

Partners Unlimited Bulletin Board

**D.C. Public School Partnerships Project
of the Washington Lawyers' Committee
for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs**

Fall 2006

High School Inventors Supported by Holland & Knight

Banneker students, with the help of some dedicated teachers and support from **Holland & Knight**, proved that necessity is indeed the mother of invention during the 2005/06 school year. Their creative endeavor was inspired by the need for a secure and convenient way to store their cell phones, which are not allowed in Banneker's classrooms.

In September 2005, a group of about 30 students were determined to come up with a better place for their phones during the day than the nearby delicatessen. That method of storage resulted in too many students being late to class and too many expensive cell phones getting lost. Math and science teachers John Mahoney and Mark Hannum helped the students form an InvenTeam to secure a grant from a Massachusetts Institute of Technology program created to foster innovation and invention among high school students.

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Robert Blakey and his associate coaches--Elizabeth Sauer, left, and Anita Khushalani, right--review his debate presentation.

Arent Fox Hosts Debate For Randle Highlands

Robert Blakey from Randle Highlands Elementary School made an impassioned plea for District of Columbia statehood during a June debate at **Arent Fox**. Elizabeth Sauer and Anita Khushalani, the associates who had coached him, felt very proud as he spoke movingly of an uncle and a grandfather who defended their country in combat, but who were not represented in the Congress that sent them to war.

While Robert's presentation impressed the firm's chairman, Marc Fleischaker, and other Arent Fox senior partners who judged the debate, so did the argument put forth by his opponent and fellow classmate Nneka Azikiwe. Brian Schneider, Nneka's coach and an associate at the firm, was pleased with the 6th grader's presentation.

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IRIS'

INTRO



IRIS J. TOYER
Project Director, D.C. Public School Partnerships
Project, Washington Lawyers' Committee

So much has happened related to our schools since my last column, I hardly know where to begin.

First, the Superintendent of D.C. Public Schools released the much anticipated Master Facility Plan. Over the next 15 years, every public school in the system will be affected. There will be some school closings, fully modernized buildings and new construction. As the plan unfolds, the children of this city are in for a great deal of change!

Next, new curriculum standards in social studies and science will join the language arts and math standards already being implemented in our classrooms.

Also, teachers are receiving an exceptional amount of professional development that will prepare them to provide a higher level of instruction in every DCPS classroom.

How do these developments affect our School Partnerships Project? Firm volunteers will be vital allies at their partner schools in making sure that their students make the most of the changes at their schools. They will be a stabilizing force, particularly for those schools in the first few rounds of modernization.

Of course, firms participating in our educational partnerships are not waiting for the system to improve the performance of their young school friends. For example, **Holland and Knight** assisted students and teachers at Banneker Senior High School in their quest to become young inventors! **Arent Fox** helped the students at Randle Highlands Elementary School debate the weighty topic of D.C. Statehood.

During the summer, when most volunteers and students take time off to renew for the coming school year, **Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld** volunteers went to summer school to tutor their second graders at Tyler Elementary School.

Our guest columnist Christine R. Ladd, Associate General Counsel at **Fannie Mae** and coordinator of the firm's partnership with Marie Reed Learning Center, writes about the rewards of working with the children at Marie Reed and how it has benefited Fannie Mae.

Our participating firms are doing so many great things that impact the lives of D.C. public school children in a positive way. Need more proof? Read the stories of former students who trace much of their success to their involvement in our educational partnerships.

Be encouraged! Be inspired! Start a school partnership!

Iris

Iris J. Toyer, Director
D.C. Public School Partnerships Project

FANNIE MAE'S

T O R Y



*Christine R. Ladd
Associate General Counsel
Fannie Mae Legal Department*

Fannie Mae's Legal Department

began its school partnership with Marie Reed Learning Center eight years ago. As coordinator for the partnership over the last two years, I have enjoyed working with Marie Reed administrators, teachers, and students to increase and strengthen Fannie Mae's efforts to benefit the school and students.

