



**Tell us about your professional journey that led you to be the new director of Bridgeport Public Library. Did you always know you wanted to be a librarian?**

Growing up, I visited my neighborhood library often. I loved to read. My most favorite book to read until I fell asleep was any random volume of the World Book Encyclopedia, so, I guess I was preparing myself to be a librarian without even realizing it. In my junior year at Hunter

College in New York City, one of my classmates had just gotten promoted to a library assistant within the music division of the Performing Arts Research Library at Lincoln Center and he recommended me for his former position as a page. I loved it! I was later selected to work on processing a collection of jazz negatives, making the photographs accessible to the public. I was surrounded by musicians who were also librarians, and an absolutely wonderful collection of books, photographs, clippings, and sheet music, so it was very natural for me to go to library school. In library school, I was the library student intern at the

Center for Photography, another great experience. In my career, I have weaved in and out of the public and private sector, always staying close to libraries and education.

I've been a freelance photographer, a stock photo agent, an academic librarian, and library director.

I also taught English for ten years at Touro College in New York City as an adjunct instructor. I began my career in public libraries in West Haven, where I managed the Ora Mason Branch for seven years. I went on to serve as assistant director in Mount Vernon but that position lasted only one year and then I decided to pursue a dream of mine: a Masters in music education. I studied at the University of Bridgeport, and while interviewing for teaching positions, I also expressed interest in Bridgeport Public Library's search for a city librarian, becoming Interim city librarian in August of 2018. I actually had the difficult task of choosing between teaching strings at a performing arts magnet school and this position. It was a tough decision, but I think I made the right one.

**What are some of the favorite parts of your job? Challenges?** My most favorite part of my job is working with staff. I did a lot of listening to my staff when I started as Interim; they had a lot to say. I enjoy identifying talent among my staff and allowing opportunities for them to grow as we serve the public. One of my biggest challenges right now is balancing the day-to-day needs of managing a multi branch library system with the needs of our many construction projects. This year we opened our East Side Branch and early next year will begin a second phase of renovation that will nearly double the East Side Branch's size. Our Newfield Branch is nearing completion, and we have two other locations in the planning stages. I am grateful that my staff shares my enthusiasm for transforming lives and communities. It is so much of what we are about these days.

**What accomplishments are you most proud of?**

I am most proud of my involvement with improving library facilities. I wrote the initial plan and grant that got the ball rolling for a new elevator and other improvements at my former branch in West Haven. I also wrote a library construction grant to bring needed modernization to the elevator at Mount Vernon's library. Facilities were not a big topic when I went to library school, but I have come to realize how much librarians need to know about proper facilities management. Fortunately, discussions are trending towards building libraries for

the digital age, but at the core, you need sound, well-thought out structures that are maintained properly.

**What do you see in Bridgeport PL's future?**

I see a library system that is responsive to the needs of the communities and neighborhoods we serve, balancing new technologies and traditional services. I see more educational opportunities for residents of all ages, whether it be for gaining skills for employment or finding that first job, starting a small business, promoting early literacy, enhancing educational and cultural experiences for youth or learning how to stay healthy and happy in these stressful times. I see Bridgeport Public Library as a gathering place for community, collaboration and creation.

**What books are on your "to be read" pile right now?** Right now, I am reading *The Librarians's Guide to Homelessness*, by Ryan J. Dowd. At the moment, our staff is taking an online course on the topic by the author, and the feedback has been very good. Next on my list is *Palaces for the People*, by Eric Klinenberg. The biggest difference I have found in working in research and academic settings and public libraries is that in the realm of public libraries, it is all about how we interact socially and what we can do to make a just world for all abilities within a shared space. Public libraries are important in creating safe spaces where one has access to knowledge and is free to explore, learn, and grow.

**What would people be surprised to learn about you?**

I am a violinist with the Nutmeg Symphonic Pops Orchestra and the Civic Orchestra of New Haven, but I think people would be surprised to know that I play the piano, spending my spare time learning jazz standards. Maybe when I retire from the library world you will find me in a hotel lounge playing and singing a Nat King Cole song. ♦