

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
January 23 – 26, 2013  
Chicago, Illinois**

**2010 Mosaic Scholar Reports  
(Prepared by: Michelle Light)**

**BACKGROUND**

The Mosaic Scholarship was created by the Council to advance SAA's strategic priority related to Diversity. Two scholarships were awarded in 2010 to LaNesha DeBardelaben (Indiana University-Bloomington) and Susan Gehr (San Jose State University), each of whom received a scholarship of \$5,000, a one-year complimentary membership in SAA, and a complimentary registration to *DC 2010*.

Award recipients are required to submit a 500-word report to the SAA Council upon completion of their second semester. DeBardelaben's 2010 report was missing from the August 2012 submission of the 2010 reports (Agenda Item 0812-1-V-K-MosaicScholars) and is now submitted in fulfillment of that requirement.

**Report from 2010 Scholar LANESHA DEBARDELEBEN (*Indiana University*)**

**The Archivist's Influence**

*LaNesha Gale DeBardelaben*



When I was notified that I was a recipient of the SAA Mosaic Scholarship, I was beyond ecstatic. It was one of the most meaningful awards that I had ever received. It confirmed my space in the archival field as an African American woman. Receiving the Mosaic Award was, for me, like an auspicious welcome-in gesture into an exciting field new to me.

Since receiving the 2010 award, I have made strides to live up to its ideals. I have graduated from the Indiana University School of Library Science program and serve as Director of Archives and Libraries for the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. I have attended all subsequent SAA Conferences in 2010, 2011, and 2012 and have enjoyed my experiences as a member of the SAA Mosaic Selection Committee.

Many lessons have been gleaned from my time as a new archivist and Mosaic Scholarship recipient. The first is that enthusiasm is an essential component to being an archivist that imparts influence. Enthusiasm is an attractive quality. We as archivists are in the business of attracting donors to entrust their collections to us, attracting users to utilize our repository's holdings, and attracting grant monies and collaborative partners to broaden our reach. Genuine enthusiasm is necessary in order to be effective in any of these areas of attraction. When an archivist is enthusiastic about their work and their collection, it draws in others and more likely produces successful outcomes.

Secondly, in order to be an archivist of influence, one must cultivate a passion for advocacy. Enthusiasm naturally leads to advocacy. When one is enthusiastic, he or she is more likely to be passionate about advancing the mission of their work and their collection. It is the duty of the archivist to articulate the importance of archives not only to the general public, but also to internal and external stakeholders within larger organizational structures. Archivists must be advocates both for preserving the past as well as advocates for enabling greater access to informational research sources that can elevate humanity.

Lastly, archivists must continually refine their technical skills in order to expand their influence. As Web 2.0 and social media outlets proliferate, archivists must remain as skilled as possible in information-based technologies. It enhances our ability to connect with users, and it validates our relevancy to meeting their needs.

We as archivists can spark and sustain transformation if we hone our abilities, tools, and resources effectively. We must, however, be creative problem solvers, as issues will demand innovative strategies and novel approaches. Through digitization and descriptive metadata efforts, archives will become even more accessible as scholarly resources that promote rich, vibrant, and well-founded scholarship. It is, indeed, an exciting time to be an archivist, to be a responsible steward that collects, organizes, preserves, and makes accessible valuable treasures that shape memory and identity. I am all the more prepared for the journey ahead as a result of receiving the SAA Mosaic Scholarship. I thank the Mosaic Selection Committee for making this career opportunity possible and worthwhile for me.