

## **Julieann V. Nilson InULA Scholarship Winners' Essays: 2016 & 2017**

JULIE HARDESTY  
Metadata Analyst  
Herman B Wells Library  
Indiana University Bloomington  
InULA President, 2016-2017

---

This year we have multiple years of scholarships to recognize in our Spring issue of InULA Notes! Read on for the highlights and the winners' statements.

The Grants and Scholarship Committee received 13 applications for the 2016 Julieann V. Nilson Scholarship.<sup>8</sup> All applications were strong and our budget was such that we were able to award 3 scholarships to Ava Dickerson, Cynthia Harter, and Andrew Wang.

Ava Dickerson's career trajectory displayed thought and confidence last year and was accompanied by lots of experience and a glowing recommendation! Her interests at the time were in archives and special collections work and improving access to information.

Cynthia Harter demonstrated a strong commitment to public librarianship and wrote extensively about her passion for the profession. She had already gained much experience volunteering and working in the Allen County Public Library system and had ideas for program improvements to better serve the public library patron.

Andrew Wang wrote a powerful statement about diversity and inclusivity for patrons and collection development. He hoped to attend Rare Book School, the Zine Librarian (un)Conference, and the ARLIS/NA and VRAF's Summer Educational Institute with the scholarship and further his goal of becoming a subject librarian.

The Grants and Scholarship Committee received 16 applications for the 2017 Julieann V. Nilson Scholarship. Both the number and the quality of the applications were impressively high, and this is extremely encouraging for the future of librarianship. The selection process was difficult as there were so many excellent statements and enthusiastic letters of support. Our final recommendation is that this year's Nilson Scholars are Emily Bedwell and Emily Stuckey Weber.

Emily Bedwell shows a genuine passion and enthusiasm for librarianship, as evidenced through her personal story and her volunteer efforts and dedication to public service.

Emily Stuckey Weber has an admirable career goal of working with children and teens and has already gained much experience working part-time with young adults at the Goshen Public Library.

I encourage everyone to read all of the scholarship winners' personal essays and celebrate the support that InULA is able to provide to the future of librarianship!

---

<sup>8</sup> For information about the scholarship, see [http://www.indiana.edu/~inula/wp\\_2012/about-julieann-nilson/](http://www.indiana.edu/~inula/wp_2012/about-julieann-nilson/).

---

**AVA DICKERSON**

Throughout my undergraduate degrees in English, French, and Archival Studies, I developed a single personal goal – to make information more accessible and easily obtained by a wider audience. As a student at Indiana University, I continue to pursue this goal through the Master of Library Science program, both in my classwork and through my employment at several on-campus academic libraries by improving preservation, organization, and communication. What began as an interest in the archives themselves evolved into a fascination with their potential purposes and, more concretely, a desire to improve the conditions and rectify the issues I had witnessed in archives and special collections.

As I began to experience archives firsthand, I discovered a number of problems that had not been introduced in my classes. The Sassafras Audubon Society presented their “archives” to me as a file cabinet in the basement of their sister organization’s headquarters, a chaotic jumble of papers – some of which had clearly been submerged in mud – that had been dumped untouched into the cabinet. Between the total lack of arrangement and the inclusion of unrelated items, such as a shoe-shine cloth from a 1968 Holiday Inn, the majority of my tasks as head archivist went into creating and imposing order on the documents. Because the Indiana State Archives boasted a large number of volunteers who maintained the majority of their projects, the high turnover led to a disjointed system of individual vocabularies that was nearly impossible to search. Hundreds of textiles sit untouched, unexplored and unexhibited in the Monroe County History Center’s collections room because they have either been cataloged improperly and cannot be found or simply have not been entered into the system at all. Furthermore, the catalog had no public access, barring researchers from exploring and making use of the collections digitally or physically. As I encountered these issues, I realized they fell into three main categories: inaccessibility due to disorganization or non-digitization, discontinuity in staff and administration retention, and lack of awareness of resources.

