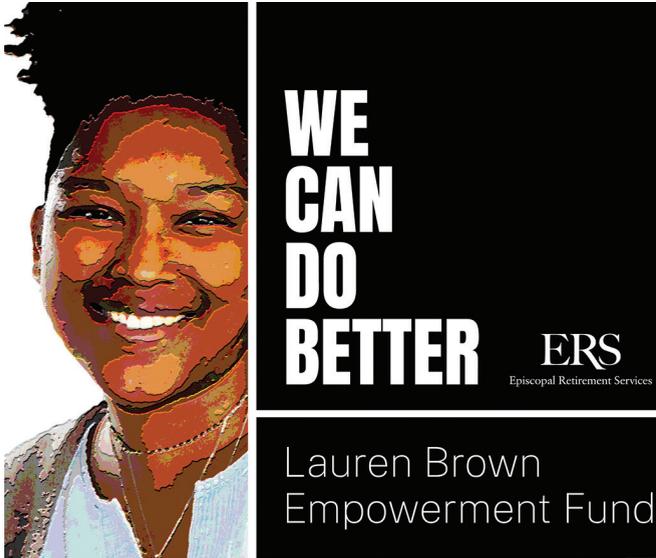


ERS Creates the Lauren Brown Empowerment Fund *By Mike Rutledge*



ERS honors the life of Lauren Zenobia Brown by empowering others to realize their full potential.

ERS has launched the Lauren Brown Empowerment Fund to boost the careers of Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color (BIPOC) team members, who often face barriers to job advancement.

The fund is named for Lauren Brown, a beloved team member who strove to make life better for her family.

Brown, a single Black mother, joined ERS while in high school, working in dining services at Marjorie P. Lee. She worked hard to educate herself continuously.

She later worked in life enrichment and administration at ERS and then became an Affordable Living manager. She aspired to go through the rigorous process of becoming a licensed nursing home administrator.

ERS President and CEO Laura Lamb, in announcing the fund, noted that of the top 200 LeadingAge organizations in the field of aging services, there is only one Black male CEO, and 7 percent of the CEOs are women.

“Our job is to make sure that we’re doing what we can to empower historically disadvantaged individu-

als to realize their full potential,” Lamb says.

Brown “touched so many lives of our residents. They loved her,” Lamb says.

When Brown applied for an ERS position but wasn’t chosen, Lamb knew her dear friend was disappointed. So she offered to help prepare her for the next opportunity, and Brown was enrolled in a next-generation leadership program.

In their final conversation, Brown told Lamb, “You have changed the trajectory of my life. I see a new future for my sons and myself because of this opportunity.”

Tragically, Lauren Zenobia Brown passed away a few weeks later, in April 2021, at age 33. Awards from the fund extend beyond tuition assistance and can help with childcare, housing, and other expenses.

People interested in donating to the Lauren Brown Empowerment Fund can do so by sending a check to ERS. Checks should be made to “ERS – Lauren Brown Empowerment Fund,” and can be mailed to ERS Foundation, 3870 Virginia Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio 45227.

The recipient of the first award will be announced later this year. ■