

LRC COMMUNICATOR

Hillary Abbott reflects on earning a master's degree while at LRC



From left, Hillary Abbott, Legislative Committee Analyst for the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, speaks during a committee meeting with Rep. Daniel Fister, R-Versailles; and Rep. Richard Heath, R-Mayfield.

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AND MUCH MORE...

The pandemic was slowing down. The University of Louisville was resuming in-person classes. And Hillary Abbott was burning up the miles in her Hyundai as she juggled the demands of a busy career and her final year of grad school.

"I would wake up in Lexington. I would come to work – and I worked a flex schedule so I got here at 7:30 – and I left at 4. Then I'd drive to Louisville, have class until 8 and drive back to Lexington and went back to work the next day," Abbott recalls.

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The early mornings, late nights and long drives were all part of a multi-year journey that has helped propel Abbott's career at the Legislative Research Commission.

Once nicknamed "Books" by her uncle, the scholar started as a Legislative Assistant in 2018. She has since climbed the ranks to serve as a Legislative Committee Analyst for Agriculture and Natural Resources.

"When I applied for grad school, the impetus was to become an analyst here, and I knew that if I wanted to matriculate throughout the agency, I would need to have my master's," she said. "I didn't expect the return on my investment to be so quick after I had completed my degree."

The timing was good. Soon after Abbott received her degree in 2022, analysts' positions opened, and she applied for her current role.

Her job includes an array of duties, including drafting legislation, attending meetings of the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board and the Kentucky Tobacco Research Board, and working with committee chairs to prepare for meetings and draft legislation.

She also serves as the lead staff for the Tobacco Settlement Agreement Fund Oversight Committee, which oversees funds from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement.

"The pace of everything is fascinating. I love session. I love the pace of all of it. I love feeling like I'm a part of something bigger," she said.

Abbott works with Senior Legislative Committee Analyst Kelly Ludwig, and credits her for the wealth of knowledge and guidance she shares.

Her mom, Susan McGoodwin in the House Majority Office, couldn't be happier for her daughter.

"I know I am a little biased, but I think she is one of the smartest people I know," McGoodwin said. "She has always been a voracious reader, with a memory for content like a steel trap."

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return on my
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Abbott, wearing stole, smiles on graduation day at the University of Louisville. With her are family members, including her mother, Susan McGoodwin, second from left, who is a Leadership Staff member for the House Majority Office.

Born and raised in Lexington, Abbott attended a boarding school in Massachusetts for high school and graduated from the University of Kentucky, where she studied history and was a DJ for the campus's radio station, WRFL.

One of her earliest jobs was running a transitional housing program for homeless veterans at the Hope Center. Her friend, former Legislative Assistant Katie Wheeler, later suggested that she pursue an opportunity at LRC.

Abbott said after working her first session, she couldn't imagine working anywhere else. She applied for a committee assistant's position and was selected.

"I fell in love with what I was doing here. It was so cool to be where I felt like I had kind of a ringside seat to all the happenings," she said. "When you're at LRC, you become so hyper focused in on things. When I would go home, I realized I was speaking in acronyms and talking about things in which my husband needed a cipher to figure out what I was talking about."

Committee Staff Administrator DeAnn Wenk encouraged Abbott to pursue the master's degree so she could keep climbing the professional ladder. Abbott applied to the Master of Public Administration program at UofL, which offered the courses at night, and got accepted. Her focus area was leadership and governance.

"It was really, really awesome, but I got accepted a couple of weeks before COVID erupted. And so, my first year of graduate school was entirely online. But I was working full-time and going to grad school full-time," Abbott said.

The nights were extremely long for Abbott during the legislative session. There was an empty office in the Annex, and she would log on to her class at 5:30 p.m. when she wasn't on the clock with LRC.

"And then I had to be super organized. I also made a point, thankfully because I was in a grad school program for public administration, they understood the legislative session and understood if I couldn't attend a lecture," she said.



Abbott and her husband, Brian, cheer on Chelsea during a match. Abbott is head of the Lexington Chelsea Football Club Supporters Club for the English premier league team.

Her thesis, which she defended in an Annex conference room on the first floor, focused on gender representation in state government and occupational segregation by sex. She also enjoyed learning about public budgeting, cultural competency and mediation.

When she graduated, she was awarded two top honors: Outstanding MPA and MPA Student of the Year.

“The mediation skills have come in handy when I’m trying to talk to a legislator about what they’re wanting with the bill draft – getting to the heart of something, knowing which questions to ask, anticipating what’s coming next kind of thing,” Abbott said.

