

Jesse Dunkleberger

The novella of my life doesn't begin in Gloversville. That story starts in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where I was born in 1986. Some of my earliest memories center around the local library. My family's faced some financial challenges, so while many people my age recall roaming Blockbuster for VHS tapes as kids, my memories take me back to my days checking out movies from the public library. From that time forward, libraries have always been a part of my life, whether at public school, my college campus, or the beautiful, historic Gloversville Public Library.

I published a novel of my own in 2016, titled *To Forgive and Forget*. A copy of it currently resides at the Johnstown Public Library, and now it makes me feel like a part of me lives there, as well. I barely made a dime from its publication, but I received something more valuable: the feeling of having created something and contributing to those shared expressions of empathy that make us human. As James Baldwin once wrote, "You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me the most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, who had every been alive."

Public service and community involvement are things I have committed myself to since moving to Gloversville in early 2022. Last year, I ran for a City Council seat and offered to serve without compensation, because the honor was enough for me. I would feel that same honor as a member of the Library's Board of Trustees. It is my desire to protect our Library as the historic and cultural center that I value as an adult, and to safeguard it as the essential resource center I relied upon as a child.