Our partnership with Marie Reed provides an opportunity for our staff to work together to meet school and student needs through book and clothing drives; purchases of uniforms, test preparation materials, school supplies, furniture and equipment; sponsorship of school programs and activities; school grounds beautification and clean-ups; and employee contributions for other unmet school and student needs.

Flexibility in our partnership arrangement allows us to respond quickly to the school's requests for assistance. For example, at the end of the last school year, Marie Reed Principal Dayo Akinsheye wanted to give the children required summer reading, a first in Marie Reed history. She called on us to help. In response, our employees donated funds and helped the school to purchase books so that every child in every grade had a new book to take home over the summer to meet the required reading assignment.

The principal, staff, and students at Marie Reed are so appreciative of our efforts to help that they make everything we do seem like the greatest success. If you ever feel unappreciated, just drop by the school for a great pick-me-up! My personal favorite experience is attending Sixth Grade Graduation. The school is justifiably proud of its students, and on graduation day there is rarely a dry eye in the house.

Our partnership has given us opportunities to serve the school and teach the children the value of service, and it has taught us to make time in our busy schedules to address the needs of others. The partnership has also given us joy in seeing our efforts make a difference; recognition of our communal responsibility for the education of our country's children; and respect for educators preparing tomorrow's workforce. From our perspective, we have received much more than we have given.

We are grateful to the Washington Lawyers' Committee for helping us make this vital connection and recommend that every legal department and firm establish a school partnership.



Caroline Jackson (at left with her hand on the Cell-Mate) and Mariela Castillo (second from left) explain the Cell-Mate to Smithsonian Museum visitors.

Holland & Knight Supports Student Inventors at Banneker Senior High School (cont'd)

By April 2006, the team had designed and built a prototype of their Cell-Mate. The Cell-Mate consists of three rows of four metal containers similar to post office boxes with Plexiglas doors connected to a Radio Frequency Identification Reader. When the Reader scans a student's personal card, the student can open his or her box and deposit the cell phone in the box. The door then closes; it will not open until the same card is scanned again. The students presented their Cell-Mate invention at MIT and at the Invention on the Mall Festival sponsored by the National Museum of American History in August 2006.

John Mahoney, a recent USA Today Teacher of the Year, is applying for a patent for the Cell-Mate with the help of John

Moran, an Intellectual Property lawyer at Holland & Knight. "We have a foundation connected with the school, and it's my intention that the foundation would own the patent," says the math teacher. "Ideally, we would like to sell the patent and use the royalties for other activities and scholarships." The school foundation was created by Holland & Knight. Alan Vollmann, another Holland & Knight attorney, contributed the initial funds for the foundation. Other early contributors were Alan's mother's estate, family friends and the law firm.

Banneker students envision many uses for their invention. Aside from schools, which have an increasing need as more school districts ban cell phones, health clubs and movie theaters could use the Cell-Mate.

Fannie Mae Plans Book Fairs for Marie Reed Library

by Katherine Coles

For the past several years, books and reading have been a major focus of the partnership between **Fannie Mae's Legal Department** and the Marie Reed Learning Center. A couple of years ago, we held several book drives to help furnish classroom libraries for the teachers. Last year, we continued our book drives to supply the children with personal summer reading materials, and we donated funds to purchase school assigned books for their first required summer reading assignments.

For school year 2006-2007, Marie Reed's principal, Dayo Akinsheye, has asked us to help rebuild their central library. Marie Reed has been without a school librarian for more than five years. This year, Principal Akinsheye was able to secure a part-time librarian to serve the students. So, the push is on to rebuild the long neglected central library.

Fannie Mae intends to meet this need through a series of book drives and book fairs. We are planning two book fairs at Washington area bookstores. The first fair will take place at Politics & Prose on Connecticut Avenue, NW, on October 13 and 14. The second fair will be held at Barnes & Noble in Georgetown and Bethesda on December 8 and 9. Anyone who mentions Marie Reed School to the sales clerk on these dates will have an amount equal to 20% of their purchase price donated to the Marie Reed Library fund. Also, Marie Reed will supply the bookstores with a wish list. Anyone willing to help in this cause can purchase a book specifically for the library shelves. These two events are the cornerstone to rebuilding Marie Reed's school library and meeting a fundamental need for the school.