Abbott said one of her favorite things about her job

is brainstorming with others.

“All of us in this office help each other brainstorm, so you really don’t feel like you’re isolated or you’re ever doing anything on your own. And I guess I love the fact that I feel like at any step, whether it’s planning for a committee meeting or answering a question from a legislator or drafting legislation, you’re a part of the solution or the end result,” she said.

Abbott said getting to know others at the agency is important. She said some who have helped her include Kim Eisner, Committee Staff Administrator in Government Contract Review; Miriam Fordham, Legislative Fiscal Analyst in Budget Review and Brian Throckmorton, Research Editor in the Director’s Office.

“I had different people that had long-term knowledge here. They had institutional knowledge of how LRC works, and I was able to lean on them for guidance,” she said.

But Abbott’s life isn’t only work. She’s mom to three cats, lifts weights, travels and has more than 4,700 vinyl records. She’s head of the Lexington Chelsea Football Club Supporters Club for the London-based English premier league team. She and her husband Brian are season ticket holders for Racing Louisville, the National Women’s Soccer League pro team in Louisville.

She’s also an avid reader and describes herself as a “nerd.”

“I love to read, so I’m an incessant nonfiction reader, predominantly British history, Wars of the Roses, the Tudor time period, and then I’m also a member of the Jane Austen Society of North America,” she said.

Perspectives



Bradley speaks on KSP Black history panel

Legislative Security Officer Tim Bradley served as a panelist last month as part of the inaugural Kentucky State Police Black History Celebration. He shared his experiences from the KSP Academy along with his perspective as a second-generation law enforcement officer. Bradley graduated from the academy in 1994 and served at KSP until his retirement in 2013.



LRC SURVIVAL GUIDE



**WITH RENOVATIONS AND
NEW CONSTRUCTION, A LOT
OF CHANGE IS HAPPENING
AT LRC. HERE IS A GUIDE ON
WHAT'S NEW.**

WHERE TO FIND CERTAIN OFFICES



The LRC Print Shop is now located in Annex Room 027. It was previously housed in the Capitol basement.

Entrance to the print shop is badge access and LRC staff only. Currently, the badge reader outside the print shop may not work for every staff member. Work is underway to update the system to allow all LRC staff access to the print shop.

Printing and Publications Manager Joe Cox said staff who do not currently have badge access may contact the print shop in advance so someone can open the doors. Contact information is in the LRC Directory.

Note: You cannot enter the Print Shop through the Public Information Office or the Public Bill Room.



Graphic Designers Dana Kelley and Jennifer Noran are temporarily located in Annex Room 195.



The Public Information Office has returned to its permanent spot in Annex Room 023.



HOW TO GET A NEW STAFF PHOTO



The Public Information Office's main studio is under construction. In the meantime, staff and legislators can have their staff portraits taken on the fourth floor next to Human Resources.

To save yourself the trouble of running all over the Annex, you can call and set up a time! Please call the Public Information Office at ext. 59105, or call or email Photography Supervisor Bud Kraft at ext. 59106 and bud.kraft@lrc.ky.gov to set up a time. You may also call or email Photographer David Hargis at ext. 57924 and david.hargis@lrc.ky.gov.

WHERE TO PARK



This is a tricky one considering the pending construction of the temporary legislative chambers. As you have likely already noticed, parking spaces on the east side of the Annex next to the rose garden are already starting to disappear.

Facilities Administration Supervisor Cindy Smith will send email updates on the temporary chambers construction as needed. Those emails will contain information on parking, so be on the lookout. Right now, all parking in the east lot is expected to be closed by April 15 along with many spaces in the rear lot.

As for the west side surface lots, a portion of those near the floral clock have been reassigned to legislators. These spaces are marked A1 through A18 in the row nearest the building (pictured below). Members will be provided with parking passes to display, and Legislative Security Officer Tim Bradley will place notifications on cars not authorized to park in those places.



HOW TO CONNECT TO LRC WI-FI



This is a busy time with many visitors on the LRC Wi-Fi. Service and Support recommends that legislators and staff consider connecting personal mobile devices to LRC-GA Wi-Fi for a faster internet connection.

LRC-GA Wi-Fi is LRC's secure network that requires a password to use. If previously connected to the public "LRC Wi-Fi," go into your Wi-Fi settings and turn off auto reconnect or you can select forget or delete to remove the connection.

