

**West Virginia Center for Civic Life**

**For Immediate Release**

**March 21, 2016**

The West Virginia Center for Civic Life is pleased to announce the appointment of Sutton Stokes as its new associate director. Instead of a formal press release, we thought we'd share the following note from Sutton. Please join us in welcoming him aboard!

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"This is what I want to do when I grow up."

I said these words to Betty Knighton, director of the West Virginia Center for Civic Life, during a break at the Center's 2011 Civic Life Institute, in Martinsburg.

If Betty had asked me what I meant by "this," I couldn't have answered with a specific job title or career path. All I knew was that my head was whirling with exciting new ideas about the power of community engagement and the potential of conversation to help it happen, and I wanted more. I had the sense that I had found my field—my intellectual home—at long last, and I wanted to stay.

Life doesn't always open a door the second you knock, of course—or at all. In the years after that Institute, I watched the Center's work with interest, but it was not clear that there would ever be a viable path to accomplishing the goal that I'd announced to Betty in that church hallway in 2011.

Then, the Center announced that it was looking for an associate director, and the rest, as they say, is history.

I could not be happier that Betty and her board picked me to fill that position, and I could not be more excited at the opportunity to roll up my sleeves and pitch in at this crucial moment in the Center's story.

I look forward to meeting and working with the Center's many friends and partners.

And I can't wait to find out "[what's next](#)."

-Sutton

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