The James B. Duke Memorial Library

Office of the Director

July 16, 2019

**JAMES B. DUKE MEMORIAL LIBRARY ANNOUNCES INEZ MOORE PARKER FELLOWSHIP**

The James B. Duke Memorial Library at Johnson C. Smith announces the Inez Moore Parker Fellowship in honor of Mrs. Inez Moore Parker and her daughter Amelia Parker. Mrs. Parker became an English professor at Johnson C. Smith University in 1944. She became interested in recording the history of JCSU after serving the University for 30 years. Mrs. Parker started collecting documents and photographs which contributed to her writing the Biddle-Johnson C. Smith University Story, published in 1975. She also developed the Black Culture Center at JCSU by collecting the University’s history, local and national African American materials and the Black Presbyterian Church records. On November 1977, the Black Culture Center officially became the Inez Moore Parker Archives and Research Center. The dedication highlighted the great work of Mrs. Parker towards collecting and preserving the African American experience.

After Mrs. Parker’s death in 1984 the archives laid dormant for fifteen years. Part of the new opening of the James B. Duke Memorial Library in 1999 included an archives storage and an archives reading room. The University hired Mrs. Monika Rhue that same year to reorganize the archives. Mrs. Parker’s daughter, Amelia Parker learned about this effort and secured funding from the Ford Foundation in the amount of $15,000 towards the reorganization and the hiring of a part-time assistant. To date, Amelia Parker sends flowers each year in honor of her mother’s legacy to the library.

September 2019, the James B. Duke Memorial Library will be celebrating twenty-years of service in its current space. The Inez Moore Parker Archives and Research Center has become essential to students, faculty, staff and the Charlotte community. The Inez Moore Parker Fellowship seeks to honor the Parkers’ contributions to JCSU and to the African American experience. The Fellowship will introduce JCSU students, faculty, staff, and the Charlotte community to the archival materials housed at the center, promote the use of primary resources, and cultivate a culture of understanding for the African American’s contribution to Charlotte, North Carolina and American history. The Fellowship will also expose JCSU students to career opportunities in archives, conservation, public history and the humanities.

Mrs. Rhue is pleased to announce Dr. Shanna Benjamin as the inaugural Inez Moore Parker Fellow. Dr. Shanna Benjamin was awarded a national fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies. Dr. Benjamin will be a residence at the Inez Moore Parker Archives and Research Center. Dr. Benjamin taught English at Johnson C. Smith University and she served as a professor and Dean of the College of English at Grinnell College in Iowa. Dr. Benjamin is working on a book chronicling Nellie Y. McKay. McKay was a co-editor of The Norton Anthology of African American Literature, the groundbreaking anthology that established a tradition of black writing. She was also a literary scholar who created space for black literature, black scholars, and black feminist thought. Dr. Benjamin’s book, Half in Shadow, is an intellectual biography of McKay that traces twentieth-century black literary history through her life and documents the strategies black women employ to fulfill professional aspirations beyond domestic labor.

The Inez Moore Parker Fellowship will provide space for the fellows to do research and access to the archives and library resources. The fellows will provide a series of discussions in the library that weave critical thinking into undergraduate research at JCSU, assist JCSU’s faculty in using and infusing archives resources in the classroom and their personal research, assist the library in developing an archival training program, and assist in selecting the next fellow. The Inez Moore Parker Fellowship maximum term is two years.

Sincerely,



Monika Rhue, MLIS

Director of Library Services and Curation

James B. Duke Memorial Library

Johnson C. Smith University