These issues could be diminished – if not completely eliminated – through improvements to preservation, organization, and communication, the main tenets of my approach to information management. Specifically, I plan to explore and implement procedural guidelines, controlled vocabularies, digitization and social media as tools. Regardless of my position or specific duties, my tactic for starting any archival or special collections project begins with the creation of a clear set of rules and guidelines to follow, a tool I discovered left by my predecessor at the Wylie House Museum which ensures continuity in the collection’s organization. When I finished my internship in textile inventory for the Monroe County History Center, I created a detailed outline of my procedure, as well as a controlled vocabulary that would ensure the records could be retrieved and the objects accessed. Using PastPerfect, Microsoft Access, FileMaker Pro and The Museum System, I have had the opportunity to digitize countless collections by photographing artifacts and generating metadata, both preserving the original manuscripts by reducing physical use and increasing the scope of the content’s reach. Though my firsthand social media experience is derived mainly from my experiences in publishing, I have witnessed the increase in patronage at the Lilly Library in coordination with the revitalization of the Lilly’s Facebook and Twitter pages, illustrating the significant impact of awareness in a collection’s use.

With the help of the Julieann V. Nilson scholarship, I will pursue projects without regards to financial compensation, expanding the breadth of situations in which I can intervene and apply archival solutions. For example, I am candidate for an internship with the preservations specialist of the Library of Congress, but I would be unable to participate in this opportunity without outside funding

such as this scholarship. Though I plan to declare a specialization in Archives and Records Management, my experience at the Lilly Library and the research proposal I crafted to study the degree of user-centered design in special collections facilities have revealed that issues of organization, preservation, and communication plague special collections as well as archives. For this reason, I plan to take classes in the Rare Books and Manuscripts specialization, both because I feel I could increase my knowledge base in this area and because our Rare Books track features classes with Joel Silver, a recognized expert in rare books reference and bibliographic studies. Due to the additional costs of taking classes outside of program requirements, the scholarship would allow me to expand my breadth of experience to special collections in addition to archives, thus preparing me more thoroughly to preserve and improve a wider range of collections.

Over the next 14 months leading up to graduation from the MLS program, I plan to continue the three positions I currently hold: graduate tutor with Writing Tutorial Services, reference attendant at the Lilly Library, and interlibrary loan assistant at the Jerome Hall Law Library. I plan to complete internships with manuscripts archivist Craig Simpson at the Lilly Library and Dina Kellams at the IU Archives to gain experience with EAD and XML as well as further my existing knowledge base of best archival and special collections practices in processing. My ideal position, manuscripts archivist or manuscripts curator, will likely entail hands-on preservation and digitization to improve the sustainability and accessibility of collections, as well as possible outreach to increase awareness of the resources, depending on the size of the institution. By combining the knowledge gained through my previous experience in archive, museum, and library settings with the theoretical and technical proficiency I will acquire through my final year of my MLS and the opportunities presented through the Julieann V. Nilson scholarship, I will represent the ideal candidate for a position in the digitally driven information management field.

---

**CYNTHIA HARTER**

I love working for my local public library. The public library is a place to be part of your community. As a public librarian you get to know your patrons; you watch children grow, help them create lifelong relationships with books and learning, and develop a sense of self; you get to help an elderly person create an email address for the first time, use GoogleMaps to look up their son's new house, find the phone number for a local doctor with a simple web search; you figure out which book a patron read ten years ago and loved, but just can't remember the title or author of it. The public library also provides anyone the opportunity to better themselves through education. Although there are many wonderful academic institutions, access is often limited to those with financial means or social connections. Public libraries provide the means for a person to educate themselves; a person merely needs to be responsible with library materials and they are granted access to books and articles on every subject, music and film from every genre, and the latest in technology. I love the public library for all it offers, everything it stands for, and all of the potential it holds for the future benefit of society. There have been times in my life when the library was the only place I could turn to; in my time working for my local public library I have seen many other people for whom this was also the case. I believe librarians are charged with creating a welcoming and open environment that invigorates and inspires the public to utilize its services. We are called to champion information literacy, uphold the value of equal access to all, and push the limits of what defines a library service. I feel passionately that libraries are essential to a healthy and successful society; all librarians should be prepared to defend the value of libraries and strive to make them serve their community to the fullest, constantly evaluating to see if more could be done. I am ready to take up these charges; I have decided to dedicate my life's work to public librarianship.

