

Michelle Mann

**Graduation Year:** Senior

**College:** Arts & Letters

**Major(s):** Africana Studies

**Minors(s):** Business Economics

**Scholar Group Membership:** N/A

**Did you received other funding for this project?:** N/A

**Could you have completed this project without CUSE funding?** No

**More details on CUSE funding assistance?**

**Project Title:** Shunned Soldiers: Uncovering twentieth-century political activism in the black LGBTQ community

**Project Location:** New York Public Library, New York, New York

**ND Faculty Mentor:** Dr. Richard Pierce

**Project Type:** Research

**Why did you undertake this project/experience?** Deepen your knowledge of a topic or issue, Research/experience necessary for senior thesis or capstone project

**Did your funded experience help you:**

**[Deepen your understanding of your coursework or field of study]:** Very Much

**[Discern your interests and post-bac goals]:** Yes

**[Become confident in your ability to set and achieve your goals]:** Very Much

**[Gain a more nuanced view of local, national, or global communities]:** Very Much

**[Improve your written and verbal communications skills]:**Very Much

**Tell us about your experience.**

During my research trip to New York I participated in archival research related to the political activism of black lesbians and gays as well as the organizational rhetoric of gay liberation organizations during the 1950-1980s. Fortunately, I was able to study more collections than I was originally anticipating. As a result of my trip, I gained a better understanding of how gay liberation organizations borrowed from black-led movements. Additionally, I gained considerable insight into the ways in which black gay rights organizations and individuals experienced challenges from both the black and gay community.

**Describe the impact this project had, both on you as a student-scholar and on the people you worked with.**

This project gave me more immediate exposure to archival research and, personally, allowed me to take an intimate look into my own history.

**Describe how this experience is connected to your plans as a student or future professional.**

This project provided the bulk of the primary research for my senior thesis in Africana Studies. While thesis research is a common topic, my thesis topic was of great personal importance to me and having the opportunity to complete this research was the pinnacle of my experience as a scholar.

**What advice would you give other students who are planning to pursue similar projects?**

Don't be afraid to reach out to your adviser/mentor for help and advice even with the smallest questions and ideas.

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