

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
May 16–17, 2017  
Chicago, Illinois**

**Proposal for the Brenda S. Banks Travel Award  
(Prepared by Harrison W. Inefuku)**

**BACKGROUND**

Brenda S. Banks spent much of her career with the Georgia Department of Archives and History, starting as an assistant archivist and the only African American professional on staff, progressing through the ranks until her retirement as Deputy Director. She was an active member of the Society of American Archivists (SAA), serving as the 51<sup>st</sup> President, named a Fellow, and co-founded the Archivists and Archives of Color Section (then Roundtable). She dedicated herself to archival education and advancing diversity in the profession. A beloved colleague, mentor, and friend to many in SAA and AAC, Brenda passed away shortly before the 2016 SAA Annual Meeting in her hometown of Atlanta.

The Society of American Archivists recognizes, “the diversity of its membership and leaders, the profession, and the archival profession,” as a core organizational value. The importance of fostering diversity and inclusion within the profession is reiterated in Strategy 4.3 of SAA’s Strategic Plan, “Continue to enrich the association and the profession with greater diversity, in membership and expanded leadership opportunities,” and in SAA’s Statement on Diversity and Inclusion, which states, “SAA initiatives are focused primarily on achieving socio-cultural diversity and fostering inclusion within SAA.”

In support of this value, SAA provides several awards to support the education and professional development of graduate students of color. The F. Gerald Ham and Elsie Ham, Mosaic, and Josephine Forman Scholarships provide funds to defray the tuition costs of a graduate program in archival studies. The Harold T. Pinkett Minority Student Award provides graduate students of color travel support to attend the SAA Annual Meeting, while the Oliver Wendell Holmes Travel Award offers travel support to international students enrolled in archival studies graduate programs in the United States and Canada. The ARL/SAA Mosaic Program, in its second round of funding from IMLS, provides graduate students of color with financial support for tuition costs, travel support to attend the SAA Annual Meeting, and internship and mentorship experience. The Diversity Award recognizes individuals, groups, or organizations who have made significant achievements in advancing diversity in SAA, the profession, or the archival record.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Brenda S. Banks Award is proposed on behalf of AAC to honor Brenda's friendship, mentorship, and leadership in AAC, SAA, and the archival profession, and to continue Brenda's lifelong commitment to support, educate, and mentor archivists of color.

This award would fill a gap in SAA's diversity efforts by providing an individual of color employed in an archives (including archivists, technicians, and others with archival functions in their job responsibilities) an opportunity to attend their first SAA Annual Meeting to experience the professional development, leadership, and networking opportunities SAA offers. The award would complement the Harold T. Pinkett Minority Student Award, sponsored by AAC, which provides support for a graduate student of color to attend SAA's Annual Meeting. By targeting individuals who are already employed in an archives, this award will expand SAA's diversification efforts to include archival practitioners who did not enter the career through formal graduate education in archival studies, and/or who are employed by organizations that cannot afford to sponsor professional development, including community archivists, activist archivists, and librarians whose job responsibilities have evolved to include archival functions.

**Pros:** This award would be a lasting tribute to Brenda Banks, a beloved member of SAA and AAC, and continue her legacy of involvement in archival education initiatives. It would demonstrate SAA's continued commitment to increasing the diversity of its membership and the archival profession, complementing the Pinkett Minority Student Award. This award would also fill a gap, providing financial support to individuals of color working in archives to attend their first annual meeting and expanding the reach of SAA's travel awards portfolio to include working archival practitioners and archivists who did not complete a graduate program in archival studies.

**Cons:** This award will have a fiscal impact, which will require additional fundraising by the SAA Foundation.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the Brenda S. Banks Travel Award be established and awarded for the first time at the 2018 Annual Meeting;**

**THAT the SAA Awards Committee be responsible for administering the award; and**

**THAT the following language be incorporated into the full award description:**

### **Brenda S. Banks Travel Award**

#### **Purpose and Criteria for Selection:**

Created in 2017, this award recognizes and acknowledges individuals of color employed in archives, such as those of African, Asian, Latinx, Native American, Alaska Native, or Pacific Islander descent, who manifest an interest in becoming active members of the Society of American Archivists.