My first professional experience in a library was at the Ball State University Bracken Library as a student assistant in the interlibrary loan department in 2006. I enjoyed my time there, particularly helping students find materials for difficult research projects. I continued with my education, eventually transferring to the Purdue campus in Fort Wayne to finish my Bachelor of Science in Mathematics. I worked several jobs, hoping to find a career that was stimulating mentally while fulfilling my desire to help people. I kept feeling dissatisfied with my options, however, and decided that I should consider pursuing an advanced degree. While doing research on various career options I discovered that a Master of Library Science degree was required to pursue a career as a librarian. I fell in love with libraries and learning at a young age and suddenly being a librarian seemed like the perfect option for my interests, skills, and aspirations. I immediately applied for the MLS program at IUPUI and was accepted to start in August 2014. In February 2015, I began volunteering at the Georgetown library branch of the Allen County Public Library (ACPL) system in Fort Wayne, IN. I developed wonderful relationships with the librarians and staff there and was offered a position as a Children's Assistant that summer. I was able to get experience helping patrons, assisting with programming, and getting to know the inner workings of a public library branch. After the summer position ended I was offered a position as a temporary Librarian I, which enables me to fill in for library staff across the ACPL system in any department. I have had the opportunity to work in youth and adult reference and circulation departments while getting to meet and learn from experienced librarians and paraprofessionals. I have also been fortunate to have many wonderful instructors while working towards my MLS at IUPUI and have had the opportunity through class assignments to go into the community and observe at many different types of libraries. I would like to continue to develop the relationships I have cultivated via ACPL and IUPUI. I feel very fortunate for my experiences; the knowledge and connections I have gained are invaluable.

Encouraging information literacy should be fundamental in the public library. I once helped an elderly man who initially asked for help retrieving a forgotten password; he wanted to apply for a job online and needed access to his email. I soon found out that he did not have the basic skills necessary to type in a web address, let alone fill out a detailed job application. I was grateful to have time available to sit with him; I was able to show him how to access and proceed through the application while teaching him some essential computer and internet skills in the process. There have been several times when I did not have the time to help patrons learn these kinds of skills, however. Too often librarians are preoccupied with daily tasks and forget the greater goal of information literacy. Patrons recognize this and are therefore less likely to seek assistance. Libraries should have services dedicated to educating the public on basic technology and internet skills, in an environment that encourages patrons to utilize those services. The technology available at the public library provides patrons access to employment, the opportunity to learn new skills, and the ability to connect with family, friends, and even their global community. I believe this connectivity makes for better citizens and a better society.

Basic technology skills should be just the start. Our library system already offers free tax help during tax season; I would like to coordinate with other community organizations to offer services such as free help applying for government services, help with job searching, counseling, or childcare. I want to develop innovative programs that benefit the community, particularly the underprivileged. I want patrons to feel ownership in their library, that it is working for them. I want to be present for the patrons in my community. I want to make sure I am constantly educating myself on the latest trends and innovations in libraries and work to make them available to my patrons. Most importantly, I want to help create an environment that emboldens patrons to utilize the services available to them to better themselves, their families, and ultimately their communities. I have lived in the

Fort Wayne area nearly my entire life so I am invested in its betterment, I understand its needs. I am not sure what professional title I will hold in the future, I only know that I have fallen in love with public librarianship and cannot see myself doing anything else. I want to continue to make the most of my academic and professional opportunities so I can become the best librarian I can possibly be, to help my community flourish and succeed.

---

**ANDREW WANG**

The foundation of my librarianship philosophy is deeply rooted in personal experiences. Growing up as a second-generation, homosexual Asian-American, I was faced with ignorance among my peers, my teachers, and my family. I developed a fascination with visual communication—namely painting and drawing—as a way to transgress the silencing to which I was subjected by prejudice, cultural-linguistic barriers, and general misunderstandings. As I continued practicing and studying art, I decided to focus on colonial Latin American visual culture as my area of specialization for my undergraduate degree in art history. I chose this subject largely because of my personal connection to some of the pervasive themes in the discourse; the syncretistic art of the era suggests a culture of transformation, oppression, and liminality. Through my own research and personal experiences, I came to understand the significance of libraries and their role in promoting cultural understanding and diverse perspectives, especially for overlooked and underrepresented subjects.

My philosophy in librarianship centers on inclusivity, regarding both patrons and collections. I believe that libraries should not place value judgments on one's intention in research. Library patrons should have equal access to library collections regardless of whether they are authoring a book, conducting undergraduate research, or are simply being inquisitive. As for inclusivity in collection development, I am a strong proponent of special collections of images, manuscripts, materials, and other unique objects, in addition to the more typical books, serials, archives, and digital resources. Much of my own research continues to strongly depend on accessibility to rare collections, especially digital collections of images and rare books. I also believe in collecting a variety of perspectives, especially for contentious subjects. Promoting diversity in both researchers and collections is necessary for generating dynamic dialogues and expanding our understanding of the world around us.

