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Statement of Purpose

Throughout my academic and professional journey, I have been drawn to how design shapes the way people engage with digital systems. My undergraduate studies in Telecommunication, Information Studies, and Media (now Information Science) at Michigan State University explored the dynamic evolution of the digital media landscape, preparing me to think critically about how technology can be governed responsibly and how it influences society on a global scale. Alongside this, I deepened my understanding of visual communication through UCLA's Design Communication Arts program, where I gained proficiency in Adobe Suite software and applied core design principles while maintaining a self-taught practice as a mixed-media painter. This foundation has guided my work across the entertainment and technology fields. Most recently, in Professor Ruth Shillair's Information and Society course, I discovered the field of Human-Computer Interaction and selected it as the focus of my final research paper. This exposure revealed a bridge between my creative, technical, and client-centered work experiences. The concepts of HCI now motivate me to apply to Michigan State University's Master of Science in User Experience program, where I aim to advance my long-term goal of helping the technology industry create accessible, human-centered products with meaningful societal impact.

Professionally, I have built an unconventional career in roles that required adaptability, problem-solving, and clear communication. At Gathr Films, an independent film distribution

start-up, I worked in the Communications Department, where I developed the company website's help center and FAQs, provided technical support, and assisted with email campaigns that connected communities with independent films at the grassroots level. At Apple, I learned best practices for engaging with and educating customers about product specifications, cultivating a solution-oriented and empathetic mindset. During this time, I also completed a full-stack web development bootcamp in Los Angeles. I later joined Enjoy Technologies, founded by Ron Johnson, the architect of the Apple Store, where I specialized in in-home device setup and troubleshooting across Apple, Android, Sonos, and Magic Leap products, combining technical expertise with efficient customer service. Most recently, as Head of Commercial Production at Ampersand Artists, a boutique creative talent agency, my primary responsibility was managing relationships with illustrators, directors, producers, and representatives of major brands such as Disney, Netflix, Meta, and Riot Games. Managing client and stakeholder expectations under tight deadlines taught me how to balance the needs of artists, commercial producers, and large agencies alike. I also wore many hats, maintaining the company website, providing IT support to clients, producing monthly email and social media marketing campaigns to boost brand awareness, and designing and ordering company merchandise. When Ampersand Artists closed earlier this year due to a downturn in the film and television industry, I recognized it as the right moment to complete my undergraduate degree, continue my education, and expand my career opportunities.

Returning to school after a fifteen-year break to care for my mother, who ultimately lost her battle with breast cancer, was a transformative milestone. Her memory continues to inspire my growth and perseverance. Since returning to MSU this summer, I have earned a 4.0 in every class, demonstrating the focus, maturity, and commitment that define this new chapter of my life.

As a Black woman navigating systemic inequities, I have forged a deep sense of responsibility to live by three guiding values: integrity, inclusivity, and sustainability. With the critical need for media and digital literacy both in the United States and globally, particularly in rural communities and the Global South, I aspire to contribute to technological systems that remove barriers, serve diverse populations, and reflect society's shared interconnectedness. I strive to foster work environments where every voice is valued and where shared principles guide the creation of accessible products. I am equally dedicated to considering the environmental impact of emerging technologies from conception through the end of their life cycles, promoting responsible design and reducing e-waste. Ultimately, I seek to build functional tools that support a more equitable and sustainable future.

Looking forward, I seek to grow as a UX Researcher and eventually as a Director of UX, with the goal of guiding teams to design digital experiences that honor human complexity. Roles such as Ancestry.com's Director of UX, End-to-End Experience resonate with me because they align with my interest in creating pathways that help people explore and connect with their histories and identities, fulfilling the psychological need for belonging shared by all humans. My vision of merging creativity, technical rigor, and social responsibility leads me to view Michigan State University's Master of Science in User Experience program as the bridge between where I am and where I want to go. I bring to this program a convergence of perspectives: a foundation in information science, years of professional client-facing work, formal training in graphic design and website coding, and an artist's eye. MSU's program offers the mentorship, structure, and research grounding I need to turn my aspirations into tangible action. I am eager to contribute my ideas, learn from faculty and peers, and build a career that connects human stories with thoughtful, inclusive design.