We have also been supporting Marie Reed's peer mediation program, which teaches children how to address conflict positively and productively. Another important activity was incorporating a nonprofit organization, The School Partnership Fund, to multiply financial resources through a matching program offered to Fannie Mae employees using the Fannie Mae Foundation and through charitable tax deductions.

Other projects we undertake change from year to year, depending upon priority and need. In the past, we

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Akin Gump summer associate Stacey Moore, holding chalk on the left, helps students with their writing exercises.

Akin Gump Sends Tutors To Tyler Summer School

This past summer, **Akin Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld** proved that its partnership with Tyler Elementary School is a year-round relationship. Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, some 20 associates, summer associates and staff employees went to the school to tutor second-grade summer school students for an hour in reading, writing, and math.

One of the Akin Gump tutors who made many trips to Tyler was summer associate Stacey Moore, who is attending Harvard Law School. While she worked with her student on the reading and writing exercises assigned by the teacher, she took the opportunity to provide guidance by encouraging the kind of behavior that leads to success.

"I really enjoyed this," recalls Stacey. "I worked with the same student each time I went to the school. Being a person of color myself, it meant a lot to help him succeed. Both his reading and his behavior improved while he was in summer school."

ALUMNI

C H I E V E



Hattie Blackshire (left), who coordinates Covington & Burling's Saturday Academy at Cardozo High School, and Stacy King, an accounting coordinator at the firm, discuss plans for the 2006/07 school year.

Covington & Burling Taps Cardozo Alum To Teach at Saturday Academy

Stacy King, an accounting coordinator at **Covington & Burling**, has two special reasons for looking forward to being part of the firm's Saturday Academy that helps Cardozo High School students prepare for their future. "It is very important for students to experience the work environment, to learn what they have to do to prepare themselves for the future—how to prepare a resume, how to be professional, the importance of getting to work on time," Stacy explains. When she was in high school, her part-time job at the Pentagon taught her how important it was to understand the world of work.

Her second reason is that she is a Cardozo alumna. She graduated in 1981, years before students at the school had the opportunity to participate in Saturday Academy. Stacy, however, recognizes how valuable the experience can be for today's students.

This year, Stacy will be helping Hattie Blackshire, the firm's Saturday Academy

coordinator, with the Cardozo program. For example, she will be involved in planning and directing the students' budgeting workshop. Hattie is also looking forward to Stacy's help with the Saturday Academy. "It will be a great benefit for the students to identify with a Cardozo graduate. She will be the perfect role model. She is very professional. Her peers look up to her."

Covington & Burling has over a half-dozen employees who are Cardozo graduates. They have been working at the firm for an average of ten years.

Help Identify More Alumni

What happens to students after they participate in partnership activities is of interest to the Washington Lawyers' Committee and everyone in the school partnership network. If your firm is in touch with students who have graduated from your partner school, contact Iris Toyer.

From Power Lunch To Debate Champion

When Victor Mwimanzi came to the United States from Tanzania in the summer of 1996, he spoke almost no English, but headed for Park View Elementary School in the fall. Early the next year, he had an experience that he considers to be very important in his life. He attended a Power Lunch at **Reed Smith** and was paired with partner Eugene Tillman. Because his English was so limited, Victor had to really work at communicating with Eugene. But by the end of the lunch, he was amazed by how much they had learned about each other. "He gave me his card," Victor recalls. "And when I was a student at Park View, we often talked on the phone."

By the time Victor got to Roosevelt High School, his English had improved so much that he participated in national debate competitions and was awarded a full debate scholarship to the University of Louisville where he is now a junior majoring in philosophy. During his college years, he spends summers working in the record department at Reed Smith. His supervisor is Bill Newborough. Victor is absolutely delightful," says Bill. "He is dependable and thorough and was quick to learn our various

(Continued on page 12)



Victor Mwimanzi's official Reed Smith picture.



