June 6, 2018 ? The American Association for the History of Medicine [1] (AAHM) has awarded the 2018 Shryock Medal to Margaret (Meg) Vigil-Fowler, a PhD candidate in the History of Health Sciences program at UCSF.

The Shryock Medal [2] is the most prestigious prize for a graduate student in the field of the history of medicine. Vigil-Fowler's advisor, Aimee Medeiros, PhD, and Elizabeth Watkins, PhD, Graduate Division dean, vice chancellor for Student Academic Affairs, and professor of history of health sciences, both attended the award presentation at AAHM's annual meeting in Los Angeles in May. "We were so pleased to be present at the ceremony," said Dean/VC Watkins. "Her achievement reflects well on our History of Health Sciences program at UCSF, but the program's success also relies on having outstanding scholars like Meg in its ranks. We're very proud of her."

Vigil-Fowler previously earned a master's degree in history from Boston University and a bachelor's in history and English from the University of Denver. Her dissertation research
investigates the history of African American women physicians from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, tracing a persistent desire among early African American women physicians to address what we now term “health disparities” in their communities—disparities that persist today.

Vigil-Fowler’s research underscores the need for a more diverse medical workforce to address imbalances in the quality and availability of healthcare in the U.S. In the future, she intends to aim her writing at a broader, non-scholarly audience, in order to spark public dialogue that is grounded in the historical context for contemporary health disparities. She also hopes to help level the academic playing field for first-generation and underrepresented minority students who are interested in pursuing careers in medicine and medical research.

The Shryock Medal, awarded annually, honors Richard Harrison Shryock (1893-1972), a pioneer among historians interested in the history of medicine. The award is given for an outstanding, unpublished essay on any topic in the history of medicine.

UCSF Associate Professor Victoria Sweet, MD, PhD, who graduated from the History of Health Sciences PhD program [3] at UCSF in 2003, won the Shryock Medal in 1997. She went on to author the bestselling books God’s Hotel (2012) and Slow Medicine (2017).

(photo by Aimee Medeiros)

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