

## Q&A with Brenda Linares: improving patient outcomes through librarianship



*Brenda Linares is a 2005-2006 Scholar currently working as the Health Sciences Librarian to the School of Nursing at the University of Kansas Medical Center in Kansas City, Kansas. Brenda holds a BS in Finance from California State University – Northridge, an MLIS from the University of California, Los Angeles, and an MBA from North Carolina State University. This past October, she received the Roadbuilder's Award from the Round Table for Ethnic Minority Concerns (REMCo), part of NCLA (North Carolina Library Association). Here, Brenda discusses her interests in medical librarianship and the traits necessary to succeed in the field.*

***What is your current job title and place of work? What drew you to work in special libraries?***

I am currently the Health Sciences Librarian to the School of Nursing at the University of Kansas Medical Center in Kansas City, Kansas. I enjoy being a health sciences librarian because I feel that I can make a difference in patient outcomes.

***In thinking about your contributions to the area of special libraries, which are you most proud of?***

As a medical librarian and working with outreach and consumer education, I am proud of proving health information to diverse communities and educating them on finding credible health information. I am also proud of teaching nursing students how to do research and improve patient health outcomes. I am also proud of being one of the few medical librarians of color working in this profession and showing that we can make a difference.

***The REMCo award honors “ethnic minority librarians who have served as pioneers in librarianship and also as positive role models.” Why do you feel it is important to honor ethnic minority librarians in this way?***

It is important to recognize minority librarians because there are very few of us in this profession. This type of recognition shows that we are present and that we can be role models to those minorities who are interested in the profession but might feel intimidated to pursue this profession.

***The award recognizes those who “exemplify courage, integrity, perseverance.” What are some additional traits, characteristics, or skills that you have found to be necessary or helpful in the special libraries world?***

In this profession you also need to exemplify dedication, activism, and advocacy because in many instances the voices of librarians of color tend to be silenced, and we need to advocate and act to make sure we are heard. We need to be a voice for ourselves but also for those people we work with, especially the community since health information and patient outcomes are important.

***Were you in attendance at the 62nd NCLA Biennial in Winston-Salem, NC? What were some of the most interesting or fun parts of the conference for you personally and/or professionally?***

Yes, I was able to attend the award ceremony. It was great to be in a room full of librarians of color and supporters. I had a chance to reconnect with some colleagues which was also great!

***How has your experience as a Spectrum Scholar influenced your life thus far (personally, professionally, etc.)?***

Being a Spectrum Scholar impacted my life by making me more confident about my skills and my worth as a librarian of color. I remember going to the Spectrum Leadership Institute and being in that room full of other library students like me with a lot of potential, and it gave me confidence that I was on the right path. Being a Spectrum Scholar has provided me with a lot of professional and personal support through the years.

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