Amina Copeland, former mock trial prosecutor and intern at Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson, in her kindergarten classroom at Peabody Elementary School.

From Mock Trial To Kindergarten Class

There is a lot going on in Amina Copeland's kindergarten class at Peabody Elementary School. She is also a wife and the mother of two young children. Yet she can clearly remember working with **Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson** attorneys on her mock trial presentation nearly ten years ago. "For several weeks, we would practice when Karen Grisez and Tommy Beaudreau came to the School Without Walls to teach the Street Law class," she recalls. "Then, when we got closer to the competition, we got to practice at the law firm. It made me take my role on the prosecution team very seriously.

Tommy, a long-time Street Law teacher and now a partner at the firm, remembers Amina:

"She was bright and confident, and I knew she would master a complex fact pattern and do a good job of preparing witnesses. She also had a great presentation style. "After the mock trial, she worked as an intern at the firm. People here enjoyed working with her."

"I worked there for several summers and Christmas breaks," Amina said. "It was a great experience."

DEBATING

C I S S U E S



Summer associates help students prepare for their debate. L/R: 6th grader Kahlil Edley, Michele Gutrick (summer associate), Jocelyn Womack (summer associate), 5th grader Shayla Bonner, and 5th grader Tameisha Thorpe.

Randle Highlands Debaters Impress Arent Fox Partners (cont'd)

Arent Fox partner Alan Fishel, who organized and moderated the debate, chose this activity because he wanted to maximize participation by the firm, while requiring a modest time commitment from attorneys and staff at the firm. A coaching team of 25 associates and summer associates helped the students prepare from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Eight senior partners judged six pairs of students who presented opposing arguments from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. At noon, the young debaters and the associates who coached them enjoyed lunch together.

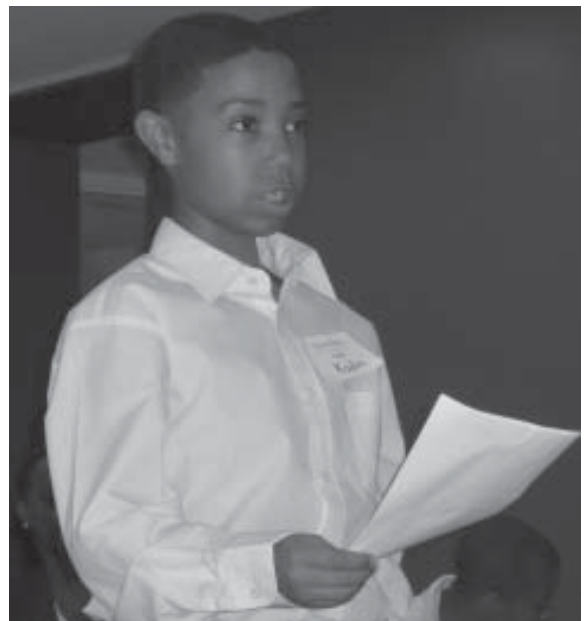
“We chose D.C. statehood as the topic because we wanted our first debate to concern a local issue that would be of significant interest to the children and the community,” explains Alan. “We also wanted to select an issue that we believed the students would be excited to learn more about.”

The students were indeed excited and engaged. In fact, Alan thought they marshaled their arguments “a lot better than some lawyers I see in court.”

Managing partner Marc Fleischaker recalls how impressed he was: “They did a fantastic job of presenting both the plusses

and potential minuses of the District of Columbia becoming a state. It was a pleasure to see the students speak publicly with confidence and style.”

This partnership activity was so successful that it was featured in a July 19, 2006, *Washington Post* KidsPost news article entitled “The Great Debate.”



Kaylin Carter argues that D.C. should become the 51st state.



Top: Arent Fox partners judge the debate. L/R Michael Anderson, Marc Fleischaker (Chairman), Wayne Matelski, Melissa Bailey, Deborah Froling, and Michele Williams.

