

Message From the Chair

We are pleased to share with you Forbes Library's Strategic Plan for FY2019 through FY2023. It is an exciting and ambitious plan that provides a framework for the library to meet the needs of our community and deliver higher levels of service. The plan was developed based on input from the Northampton residents who came to our community forum and the 1,060 community members who responded to our survey. We also spoke to over forty local stakeholders about the challenges their organizations, and our city, will face in the coming years and ways in which the library can help. The library staff, the board of trustees, the Friends of Forbes Library, the Coolidge Museum Advisory Committee, and the members of our strategic planning committee all participated in visioning exercises that helped identify the library's strengths and create goals for the future.

What we heard most often, from everyone who contributed to this process, was the need for more access to everything the library offers. This plan addresses the need for both physical access to the library building and expanded access to all types of resources for everyone in the community. It includes improving access to online resources as well as taking library services outside of the building to parts of the community where they are wanted and needed. In addition, the library aims to be a gathering space for our community to access each other's ideas and a place where information about vital services can be found. The objectives in this plan will help us improve services to children, teens, and families to ensure everyone has access to tools that spark curiosity and nurture learning. We will also expand access to local history and grow the library's special collections to gather information and work that is being created today. Included in our plans to further connect the past, present, and future, are enhancements to the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum that will attract more researchers, visitors, educators, and students. Providing books and information is an important and vital part of our mission, but we also want to show how information can be used to explore, entertain, and create. Through this plan we will celebrate and support the writers, artists, and makers in our community and provide people of all ages a place to create, collaborate, and learn how to problem-solve.

As part of the planning process, we have rewritten the library's Mission and Vision Statements so that they are aligned with our motto: Forbes for All. Everyone is welcome at Forbes. It is a safe space where access to information is free and discovery, participation, and dialogue are encouraged.

This has been a long process and a lot of effort went into it. Many people assisted and contributed to this plan. Please turn to page 36 to see a full list. I would particularly like to thank Lisa Downing and Molly Moss, the Director and Assistant Director of Forbes Library, for all of the time and expertise they put into making this plan. Northampton is lucky that the daily operations of our library are in their very capable hands.

This Strategic Plan is intended to be a living document, providing a continuing touchstone for staff yet flexible enough to change as our city evolves. The library is here to serve our community. If you have any thoughts or ideas we'd love to hear them at any time! You can email me at katywight@gmail.com, call or visit the library to speak to Lisa Downing or Molly Moss or email director@forbeslibrary.org.

2019 will be the 125th anniversary of Forbes Library and we'll be hosting special programs and exhibits throughout the year. I'm looking forward to celebrating this milestone with the staff, patrons, and everyone in our community!

Katy Wight
Trustee & Chair of Strategic Planning Committee

