



HSS Scholar

# Clerc Cooper

**MAJORS: HISTORY,  
AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES  
MINOR: SOCIOLOGY**

**Educational Highlights:** As a member of the Honors College's William Aiken Fellows Society, I had the opportunity to pursue both the Truman Scholarship and the Rhodes Scholarship. I also was extended an invitation to join the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, the Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society, and the Phi Alpha Theta Honor Society. I was named an Outstanding Student from the History Department in 2014, and I also received the Alexander C. Dick Scholarship in Pre-Law, as well as the Charleston Chapter of the American Federation of Women's Clubs History Prize that year.

**Research Focus or Project:** In the Spring of 2013, I joined Dr. Jon Hale and Dr. Millicent Brown in researching school desegregation in Charleston as part of the Jubilee Project, which commemorated the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and the 50th anniversary of school desegregation in Charleston. The interviews conducted for the research project are now housed at the Avery Research Center as part of the Lowcountry Digital Library. I also organized a community-wide panel discussion with the first students to desegregate, where Dr. Nancy McGinley, the Superintendent of Charleston County public schools, offered the students a formal apology. After this research, Dr. Hale and I collaborated on a book chapter, entitled "Lowcountry, High Standards: The Struggle for Quality Education in Charleston, South Carolina," which will be published in *Deferred Dreams, Defiant Struggles: Critical Perspectives on Blackness, Belonging, and Civil Rights* in 2015. I received a William Aiken Fellows Summer Enrichment Grant to fund my research for this project in the summer of 2013 and had the opportunity to present the research at the College's annual Celebration of Scholars and the Southern History of Education Society's annual conference. For my Honors College Bachelor's essay, I researched Catholic school desegregation in Charleston, SC and New Orleans, LA, again locating several of the first students to desegregate. My paper examines the moral emphasis the Catholic Church placed on desegregation and the plans they implemented to prepare parishioners.

**Future Plans:** Following graduation, I plan to spend the summer coaching sailing before entering law school in the fall at Tulane University in New Orleans. After law school, I would like to pursue a federal clerkship and become a civil rights attorney, possibly working for the Department of Justice.



*Presented by Jerold L. Hale, Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Department of History at the College of Charleston on the 15th day of May 2015.*