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Outstanding Historian Honored

Bloomington, IN—**Chong A. Moua**, University of Wisconsin-Madison, has been selected by the Organization of American Historians (OAH) to receive the 2013 Huggins-Quarles Award, which is an annual award for graduate students of color to assist them with expenses related to travel to research collections for the completion of the PhD dissertation. On Saturday, April 13, OAH President Albert M. Camarillo and OAH President-Elect Alan M. Kraut will present the award in San Francisco, California, during the 106th annual meeting of the organization.

According to the 2013 Huggins-Quarles Award Committee, “Refugee Cosmopolitanism: Hmong Refugeeism and a Critical Stateless Perspective” seeks to unsettle conventional themes of immigration history that dominate the field of Asian American studies. Instead of narrating a quest for greater opportunities in the United States, Ms. Moua’s study of Hmong refugee settlements highlights a history of forced displacement and dislocation. The Hmong serve as a vital reminder of the secret wars that the United States fought in Laos where the CIA recruited the Hmong to fight the ground war against communist forces in Laos and Vietnam. It is this political alliance between the Hmong and the United States that qualified the Hmong as political refugees following the U.S. withdrawal from Southeast Asia in 1975. With this in mind, Moua relies on the subject of the refugee to reconceive immigration history where the “birthplace” or political place of origin of Hmong refugees is the primary asylum camps such as Ban Vinai, that although located in Thailand, represent a denationalized space. Moua’s dissertation promises to contribute significantly to the fields of Cold War and Asian American history. With her linguistic ability in English, French, Hmong, and Thai, Moua is uniquely qualified to pursue this dissertation topic. She intends to use her award money to pursue research at the Hmong Archives in Saint Paul, Minnesota, and the Southeast Asian Archive in Irvine, California.

Founded in 1907, the OAH is the largest learned society and professional organization dedicated to the teaching and study of the American past. The OAH promotes excellence in the scholarship, teaching, and presentation of American history, and encourages wide discussion of historical questions and equitable treatment of all practitioners of history. Members in the United States and abroad include college and university professors; students; precollegiate teachers; archivists, museum curators, and other public historians employed in government and the private sector.