

## **Julieann V. Nilson Scholarship Winners' Essay Spring 2025**

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I enrolled in Indiana University's Master of Library Science program to pursue my professional ambition of becoming a Latin American Studies Librarian. As someone who has lived in Colombia, earned a Master of Arts degree in Latin American Studies, and developed advanced proficiency in Spanish, my philosophy toward librarianship has in large part been influenced by my experiences in academia and abroad. From 2016 to 2017, I worked as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant at the Universidad Tecnológica del Chocó which is located in one of the poorest and most remote regions of Colombia. During this time, and in my subsequent trips abroad, I came to appreciate how difficult it is for Afro-Colombian and Indigenous students and scholars in rural Colombia to not only gain access to physical library collections and digital resources, but to also have their research published and translated.

As a Latin American Subject Librarian, I want to strengthen ties with libraries and other academic institutions across Latin America and explore ways to democratize access to digital resources and publishing. I further want to encourage students in the United States to critically analyze traditional perceptions of scholarship in Latin American Studies and to question whether scholars from Afro-LatinX, Indigenous, and other historically marginalized groups are clearly represented in library collections and other areas of academia. I am similarly eager to collect materials in Haitian Creole and to build relationships with information institutions in Haiti. While obtaining my Master of Arts degree in Latin American Studies from Vanderbilt University, I had the opportunity to take seven Haitian Creole language courses and participate in Florida International University's Haitian Summer Institute. These opportunities sparked my passion for Haitian Studies, and I am currently taking advantage of my time in Bloomington to conduct research on the origins and significance of the Haitian Creole-English Bilingual Dictionary produced by the Indiana University Creole Institute in 2007.

The goal of my research is to explore how a group of scholars based in Indiana were able to produce the most authoritative and complete Haitian-Creole dictionary in print. Moving forward, as an aspiring Latin American Subject Librarian, I want to challenge the traditional narratives of failure and poverty surrounding Haiti by collecting materials that capture the nation's complex history and culture. Indeed, one of my professional ambitions is to someday develop one of the preeminent Haitian Creole collections in the United States. I believe that by actively collecting and promoting literary and academic works published by Haitians and other historically marginalized groups I can encourage patrons in the United States to begin to look at Haiti, and other parts of Latin America, through a different lens.