Archive and Internet Archive are examples of digital libraries where I have cultivated my passion for working with digital collections in the last few years. For instance, I recently discovered a rendering of my family tree and a brief description of our tribe in a digital copy of the *Tribal Survey of Mongalla Province* (1921). Only two physical copies of this book are available in Minnesota, and I would not have been able to uncover this resource as easily without online access. Over the years, I’ve become increasingly interested in learning more about community-centered approaches to archives and digital technologies that enable wider access to historically and culturally relevant materials.

My journey in libraries and archives first began in 2017 as a project coordinator for Umbra Search African American History. Umbra Search is a digital library that aggregates materials documenting African American history and cultural life from archives, libraries, museums, and other repositories across the United States. I was also a digitization worker at the Hennepin County Library digitizing photographs that document housing and urban renewal projects in Minneapolis during the twentieth century. In my current role as an archival digitization technician at the Minnesota Historical Society, I’ve developed many valuable skills and connections that will help guide me through the next chapter of my education.

The Archie Motley Scholarship will allow me to focus on my studies without added financial stress, for which I’m grateful. My hope is to take full advantage of any and all opportunities that come out of this experience and to learn and grow from new challenges that I might face. Most important, I look forward to building and sustaining new connections and friendships with information professionals, not just in my graduate program, but in the Midwest Archives Conference community and beyond.