



SOMMFOUNDATION, IN COOPERATION WITH BLACK WINE PROFESSIONALS, AWARDS THE COURT OF MASTER SOMMELIERS BIPOC SCHOLARSHIP

SommFoundation congratulates Eva Zhen and Charles “Chuck” Nix II, recipients of the 2020 Court of Master Sommeliers BIPOC Scholarship. Each were awarded \$5365 in general education scholarship funds to assist with professional studies and certifications.

This scholarship is sponsored by the Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas (CMS-A). They are taking action to increase diversity and inclusion throughout the hospitality industry and at every stage of the journey to becoming a Master Sommelier. The scholarship is funded in part by proceeds from the CMS-A online learning programs. Two anonymous sources also donated funds toward this scholarship.

SommFoundation thanks Julia Coney and Black Wine Professionals for their integral part in this scholarship process. Black Wine Professionals is a resource for wine industry employers and gatekeepers, professionals, and the food and beverage community. Their goal is to lift up the multifaceted Black professionals in the world of wine.

Eva Zhen hails from the bountiful Central Valley of California. Born to Cantonese Chinese parents with discerning palates, her childhood tasting memories are rich with cultural heritage and the complexities of tea leaves, herbs, and fungi. After college and numerous hospitality industry positions, she began her career in wine and liquor distributor sales. She then transitioned from off-premise to on-premise, where she spent four years of sales, and staff training in Silicon Valley. Eva loves wine sales and the stories behind each bottle of wine. To her, wine is the apex of science, transformation, history, culture, and food. She plans to pursue wine education as her long-term goal, helping others achieve both personal and financial success in the wine industry.



EVA ZHEN

Charles Nix is a sommelier and beverage manager for Table 100 (L&R Restaurant Group) in Flowood, MS. Chuck started in the hospitality industry nineteen years ago, at Hillstone Restaurant in Memphis, TN. He continued on to work with James Beard Award-winning chefs from the American South. He is the senior board member and co-founder of the Southern Sommelier Collective. Chuck hosts



CHUCK NIX II

weekly virtual wine classes for both enthusiasts and studious professionals. His experience in the southern U.S. has helped him navigate underserved communities and develop a sense of empathy, a trait he feels is all but lost in the “everyday hustle” of the hospitality profession. His desire to create and cultivate extends beyond the dining room to the community as a whole, fostering kindness and opportunity for all.

The mission of SommFoundation is to assist wine and spirits professionals to achieve the highest level of proficiency and accreditation in the food and beverage industry. SommFoundation provides enrichment opportunities and scholarships to sommeliers, restaurant professionals, wine journalists, and winemakers to further their knowledge about the world of wine and spirits.