To act on my philosophy would require me to maintain active roles not only in information storage, but also in information production, embedded librarianship, and diverse collaborations. In my former position as Library Coordinator of the GLBT Library at IU, for instance, I managed to establish a new zine collection, but recognized that it would be useless if I did not make outreach efforts. In order to develop and promote the collection, I created an accessible finding aid online, collaborated with a course to present a zine-making workshop, and organized a leisurely program to introduce zines in a residence hall. This project represents many of the core values I hold in librarianship. In developing this collection, I provided a platform for marginalized communities, made connections with academic departments and student organizations, and provided unique titles not found anywhere else on campus.

In my extensive work experiences as a student, I have come to recognize that my goal is to be a subject librarian in the arts (and humanities) at a small academic institution. I truly excel when I am stimulated with multiple projects and responsibilities. In my position as president of the Society of Art Librarianship Students, for instance, I am tasked with organizing trips and tours, professional development workshops, and a wide variety of projects we have undertaken (one of my favorites includes developing our own zine). We have managed to curate displays at the Fine Arts Library,

provide research consultations for undergraduates, implement fundraising events, collaborate with librarians throughout the Midwest for professional development workshops, and much more. At a smaller academic institution, each librarian is generally expected to take on a greater variety of responsibilities that are generally divided among multiple librarians at larger institutions. Having experienced projects ranging from public services to technical services, from collection development to user studies, I aspire to work professionally in such a dynamic, multi-faceted position.

In order to continue expanding my skill set, I recognize that I must seize as many opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities as possible. In my dual degree program (MLS/MA Art History), I do not have the opportunity to enroll in many elective courses. To supplement my courses and jobs on campus, I will be attending the ARLIS/NA and VRA joint conference this March to present the GLBT Library's Zine Collection as well as a user study project I conducted on comics in art libraries. Additionally, in summer 2016 I hope to attend the Summer Educational Institute (hosted by ARLIS/NA and VRAF), Rare Book School, and the Zine Librarian (un)Conference. Though I have been awarded scholarships for some program fees, travel costs may inhibit my ability to be present for some of these events. I would greatly benefit from receiving the prestigious Julieann V. Nilson Award as I continue building momentum before I enter the job market. I believe that attending these conferences and workshops, coupled with my experience, passion, and determination, will provide me greater opportunities for achieving my goals. Thank you for your time and consideration.

---

**EMILY R BEDWELL**

The library has always been a part of my life. For as long as I can remember, the library has been a place where I can dream, work, explore, question and challenge my own views of the world. As a child, the library was the place where I went to escape the real world and find new friends between the pages of great stories. As a college student, the library was where I went to find information and new ideas. And now, as an adult and graduate student, the library is the place where I go to expand my view of the world and embrace the complicated history we create every day as citizens.

I have long admired librarians and the library as an unbiased place where learning was celebrated, where it was okay to ask questions, and where the constant drive to be more well-rounded citizen of your town and city was encouraged. Libraries are places where everyone is allowed equal access to information and where everyone has the right to learn and dream and explore the entire world, not just a specific corner.

I grew up in a rural community in northern Indiana. Our small local library and the school libraries did the best they could to create balanced collections that contained what we wanted to know – and what we didn't know we needed to know. When I moved to Bloomington, Indiana, in 1997, I was amazed at the size and scale of the university libraries, but more so by the size and scale of the local public library. I think it was when walking through the Monroe County Public Library as an adult member of the community that I first realized that I wanted to be a public librarian.

My long and winding path to graduate school included receiving an LTA from Ivy Tech Community College in 2011 and then finally entering graduate school in 2016. The challenges of doing an online program like this are vast. I still work a full-time job, participate in the local volunteer theater company, and am an active member of the Friends of the Library Board. The balance of work, school and life is a hard one, but it is a challenge that I embrace readily daily. Each class I take and each fellow student I meet helps me to see that the career path I have chosen is exactly where I am supposed to be.

I truly believe that libraries are more important now than they have ever been before. Libraries are places where equal access to information is guaranteed, and where people of all walks of life can apply for jobs, learn about their government and leaders, find great books, and be engaged in their world. While libraries will always house physical collections, the libraries of the modern era also provide internet access, computing power and skills, and teach users the importance of accurate research.