Full instructions on how to connect to LRC-GA Wi-Fi is located on the Staff Home Page under Computer Support. That link will direct you to the Service and Support Center webpage.

Instructions on how to log into LRC-GA secure Wi-Fi network are under General Information. Please do not publish or share the LRC-GA Wi-Fi password outside our agency, and if you see Wi-Fi networks available that you don't recognize - don't join them!

If you have questions or concerns, please give Service and Support a call ext. 51122 or email them at LRCServiceandSupport@lrc.ky.gov

WHERE TO SMOKE



LRC reminds everyone to not stand directly outside the Annex doors while smoking. Instead, please use the designated outdoor smoking areas.

More information on LRC's smoking policy can be found in the personnel policy manual. A link is available on the LRC Staff Home Page.





Looking Back



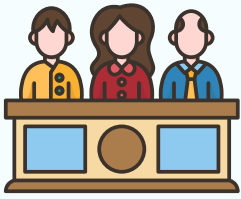
The Legislative Research Commission has undergone a lot of changes in its 76 years. The names and existence of certain legislative committees are just an example. This is Looking Back at LRC, where we look at LRC newsletters of yesteryear.

Before the existence of the internet, the legislative committees – interim joint, statutory and special – lists were published in LRC newsletters. This reveals a few things. Some committees have been around for ages. Others have taken on new names, while some have disappeared altogether.

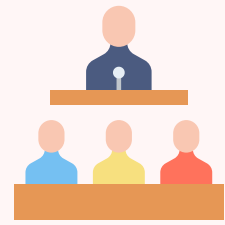
One committee that has stood the test of time is the Appropriations and Revenue Committee. But in the 1970s, most of the interim committees had different names than they do today.

Back then we had the Business Organizations and Professions Committee, the Cities Committee, Counties and Special Districts Committee, Personal Service Contract Review Committee, Labor and Industry Committee, Public Utilities and Transportation Committee, Highways and Traffic Safety Committee, Judiciary – Courts Committee, and Judiciary – Statutes Committee.

As we know, Judiciary – Courts and Judiciary – Statutes eventually morphed into just one



Looking Back



Judiciary Committee. Highways and traffic safety no longer have their own committee, and so on. Some of you may remember Business Organizations and Professions being renamed to Licensing and Occupations in 1995.

Committee names also tell a story and reveal pieces of Kentucky history. As they do today, the committees show what issues are impacting the commonwealth and are important to lawmakers. Juvenile justice is one of those issues.

In 1980, the legislature formed the Task Force to Study the Commonwealth's Juvenile Code, and in 1984, they formed the Special Committee to Study Kentucky's System of Juvenile Detention and Placement.

Public pensions, coal mining and floods have also had a special committee or task force or two over the years.

One past special committee in particular caught our eye. This short article was in the Oct. 14, 1977, issue of LRC Footnotes:

The LRC has created a special permanent committee on video media to study the feasibility of the television coverage of the 1978 General Assembly and Interim Committee on activities.

The Special committee will negotiate with KET, other necessary agencies and members of the general assembly to secure implementation of the coverage if the committee determines the project to be feasible.

I think we all know how that special committee turned out. KET has provided coverage of the legislature since the 1978 legislative session.



JAILS SUBCOMMITTEE - Kathy Campbell, staff person for LRC's Counties and Special Districts Committee, looks as if she hears the cell doors closing behind her rather than just inspecting jail conditions with legislators who toured four jails in the Bluegrass Area. Also on the trip were Prentice Harvey and Bill Wiley. (original caption)

? GUESS WHO? ? ? ?

Which LRC staff member is pictured as a child in this photo? Here are some hints:

This coworker is fairly new to LRC. Her mother loved to take pictures of her every month when she was a baby. This one was taken at the Macy's in Louisville in 2003. This coworker is a Frankfort native. She danced for 13 years and is one of 10 kids.

Send your correct guesses to communicator@lrc.ky.gov. Correct guesses will be entered into a drawing for a gift card!



Did you recognize David Hargis?

The previous issue of this newsletter asked LRC staff to guess the identity of their coworker who was photographed by his grandparents in Stamping Ground. This coworker has worked at LRC for a little more than a year. He came to LRC to make his hobby and side-job his full-time job after 15 years in the executive branch.

One person correctly guessed that the child in the photo is Photographer David Hargis in the Public Information Office. The winner of a \$10 gift card is Legislative Proofreader Liz Smith!



