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Ref: Iris Leigh Barnes, Candidate for a 2018 SEMC JIMI John Kinard Scholarship

Dear Members of the SEMC JIMI Planning and Scholarship Committee:

It is my pleasure to recommend Ms. Iris Leigh Barnes for your consideration to award a **John Kinard Scholarship**. This recommendation comes with my highest endorsement.

I have had the distinct opportunity to work with Ms. Barnes since 2008 when I first contracted her to serve as a Preventative Conservator to clean and restore photographs and works on paper for the Lillie Carroll Jackson Civil Rights Museum (LCJM) in Baltimore (Morgan State University had acquired the museum in 1996, but closed its doors for extensive renovations). However, after her contract had been fulfilled, the core planning committee was impressed with her work and professionalism and asked Ms. Barnes to join our team during the restorative, redevelopment, and planning process to reopen the museum.

Ms. Barnes brings a diverse set of skills and dedication to any situation. I have watched as she brought ideas into fruition while serving as conservationist, preservationist, researcher, curator, graphic designer, and interpretive public program coordinator for the projects *Creating Memories: the Scrapbooks of James H. Gilliam Jr.* (2013), and *Faces of Freedom: The Upper Chesapeake, Maryland, and Beyond* (2014). She tackled each task with dedication and excellence garnering the attention of many media outlets. In particular, Ms. Barnes provided the intellectual leadership for the "Faces of Freedom" initiative spearheaded by the Hays-Heighe at Harford Community College for which she served in several capacities: steering committee co-chair, exhibit curator, exhibit graphic designer, and marketing graphic designer. The project was multi-faceted including several public engagement and interpretive programs. As a result of the project, Ms. Barnes and the Hays-Heighe House team were recognized with a Maryland Preservation Award for Excellence in Exhibitions and Programming by the Maryland Historical Trust, among the highest awards in the state for historic preservation.

At the first opportunity, I wanted to bring the talent and leadership that Ms. Barnes displays to Morgan on a full-time basis. That moment came in June 2015 when I invited Ms. Barnes to serve as Assistant Curator for LCJM to lead the museum in making its debut as a renewed and reinvented museum of the 21st century and she is doing just that. I am pleased to have Ms. Barnes on our team. Honestly, we could not do it without her; since 2008 her role in the museum began tangentially but grew exponentially as her initiative, skills, and leadership became overwhelmingly apparent.

She has recently been successful in attaining four financial awards from competitive grants within nine months for the museum. Of particular note is the National Park Service (NPS) Civil Rights Grant, which placed the museum on par with other icons such as the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church and Central High School, to name a few of the other recipients. She has led several graduate assistants and undergraduate interns. Three of the graduate students have moved on to positions at the NPS.

I know that her greatest contributions to the museum are yet to come and your Management Institute will be of great value in that regard. While Ms. Barnes has had formal training and successful work experience in the Museum and History disciplines, it would be to the mutual benefit of the museum, the community we serve, and Ms. Barnes, personally, to attain formal training in museum management in order to take the museum to higher levels. The workshop scholarship that you offer seems ideal, especially since, unfortunately, within the university's expansive system, a relatively new institution such as the LCJM has not yet been provided professional development benefits in its budget.

It is my recommendation that you consider Ms. Barnes—an exceptional preservationist, historian, scholar, curator, and overall museum leader on the rise—for your scholarship. I am confident that Ms. Barnes will make full use of the experience and knowledge that she gains and will continue to make great contributions to African American history and culture.

Sincerely,



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