Harlan B. Hodge was reared by a community which included the most outstanding teachers in the world. To these people, he has dedicated his life. His teachers in East St. Louis exposed him to his potential. His teachers in the Parkway School district cultivated his mind and character. Tennessee State University connected him to his roots and The University of Missouri St. Louis grounded him in the Social Work profession. As a Sojourner Truth Scholar at Washington University, Harlan mastered service to others as his highest aspiration.

Over the past 20 years, Harlan has given himself in service to the St. Louis Region. He leads inspirational leadership workshops for adults and students. He coaches Chess throughout the region. He consults non-profits and schools on working with at-risk youth. He counsels juvenile offenders in Restorative Justice. He volunteers at his son’s school and his family host three backyard movie nights annually for over 50 rowdy neighborhood children. In addition, he supports the employment of 100’s of college students through his work with programs like INROADS and FOCUS Youth Leadership St. Louis, two initiatives he benefited from as a high school and college student.

Harlan believes the key to a sustainable and thriving community lies in our ability to make meaningful personal connections. When people share themselves, they create lasting bonds. Harlan has written, published and presented extensively on this topic. At the core of Harlan’s efforts is the desire to give back to the St. Louis Region what his family, teachers and others have given him; inspiration, encouragement, opportunity and hope.