2015 AVCA Minority Coaches Award: Live It, Love It, Coach It! Recipients

Jordan Armstrong – Armstrong is the volunteer assistant coach at the University of Kentucky. The former IPFW Men’s Volleyball team captain was a four-year MIVA Academic All-Conference selection. He has spent a lot of time coaching in the club ranks, most recently with Lakeside Volleyball Club in Burnt Hills, NY. Armstrong graduated from IPFW last May with a degree in Business Marketing Management with a minor in Communication Studies. “My coaching style is being one that emphasizes communication, fosters learning and strives for a constant effort in the pursuit of excellence,” Armstrong said.

Paula Barros – Barros is an assistant coach for St. Gregory’s University. This is her first season as a Cavalier after serving as a volunteer assistant at Langston University. The Brazil native graduated from UT-Brownsville where she was part of the 2011 NAIA National Championship team while earning AVCA/NAIA All-America Honorable Mention. While at UTB, she coached the Rio Grande Valley Volleyball Club. “I love volleyball, it is my life. It has provided me the chance to live in different places, countries, meet different cultures, and get a great education,” said Barros.

Ashley Davis – Davis is in her fourth year as an assistant coach for Madison College. Prior to her arrival in 2012, she spent seven years coaching two club teams and currently coaches club volleyball for Wisconsin Performance. She played her college ball at Lawrence University, where she finished her career ninth on the school’s all-time hitting percentage list. Additionally, she’s fifth all-time in blocks at Lawrence. “My coaching style encourages athletes to understand all aspects (physical and mental) of the game and make in-match adjustments when needed,” said Davis.

Kamisha Kellam – Kellam is an assistant coach at Howard University. She was a two-time All-Conference honoree and a team captain where she led the America East Conference in hitting efficiency while at the University at Albany. It is through her success and experience as a player she is able to relate and adapts quickly to get the most out of her players.

Ana Moreira-Pego – Moreira-Pego is the graduate assistant coach at University of New Haven. This is her second season since coming off an NCAA Division I Career at Alabama State, where she was a starting setter for two seasons. “Volleyball is my whole life. It is everything I live and I love and all of my achievements have been made possible through it. It has made me the best person I could be,” she said.
Natalie Thomas – Thomas is the graduate assistant coach for Minnesota State University Moorhead. Previously she was on staff as a student assistant in 2013. The Minnesota native was a four-year player at Minnesota-Morris, where her 2,696 career assists ranks her third best in program history. “I live for volleyball in the sense that I am always trying to gain more knowledge. I love volleyball and honestly my life revolves around it,” she said.

Mark Thomas II – Thomas II is the head men’s and women’s volleyball coach at Newbury College. Prior to his current position at Newbury, he was an assistant for the United States Coast Guard Academy and University of California – Riverside. The Massachusetts native began his coaching career at Springfield College as a graduate assistant for the women’s team. He coaches at his alma mater after a distinguished college and playing career. He currently holds the program record for career and single-season kills, and after his college career he played professionally overseas in Trinidad & Tobago.