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2021 Scholarship for Diversity in Librarianship Recipients

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2021 Scholarship for Diversity in Librarianship Recipients

Abstract

At the annual South Carolina Library Association conference, students are honored that received a Scholarship for Diversity in Librarianship. There were six library school students that received the 2021 scholarship.

Keywords

Scholarship, MLIS students, diversity, librarianship

There were six recipients of the 2021 South Carolina Library Association Scholarship for Diversity in Librarianship who were honored at the annual conference. Each library school student from the University of South Carolina submitted a photo and a brief biography which is listed below.

Here is the list of our scholarship recipients:

- Michael Brown
- Randy D. Heath
- Ashley McCants
- Elexis Thompson
- Mattie Denise Thompson-Long
- Anthony Willis

Michael Brown



Mr. Michael Brown is the second of eight children; four boys and four girls born to Mr. Michael Pye and Ms. Danelle Brown. He is the grandson of Mrs. Lucy G. Abram and Mrs. Paula Jo Brown. Michael was born in Dallas, Texas, and is a 2019 graduate of Morris College in Sumter, SC.

Michael is currently a graduate student at the University of South Carolina majoring in library and information science, while also completing his third year as an English language arts teacher for the Pickens County School District.

While his focus is on academic librarianship he does plan to go on and receive his certification to become a media specialist. Michael is a member of Sigma Tau Delta Honor Society, The NAACP, NCNW, SLIS, and Literacy-based organizations and communities.

After completing his degree and sequential specialization Mr. Brown plans to go on to receive his Ph.D. in language literacy and culture with the plans of working in academic librarianship and continuing to teach at the collegiate level.

Mr. Brown likes reading historical fiction, writing poems based on myths, and conducting diverse cultural inclusive literacy research.

He is grateful to be the recipient of the Scholarship for Diversity.

His motto is “Invest in yourself so that others will invest in you.”

Randy D. Heath



Randy Dantrell Heath is entering his seventh year with Richland Library in Columbia, SC, which was awarded the National Medal in 2017 by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and is currently serving as Branch Manager at Richland Library’s historic Edgewood location. Starting as a career coach, Randy provided one-on-one assistance to tailor and share crucial information with jobseekers. Then in 2018, he helped hire and lead a new team of employees through the construction of a state-of-the-art library location, which was transformed from a former retail space.

In his other roles, Randy is the co-lead of Richland Library’s Let’s Talk Race team, which has received national recognition for its efforts to create civic engagement, build community connections and engage in courageous conversations. He’s also a member of Richland Library’s first-ever Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Council and the co-director of Race to the Table SC.

Presently enrolled to obtain his Master of Library Science degree, Randy has a Bachelor’s degree in Business Management and Marketing from the University of South Carolina, training in Project Management and Service Design, and a graduate certificate from Richland Library’s Leadership program.

Randy was recently named an ALA Spectrum Scholar and University of South Carolina Augusta Baker Scholar. Randy is also the recipient of the SCLA Scholarship for Diversity in Librarianship.

Randy is a husband and father of four. He loves spending time with family and friends, volunteers as a youth basketball and baseball coach, and enjoys an occasional milkshake from his favorite spot, Marble Slab.

After completing his Master of Library Science degree, Randy plans to continue to work in library leadership and has ambitions to one-day work in library administration. Randy is considered a well-rounded leader with a thirst for continued professional, social, and community impact and engagement. He hopes to continue to expand his reach for influence and positive change as he continues to acquire the knowledge, skills, and experience to grow in his field. Randy is very grateful and honored to be the recipient of the SCLA Scholarship for Diversity in Librarianship.

Ashley McCants



Ms. Ashley McCants is currently a Masters of Library and Information Science student at the University of South Carolina. She has a Bachelors in Biology, from Claflin University, and a Masters in Public Health, with a concentration in Community Health and Prevention, from Drexel University. Ms. McCants is a member of the American Library Association, as well as the South Carolina Library Association. She considers her decision to pursue librarianship a

“happy accident,” because it found her.

Ms. McCants currently resides in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and works as a library technician at her local public library. She enjoys the academic environment and, upon completion of her degree, intends to pursue opportunities in this area. She is grateful to be the recipient of this scholarship and looks forward to contributing to the field of Library and Information Science.

Elexis Thompson

Elexis Thompson is a 23-year-old student at the University of South Carolina. She studies full-time, volunteers at the Richland County Library, and teaches English to youth who primarily speak Spanish. In the future, she plans to become a Youth Services Librarian, combining her love of children with her passion for diversity, equity, and inclusion. She is grateful to be the recipient of the Scholarship for Diversity.

Mattie Denise Thompson-Long

Ms. Mattie Denise Thompson-Long was born in Greer, SC. She is the proud daughter of Pastor and First Lady, Rev. Wendell & Mrs. Lillie Thompson of Greer, SC. Ms. Thompson-Long was educated in the Greenville County School System. She attended Woodland Elementary School, Greer Middle School, and later went on to obtain a Diploma from Greer High School in 1988. As a young woman, she attended USC Upstate where she earned a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science, and then went on to attend Converse College where she earned a Master's Degree in Elementary Education in 1996. She taught second and fourth grades in Prince Georges County, Maryland for seven years, and she taught for two years in Spartanburg County, South Carolina. She is currently employed full time by the Greenville County Library System as a Floater since 2010. She has been with the Greenville County Library System in some capacity since 2006. She started her first semester at the Graduate School of the University of

South Carolina in Columbia, SC in August. She is pursuing her Master's Degree in Library & Information Science. She is a member of the ALA, SCI-A, NAACP, and she is a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

Although these degrees and accomplishments are important, the most important thing to her is that she has served in the Ministry since March 2011. During her free time, she enjoys volunteering at her church, reading books on Theology, listening to gospel music, and spending time with her family. Mattie Thompson-Long is truly thankful to be one of the recipients of the 2021-2022 SCLA Diversity in Librarianship Scholarship. This will enable her to become a full time Librarian for the Greenville County Library System.

Anthony Willis



Anthony Willis is a MLIS candidate at the University of South Carolina. He is a resident of Florence, SC and has been employed with the Florence County Library since 2015, where he is currently working with systems services. After obtaining his master's, Anthony plans to continue working within the public library setting and applying his interest in technology to improve digital services for libraries. Anthony is grateful to receive the scholarship for diversity in librarianship and is excited to be working in a field where he can serve the community and help to fulfill their information needs.