

Hilary Harlan, B.A. English Creative Writing, 2014

By Max Chambers

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“As Nathaniel Hawthorn teaches us, ‘the future is yet full of trial and success. There is happiness to be enjoyed. There is good to be done.’ Don’t be afraid to make mistakes and to change your mind if you need to.”

Hilary Harlan graduated *summa cum laude* with a bachelor’s degree in Creative Writing in 2014, and she is currently an Outreach Library Associate at [Bexley Public Library](#) in Bexley, Ohio. She is also a student in Kent State University’s [Master of Library and Information Science](#) program, which she anticipates completing in August 2019.

Harlan originally chose to major in History, but she always felt a calling to write. “I didn’t originally major in English because I thought it would be difficult to find a job, but after meeting Leah Railey (a very cool English major who would become my best friend) my freshman year, I decided I should switch to pursue something I was actually interested in.”

Harlan feels that her creative writing coursework at WKU gave her important skills for her career in library services. “The discussions in my creative writing classes taught me how to toughen up and take criticism. The classes helped me to be introspective, respond to others thoughtfully, and give feedback in a constructive way.” Harlan also appreciates the support of Professor Walker Rutledge, Dr. Kristi Branham, and Dr. Ted Hovet, who all encouraged her to explore her interests, grow in professional pursuits, and consider the world around her in new ways.

After graduation, Harlan was accepted into law school, but she chose to take a gap year and work at the [Warren County Public Library](#). That choice changed her entire career outlook. In 2018, she left the University of Cincinnati’s law program and moved to Columbus, Ohio, where she could pursue a Master of Library and Information Science degree at Kent State University. She will complete the MLIS program in August 2019.

When she isn't working at the library or studying, Harlan enjoys hiking with her dog, taking walks in the woods, birdwatching, and reading horror novels, particularly the works of Stephen King. She also loves to participate in community activism, and her position as Outreach Library Associate helps her do that. "You're enriching others' lives through free programming, free materials, and free classes. You're working with the community to determine their needs and finding ways to get the public the best value that you can for their tax dollar. It's incredibly rewarding work."

Harlan recommends that college students forge their own path in life, no matter what that path may look like. "If something doesn't feel right, switch. If you don't enjoy something, you don't have to do it. If someone doesn't make you happy, you don't have to be around them. Don't be afraid to make mistakes and to change your mind if you need to."