Debate Topics Can Engage Students of All Ages

Although debating is usually thought of as an activity for adults and young adults, the presentation by Randle Highlands elementary students of the pros and cons of D.C. statehood shows that it is an activity for all ages. From the broad participation of **Arent Fox** attorneys in the event, it is clear that it is also a very successful intergenerational activity.

The prospect of never having a voice in national affairs while living in our nation's capital evokes strong arguments. Dr. Donna Graham, school coordinator for the partnership between MacFarland Middle School and **Fulbright & Jaworski**, believes that middle-school students can successfully debate this issue, which is timely because of developments on Capitol Hill, including a recent debate by Constitutional scholars on giving the District of Columbia a voting member in the House of Representatives. This debate took place on September 14 when the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution held a hearing on the D.C. Voting Rights Act sponsored by Congressman Tom Davis (R-VA) and Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC).

The point of controversy during the hearing was whether Congress has the authority to give the District voting representation in the House. DC VOTE (202-462-6000) is a good source for talking points asserting that Congress does have this authority, and the American Enterprise Institute (202-659-4464) is a good source for talking points to support the argument that Congress does not have such authority.



Tameisha Thorpe makes the case for statehood as 5th grader Robert Blakey and summer associate Michele Gutrick listen intently.

2006/07 Partnership Dates

Thursday, November 30, 2006	Geoplunge 2
Thursday, January 25, 2007	Partnership Luncheon
Monday, February 12, 2007	Cooking For Kids Bake Sale and Taste-Off
Thursday, April 19, 2007	Partnership Luncheon

Partnership Luncheons will be held at
Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld

Coats For Kids Can Help Keep Your Students Warm

If your firm is planning a winter clothing drive for students at your partner school, consider following **Verizon's** example and work with Coats for Kids Foundation, a nonprofit organization in Alexandria, Virginia.

Last year, instead of purchasing coats for children at Adams Elementary, its partner school, Verizon made a donation to Coats For Kids. The nonprofit organization then provided coats for the children at Adams. Working with Coats for Kids makes money for coats, hats, and gloves go much farther because the organization has established relationships to obtain discounts from retailers and wholesalers. For more information, call Paul Darby at 703-567-2628.

Key Questions To Ask About School Board Candidates

On November 7, D.C. voters who work for law firms and who have children in our partner schools will help select a new Board of Education President as well as Board Members to represent Wards 5, 6, 7, and 8. In anticipation of this election, it is a good idea to keep in mind the kind of information that is important to know about the candidates.

- What makes the candidate qualified to deal with the board roles and responsibilities?

- What is the candidate's personal involvement with the D.C. Public Schools? Are or have his/her children been enrolled, and for how long? Volunteer work? PTA or Home and School Association (HSA) membership?

- What is the candidate's involvement in the community? Has he/she ever done volunteer work? What, specifically?

- What is the candidate's experience working in organized groups? Has he/she served on another multi-member board? Has he/she come to meetings faithfully and well-prepared?

- What is the candidate's idea of how a board member should carry out his/her responsibilities?

The source of these questions is a research paper prepared by the Washington Lawyers' Committee's Public Education Reform Project entitled "Choosing Effective School Board Members: District of Columbia Elections, November 7, 2000."

Fannie Mae's School Projects (cont'd)

have helped Marie Reed Learning Center purchase school uniforms for students who could not afford them. We have helped improve the school grounds with flowers supplied and planted by Fannie Mae's Grounds Services, and purchased and stuffed 600+ pencil bags to welcome students back to school. We also collected \$17,000+ for computers and related equipment through Giant's Grocery Apples for Students Program, and provided new children's books for incentive awards. We have obtained school desks, chairs, tables, bookcases, and lamps; sponsored a year-end Fun Day event; and sponsored a year-end recognition awards ceremony for the students participating in Marie Reed's tutoring program.

We also work with Marie Reed to present their annual career development week. In another department-wide drive, we were able to provide the school with enough calculators for the entire fifth- and sixth-grade classes to use during the school year.

