

Martha L. Brogan City Librarian and Director | New Haven Free Public Library

In September 2014, **Martha Brogan** became the eighth City Librarian—and the first woman—in its 130+ year history to direct the New Haven Free Public Library (NHFPL). Founded by City Charter in 1886, today the constellation of the NHFPL system comprises the Ives Memorial Library located on the historic New Haven Green; four neighborhood libraries located on New Haven’s “main streets” across the city; a 24/7 digital branch; and a Readmobile that circulates to early learning centers and sites without a public and/or school library facility.



A department of the City of New Haven, the NHFPL is governed by a Board of Directors on which the Mayor serves *ex-officio* and to which she appoints nine members—all New Haven residents. Martha sits on the Mayor’s Kitchen Cabinet and connects the library with municipal priorities including the City Transformation Plan, the Digital Inclusion Roadmap, Adult Literacy, Early Childhood Education, the City that Codes, the Elm City Innovation Collaborative, the Big Read and the Homeless Outreach Task Force.

The New Haven Free Public Library launched a new Strategic Framework 2018-2023, *Growing Together. One City. One Future.* in spring 2018 after a ten-month leadership development and community assessment exploration led by Innovation Builders. The framework articulates new mission and vision statements along with seven core values and seven strategic initiatives, stemming from in-depth community input. A majority of NHFPL staff are now trained in a suite of 21st-century skills based on empathetic listening, iterative design thinking, experiential learning, and outcome-based partnership service models.

During Martha’s tenure, the City has reinstated seven full-time positions in the Library, growing from 38 to 45 full-time employees. As a result, the four branch libraries expanded hours of operation—opening an additional weekday for six hours. Per capita allocations from the City’s General Fund to the Library have grown from \$28 to \$32—still short of NHFPL’s goal, and the state benchmark of \$42. The “Penny for your Thoughts” advocacy campaign launched in 2015 to garner support for increased resources for the public library and bring its funding to 1% of the City’s General Fund budget continues as a major goal for the NHFPL Board and Library Foundation.



Two major renovations over the last four years have reinvigorated the downtown library, strengthening services to teens with a dedicated space and launching Ives Squared, a reimagined innovation space devoted to entrepreneurship, small business development, collaborative learning, co-working and creative exploration with leading-edge technologies.



In addition to her responsibilities as City Librarian, Martha is the Executive Director of the NHFPL Foundation, a 501(c)(3) that raises awareness and creates philanthropic opportunities to sustain and enhance the New Haven Free Public Library for future generations. In November 2015, the State Library awarded a \$1M public library construction grant to NHFPL to design and build a new Stetson Branch Library as a cornerstone of the new Q House, a revitalized multi-service community service hub. The NHFPL Foundation launched a \$2M capital campaign in early 2017 to furnish and equip the opening-day collection, a teen studio, a collaborative learning classroom, community conversation space and other technology-enriched services. As of spring 2019, the campaign reached 85% of its goal and entered the homestretch of the campaign.

A resident of New Haven since 1990, Martha moved with her two sons and husband to New Haven from St. Paul, Minnesota to accept an appointment as the Social Sciences Librarian at Yale University after employment at the University of Minnesota Libraries. During her eight-year tenure at Yale, she was active in the community as an advocate for New Haven Public Schools and instrumental in efforts to reinstate library media centers throughout the district. With subsequent appointments at Indiana University and the University of Pennsylvania, Martha continued to maintain her household in New Haven where her spouse had a 20+ year tenure on the humanities faculty of Gateway Community College.

Martha holds a B.A. from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota; a Master's degree from the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont; and a Master's in Library Science from the University of Minnesota. Active in professional organizations throughout her career, Martha is eager to promote civic engagement, lifelong learning, and barrier-free access to resources, experiences and opportunities for all residents through the New Haven Free Public Library.



In March 2019, NHFPL was honored to be named a finalist for the National Medal for Museum & Library Service.

Resource Links:

- ***Growing Together. One City. One Future. New Haven Free Public Library | Strategic Framework 2018-2023***, nhfpl.org/strategic-framework
- Selected publications (1984 to 2006) by Martha Brogan, https://works.bepress.com/martha_brogan/