This award supports the Society of American Archivists' Archivists and Archives of Color Section's objectives of:

- Providing individuals of color employed in an archives with an opportunity for professional development and networking through engagement with SAA; and
- Promoting increased participation in SAA by individuals of color employed in an archives by exposing first-time Annual Meeting attendees to the experience of attending national meetings and encouraging them to join and remain members of the organization.

Recipients will be selected based on their submission of a completed application and the strength of their letter of support and personal statement. Personal statements will be evaluated on:

- Overall clarity;
- Understanding of professional goals;
- Description of benefits of attending the SAA Annual Meeting; and
- Explanation of commitment to SAA, diversity, and the profession.

**Eligibility:**

The applicant:

- Must be of American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander descent;
- Must be currently employed in an archives; and
- Shall not have previously attended an SAA Annual Meeting.

**Sponsor and Funding:**

Sponsored by the SAA Archivists and Archives of Color Section and funded through the SAA Foundation, the award is named in honor of Brenda S. Banks, Fellow and Past President of SAA and co-founder of the Archivists and Archives of Color Section.

**Prize:**

Up to two awards may be given during an awards cycle. Each recipient receives full complimentary registration and related expenses for hotel and travel to attend the SAA Annual Meeting during the year in which the award is received. In addition, each recipient receives a complimentary one-year membership in SAA.

**Selection Committee:**

The Brenda S. Banks Travel Award Subcommittee of the SAA Awards Committee is comprised of four members of the Society of American Archivists (one of whom will be the current junior co-chair of the Archivists and Archives of Color Section) and one of the co-chairs of the Awards Committee (*ex officio*). Of the three remaining members, one shall be appointed each year by the SAA President-elect to serve a three-year term, and shall serve as chair of the subcommittee in her/his third year.

**Application Deadline and Requirements:**

**All applications shall be submitted to SAA by February 28 of each year.**

Applications must include the following documents:

- A cover letter stating interest in the award and how the applicant meets eligibility requirements;
- Essay of no more than 500 words discussing the applicant’s professional goals and experience with and/or commitment to working with, or documenting and preserving the histories of communities of color;
- CV or resume;
- [Click here to download application form.](#)

Brenda Banks Travel Award Subcommittee  
 Society of American Archivists  
 17 North State Street, Suite 1425  
 Chicago, IL 60602-4061

Questions should be directed to the Chair of the Brenda S. Banks Travel Award Subcommittee.

**Support Statement:** The Brenda S. Banks Travel Award provides SAA with an opportunity to honor the legacy of Brenda Banks, support its commitment to diversify the organization and profession, and provide individuals of color employed by archives with opportunities for professional development and networking by supporting their attendance at their first SAA Annual Meeting.

**Impact on Strategic Priorities:** Addresses Goal 4: Meeting Members’ Needs, Strategy 4.3. Continue to enrich the association and the profession with greater diversity in membership and expanded leadership opportunities.

**Fiscal Impact:** This award would cover the annual meeting registration and associated travel costs for up to two individuals to attend the SAA Annual Meeting, as well as with one year of membership in SAA. The average fiscal impact of this award should approximate the fiscal impact of the Harold T. Pinkett Minority Student Award.

*Staff Note: Funds for this award would be drawn from the SAA Foundation’s Awards Fund. Cost per award may be estimated as follows:*

<i>Airfare =</i>	<i>\$ 350</i>
<i>Lodging =</i>	<i>\$ 800 (4n @ \$200)</i>
<i>Registration =</i>	<i>\$ 329 (based on current Early-Bird Member rate)</i>
<i>Membership =</i>	<i>\$ 164 (based on current ID4 level)</i>
 <i>TOTAL =</i>	 <i>\$1,643</i>