There are few things that get me more excited than watching users interact with library staff. When the conversations are a good balance of giving and receiving information, everyone walks away feeling like some good was done that day. In a world where there is instant access to thousands of pages of bad data, the role of the librarian is to help people find the good and right information – to connect information to users are the time they need it most. This exchange and interaction is what excites me most about my future as a librarian. I not only want to help people find the great books they love, but I also want to help people learn how to use the internet wisely, to connect to the world at large, and to sift through all the information available to them to find what they really need.

I am excited to be a librarian in the 21st century. I look forward to the challenges that come with ever-changing communication and technology and am excited to harness those tools to help ensure that the library continues to be a relevant and important part of local communities for a long time to come.

---

**EMILY STUCKEY WEBER**

I have dedicated my career to working with children as an environmental educator, library technician, middle school science teacher, and reading instructor. I have found my greatest passion in my work with adolescents, especially middle school students. At this age, students possess a natural curiosity about the world, as well as great enthusiasm for learning. They ask meaningful questions about why the world operates in a certain way. Adolescents are willing to try new things and create innovative solutions to issues in their community and their world.

My work with adolescents helped me discover my current career path of becoming a library and information science professional. Being a librarian brings together my passions for literacy, education, information literacy, discovery, and inquiry. I am energized by the opportunity to grow and change throughout my future career as advances in technology and new educational trends continue to change the work of librarians. In fact, change and adaptation are two of the things that draw me to this profession, because I want to remain curious and learn new skills and techniques throughout my career. I am a lifelong learner who is always excited to explore new concepts, so I know this career will suit me well.

Though I am only in my second semester of the MLS program, my coursework at IUPUI has shaped my philosophy of patron service and underscored the importance of intellectual freedom. Reading and discussing the ALA Code of Ethics and RUSA guidelines in my reference course has helped me advance my understanding of the importance of librarians in our society. The Code of Ethics helps me ground my practice in providing equitable access to resources and serving everyone who walks through our doors. I feel a greater sense of purpose in my work knowing that these ethical tenets are the foundation of our practice. I am empowered knowing that I promote social justice and equality every day in my work as a librarian. The RUSA guidelines also have helped me deepen my sense of call, especially the guidelines on working with a variety of user populations including teens, LGBTQ individuals, and Spanish-speaking patrons. These guidelines provide concrete ways to ensure

libraries provide equitable services to all users. These documents have helped me internalize our mission as librarians and motivates me to continue to learn more to move my practice forward. My coursework has solidified my commitment to work with adolescents, to help them access high-quality information on any topic of interest, and to support their right to read whatever they choose.

In my current work as teen programs coordinator at the Goshen Public Library, I regularly assist teen patrons with their information needs and readers' advisory requests. I also collaborate with teens to plan engaging programming that allows teens to try new things and explore their interests. I am able to provide teens with experiences they likely would not have access to otherwise. Since I am working in the library field while studying in the MLS program, I am able to apply the skills and concepts I am learning in class to my daily work. I am honored to work with the teenagers in my community, and take my role as a role model and educator seriously. Teens are full of energy and curiosity, and I greatly enjoy the opportunity to support their interests and provide books and other informational resources that expose them to other cultures and ideas to expand their worldview. I also find it incredibly important to include resources in our collection that allow teens to see themselves in literature and nonfiction. Adolescents are figuring out their identity and who they want to be. This is a critical time to ensure they know they are not alone, and that other young people have faced issues similar to their own.

My goal upon graduation is to work with adolescents in a school library. I envision my future school library as a place where both students and teachers are accessing information, collaborating, and creating. Schools need libraries to be centers of innovation and creativity. As a school librarian, I can help shape the academic culture of a school by teaching information literacy skills. I will also have the ability to collaborate with classroom teachers to support student learning. In a middle school or high school setting, the library should be a space for students to learn new skills, socialize, and collaborate together. Libraries should also be places for students to use technical equipment to become digitally literate individuals. My future library would include a Maker space where students apply their classroom learning and explore their own interests by creating products of their own design. I want to bring my background in biology and environmental science into my work as a librarian. I have a strong interest in the STEAM fields and would like to provide authentic experiences in STEAM careers for students. The school library is a natural place to foster interest in the arts, math, and sciences. I see my role as a school librarian as a way to help shape the future. I want to improve society by helping students become passionate learners who change the world.