KUDOS KORNER



From Business Analyst Regina Long:

I would like to recognize Stephanie Newberg in the Public Information Office. She is an asset to the LRC Business Office. She demonstrates professionalism and a team effort when providing registration information. We appreciate her efforts and dedication to a job well done.

From Public Information Manager Mike Wynn:

Kudos to LRC Video Specialist Jeff Fossett for his tireless work producing multiple videos this year for the annual Black History Celebration. His historical look at the Civil Rights Movement in Kentucky was top-notch, and he did a great job capturing the KSU choir and tap dancer in the Rotunda during the second event!

CONGRATULATIONS

ON YOUR STELLAR PERFORMANCE!

Happy BIRTHDAY

April

April 2: Karen Sigler, Maurya Allen,
Jonathan Ballard

April 3: Caroline Shy

April 5: John McKee

April 8: Joe Cox, Emily Patrick

April 10: Mark DeVore, Jordyn
Nalley

April 11: Marissa Baker

April 16: Karen Lockett, Lawrence
Melkulcok, Nathan Campbell

April 18: Anne Burgess, Liz Smith,
McKaylynn Woodard, Lisa Wilson

April 21: Kim Hall

April 22: BobbieJo Spalding, Karen
Evans

April 23: LJ Tyree, Emily Caudill,
Patrick Hart

April 24: Christopher Jacovitch

April 25: Benjamin Watson, Lauren
Holder, Megan Arnold

April 27: Teresa Arnold

April 29: Liz Columbia

May

May 1: Donna Robinson Holiday

May 2: Cynthia Brown

May 4: Mariah Derringer-Lackey, Kim
Yeast

May 5: Josh Allen

May 6: Perry Papka, Stefan
Kasacavage, Karen Brady, Noah
Manno, Christina Gordley, Daniel Yeich

May 7: Jens Fugal

May 8: Rhonda Schierer, Jennifer
Crane

May 9: Emily Harkenrider, Tim Bradley

May 11: Elizabeth May

May 12: Jessica Zeh

May 13: Deborah Nelson, D. J. Burns,
Clay Sprinkles

May 14: Crystal Thompson

May 15: Katherine Halloran, Fred
Petke

May 17: Chris Schweickart

May 23: Dove DeNigris, Shannon
Tubbs

May 24: Joey Heady, Seth Dawson

May 25: Joey Beeler

May 26: Allison Stevens

May 28: Savannah Wiley

May 29: Frank Willey, Nancy Day



March Recipe



COCA-COLA



CAKE



- 2 cups sugar
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 sticks butter
- 1 cup regular Coke
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 1 ½ cups small marshmallows
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon soda
- ½ cup buttermilk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Icing:

- 1 stick butter
- 6 tablespoons regular Coke
- 3 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 1 box powdered sugar




Cake: Mix sugar and flour in bowl and set aside. In a medium saucepan, bring butter, Coke, and cocoa powder to a boil. Remove from heat. Add in the sugar/flour mixture and marshmallows. Stir until marshmallows melt and incorporate. Add eggs to the buttermilk and give a stir – add to the pan along with the soda and vanilla. Pour into a 9 x 13 greased pan and bake at 350 for 30 minutes.

Icing: Mix all in a saucepan, bring to a boil, let cool. Add powdered sugar (nuts are optional). You can set this in the refrigerator a couple of hours (covered) while the icing sets a little.


Stacy Jacobs, Lead Legislative Assistant
Legislative Services

March Recipe

Swiss Broccoli Chowder



2 tablespoons minced onions
3 tablespoons margarine
3 tablespoons flour (self-rising)
1.5 teaspoons salt
2 cups milk
3 cups chicken stock
2 cups thinly sliced carrots
4 heads broccoli florets
1 cup sour cream (room temperature)
6-8 oz. Swiss cheese, diced
garlic salt (to taste)
ground pepper (to taste)



In a large sauce pan, sauté butter and onion until tender; stir in flour and salt; gradually add milk, stirring until it boils; in separate pot-warm chicken stock/broth, add warmed stock to mixture along with broccoli and carrots. *To lessen cook time, add carrots to stock to partially cook prior to adding to onion mixture; cook over low heat, stirring occasionally until carrots are tender (40-45 minutes); stir in (room temperature) sour cream and Swiss cheese until cheese melts...DO NOT BOIL; serve and enjoy! Goes well with sourdough bread.

Jessica Zeh
Lead Legislative Staff
Veterans, Military Affairs, and Public Protection