

# Praveena Fernes (NTC '18) awarded George C. Marshall Scholarship

|  
Caitlin Harvey [charvey8@tulane.edu](mailto:charvey8@tulane.edu)

[View PDF](#)

The Honors Program of Newcomb-Tulane College is pleased to announce that Praveena Fernes has been awarded the George C. Marshall Scholarship for graduate study in the United Kingdom. She will pursue a Master of Science degree at The School of Oriental and African Studies in Environment, Politics, and Development in her first year and a Master of Science degree at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in Public Health in her second year. Praveena is from Fremont, California. She is Tulane University's 24th Marshall Scholar.

In 2018, Praveena earned her Bachelor of Science in Public Health from Tulane University, where she graduated summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, and with departmental honors. Her Honors Thesis was entitled "Storytelling Used as a Public Health Tool: Healthy Living and Food Access in New Orleans" and her committee members included Professors Elisabeth Gleckler, Jylana Sheats, and Rebecca Mark. This project serves as a testament not only to her intellectual curiosity and dedication to engaged scholarship, but to her commitment to leadership in the field of public health, promoting awareness and finding realistic solutions to pressing public health issues that have measurable impact on human lives. Praveena's research includes the perspectives of those stakeholders whom such solutions affect, and to conduct her research, she incorporated a tool designed by Stanford University, which enlists citizen scientists to engage in storytelling through photography and geocoded audio narratives to identify and prioritize the most pressing issues in the affected community, in this case, the New Orleans community.

At Tulane, Praveena was inducted into the prestigious William Wallace Peery Society and was awarded the Community Service Fellowship and the Presidential Scholarship. Named as the lead Community Engagement Advocate (CEA) for

Tulane's Center for Public Service, Praveena facilitated over 70 interactive workshops designed to create brave spaces for students to explore a wide range of topics race, class, gender, sexuality, able-ism, religion, and community engagement to prepare them to navigate some of society's most pressing challenges related to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Praveena was awarded a US Student Fulbright Grant in 2019 to pursue a research project in Rasi Salai, Thailand. She is conducting citizen-science research in dam-affected wetlands communities along the Mekong River with Stanford University's Our Voice Framework to better understand community health and built environment issues. She is also curating a traveling object-based storytelling exhibit to illuminate villagers' evolving relationship to the Mekong River and wetlands over the past quarter century, featuring meaningful yet ordinary objects paired with first-person accounts. This exhibit will take place in Thailand and in the United States upon her return to foster conversations about identity, climate change, and successful grassroots movements in the Global South. In addition, since 2017, Praveena has served as Director of Storytelling and Partnerships with the Radical Grandma Collective. Here she connects traditional Thai weavers to the global marketplace so they can sell their scarves to raise funds to combat environmental injustice in their community of Na Nong Bong. She also develops online storytelling content and initiates partnerships with National Geographic to promote women supporting women in environmental justice work.

Marshall Scholarships finance young Americans of high ability to study for a graduate degree in the United Kingdom. Up to forty Scholars are selected each year to study at the graduate level at an UK institution in any field of study. As future leaders, with a lasting understanding of British society, Marshall Scholars strengthen the enduring relationship between the British and American peoples, their governments and their institutions. Marshall Scholars are talented, independent and wide-ranging, and their time as Scholars enhances their intellectual and personal growth. Their direct engagement with Britain through its best academic programs contributes to their ultimate personal success. Applicants are judged on academic merit, leadership potential and ambassadorial potential.

For questions, please contact Charlotte Maheu Vail, Director, Honors Program and Caitlin Harvey, Director, Marketing and Communications, Newcomb-Tulane College