PARTNERSHIPS

Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld

Tyler Elementary School

Arent Fox

Randle Highlands Elementary School

Baker & McKenzie

Payne Elementary School

Beveridge & Diamond

Birney Elementary School

Bingham McCutchen

Adams Elementary School

Bracewell & Giuliani

Brightwood Elementary School

Covington & Burling

Cardozo Senior High School

D.C. Chartered Health Plan, Inc.

Ballou Senior High School

Dickstein Shapiro

Ellington School of the Arts

DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary

Bruce Monroe Elementary School

Dunbar High School

Eastern High School

Duke Ellington Senior High School

Fannie Mae's Corporate Legal Dept.

Marie H. Reed Learning Center

Foley & Lardner

Wilkinson Elementary School

Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson

School Without Walls

Fulbright & Jaworski

Macfarland Middle School

Greater Washington Area Chapter -

Women Lawyers Division -

National Bar Association

Malcolm X Elementary School

Health Right, Inc.

H.D. Cooke Elementary School

Ferebee-Hope Elementary School

LaSalle Elementary School

Lincoln Junior High School

F I R M S C H O O L S

Holland & Knight

Banneker Senior High School

Cleveland Elementary School

Howrey

Bancroft Elementary School

Kilpatrick Stockton

Sousa Middle School

McDermott, Will & Emery

Bowen Elementary School

McKenna Long & Aldridge

Stevens Elementary School

Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw

Gage-Eckington Elementary School

The Office of the Attorney General,

District of Columbia

Walker Jones/R.H. Terrell Education Center

Patton Boggs

Francis Junior High School

Pepper Hamilton

Stanton Elementary School

Reed Smith

Park View Elementary School

Sidley Austin

Thomson Elementary School

Spriggs & Hollingsworth

Jefferson Junior High School

Step toe & Johnson

Montgomery Elementary School

Sutherland Asbill & Brennan

Bell Multicultural Senior High School

U.S. Attorney's Office for the

District of Columbia

Amidon Elementary School

U.S. Courts for the District of Columbia

Circuit

J.O. Wilson Elementary School

Verizon

Adams Elementary School

Washington Bar Association -

Young Lawyers' Division

Banneker Senior High School

Ballou Senior High School

Weil, Gotshal & Manges

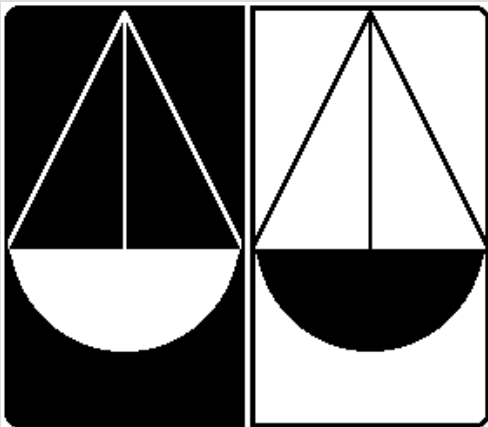
Noyes Elementary School

Williams & Connolly

Dunbar Senior High School

Winston & Strawn

Kamit Institute for Magnificent Achievers



D.C. Public School Partnerships Project's

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Power Lunch Alum Succeeds (cont'd)

tasks. I believe Victor is one of Reed Smith's outstanding hires. My own signal that summer is coming is the welcome phone call I get from Victor in the spring." Bill and Victor have an affinity because Bill, a former seminarian and theology student, enjoys the discussions he has with the young philosophy student.

Victor also still has an important relationship with his Power Lunch partner, Eugene Tillman. They continue to have lunch when Victor is in town and to stay in touch through e-mail while he is away at school. Victor has also developed a friendship with another Park View alumnus, Judge Emmet Sullivan, whom he visits every summer.

Victor is sure that after completing his undergraduate studies, he will continue his education in one of two ways. Because of his Reed Smith experience and friendships with people at the firm and Judge Sullivan, as well as his gift for presenting an argument, he is seriously considering law school. On the other hand, advanced degrees in philosophy would give him the opportunity to share his passion for the subject with future students.

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