

# Partners Unlimited Bulletin Board

A Public Education Legal Services Project  
of the Washington Lawyers' Committee  
for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs

Spring 2004

## Spriggs & Hollingsworth Aims to Boost Test Scores With Tutoring Program

Soon after **Spriggs & Hollingsworth** was paired with Bertie Backus Middle School, the firm's committee that organizes partnership activities decided that helping to raise the students' scores on standardized tests would be a priority of their educational partnership with the school. A survey of potential volunteers revealed that the firm had the capacity to tutor students in English and math, which students must master in order to perform well on the Stanford 9 tests. Tutors were recruited and organized into two teams for each subject.

Critical decisions and arrangements also had to be made at the school. One key decision was to make the tutoring an after-school activity. Another important step was finding teachers willing to stay an additional hour after school. The next steps were identifying students who would benefit from

*(Continued on page 4)*



*Bancroft Elementary student working on a square for a spring peace quilt, one of many art projects supported by Howrey Simon Arnold & White*

## Howrey Simon's Peer Mediation Program Inspires Art Projects

During the 2003/04 school year, the eight-year-old peer mediation program that **Howrey Simon Arnold & White** sponsors at Bancroft Elementary School involved every student in the school. Since 1996, when the law firm brought peer mediation to Bancroft, student mediators, known as peacemakers, have been called on to settle numerous disputes on the playground, in the cafeteria, and elsewhere at the school. Howrey

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# IRIS' N T R O



*IRIS J. TOYER*  
Project Director, Public Education Legal Services  
Project, Washington Lawyers' Committee

If I were to select a theme for this school year, I would take the name from one of my favorite poems, "Still I Rise," by Maya Angelou. In this poem, Ms. Angelou writes that she will rise regardless of the challenges placed in her path. She speaks of her resilience with a strong lyrical voice.

For our students, this school year has been a tremendous challenge even by D.C. standards. Our schools began the year with an uncertainty over its school budget, lost two superintendents along the way, picked up a third, and at

this writing are searching for a fourth. Then, there is the ongoing political debate over school governance.

I think that the school partnership firms have been pleasantly surprised to find that in spite of all of these challenges—the children have continued to rise.

The firms find creative ways to help their partner schools shield their students from the chaos. In this issue, you will read how **Sidley Austin Brown & Wood** and **Howrey, Simon, Arnold & White** sponsor peer mediation programs at their partner schools. Perhaps these students will be able to help the *adults* settle their differences!

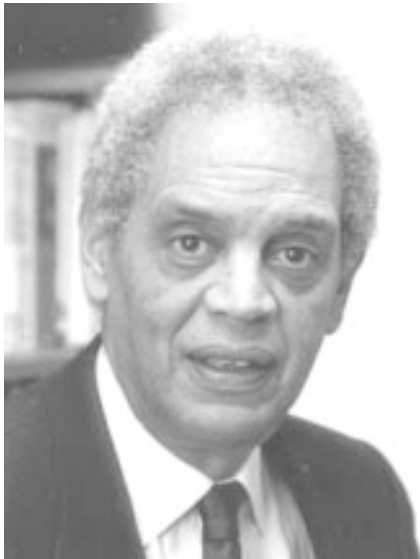
Read also about firms like **Patton Boggs LLP** and **Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw** that took our annual Cooking for Kids Bake Sale and Bake Off to new heights. They published the recipes in cookbooks decorated with student artwork, and sold the cookbooks, with all profits benefiting their partner schools!

New firms continue to join the Public Education Legal Services Project. They include **Spriggs & Hollingsworth**, paired with Backus Middle School; and **Health Right, Inc.**, affiliated with H.D. Cooke, Ferebee-Hope and LaSalle elementary schools and Lincoln Middle School. We invite more firms to join in our success!

## *Iris*

Iris J. Toyer, Director  
Public Education Legal Services Project

# EXPERIENCES



**ROGER WILKINS**

*Professor, George Mason University  
Former Member, District of Columbia  
Board of Education  
Past Chairman, Pulitzer Prize Board*

It is really quite remarkable that there are so many lawyers in this city who mentor so many young people, week after week, month after month, and year after year. And all this activity is orchestrated by Iris Toyer. One of the things I read in a recent issue of this newsletter is that grown-ups cannot remember what it is like to be kids and therefore have a hard time understanding what their relationships do for the children at their partner schools.

Well I remember what it was like to be a kid in Harlem. In the Sugar Hill section of Harlem, we had some remark-

able neighbors. We had a very enterprising principal, who from time to time would encourage some of these people to come to our school. I remember three of them in particular. One was a mean man who lived right across the street from the school, and he used to get angry at us because he wanted to sleep all day. When we made noise, this person, known to us only as the mean man, would wake up and scold us. One day, he was brought to our school to talk to us about music. And it was really very nice. When we learned that he stayed up all night to work, we did not think he was so mean anymore. His name was Duke Ellington.

Another man who came to our school was my uncle Roy, who was then a major figure in the NAACP. And the third was Thurgood Marshall. Now we were little kids. With the exception of Ellington, we did not really know what these men did. But we knew they were important, and we knew they took the time to come to talk with us. And that let us know that we were important, that our lives were important, that our futures were important to them. I remember very well the joy and the feeling of fullness I got because these men thought enough to come to our school. And today, it must be the same for each kid who has a relationship with a law firm volunteer. What you do for them, what you implant in them is of lasting importance.

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# BOOKS

# A S I C S



*The Spriggs & Hollingsworth Tutoring Team: L/R 1st row: Monica Freas, JonMarc Buffa, Gary Rubin, Ignacia Moreno, Shelly Cox, Caitlin Kottage, Dianne Munevar, Nancy Hollins, Meagan McMillan, Teresa Greene, Shakeya Currie, and Stuart White. 2nd row: Christine Harrington, Angela Aiken (not visible, behind Gary Rubin), Jeni Davis, Joanne Badr, Andrew Papp, Daniel Broehl, Luke Schray, Diane Schiraldi, and Carol Leath.*

## **Spriggs & Hollingsworth Aims to Boost Test Scores With Tutoring Program (cont'd)**

tutoring and getting permission from parents for their children to participate in the activity.

On Tuesdays, three to five volunteers go to the school to tutor about 20 students in English, and work with them on test-taking skills and the exercises in a Stanford 9 tutorial. Students who have reading difficulties have the opportunity to use a special program on phonics provided by the firm.

About 20 students are tutored in math on Thursdays. Most of these students work on test-taking skills and tutorial exercises. One-on-one attention is always available for anyone who needs special help.

“Our project has developed through trial and error, and we feel we’re on the

right track,” says Senior Coordinator Angela Aiken, “In the beginning, we concentrated on getting to know the students and gaining their trust. After we spent two or three tutoring sessions with them, they started to let us know what their shortcomings were and where they needed help. We have definitely noticed improvement in their English and math skills. When the teachers tell us we are making a difference, we know our efforts are working.”

Spriggs & Hollingsworth also organized a character-building forum for the entire 7th grade—one session for girls met in the cafeteria, and another session for boys was held in the auditorium. Because of the success of these activities, both the after-school program and the character forum will be part of the 2004/05 school year.

## Fannie Mae Helps Build Libraries

by Susan Sullivan

During the 2003/04 school year, **Fannie Mae's** Legal Department focused its volunteer efforts for the Marie Reed Community Learning Center on book projects—expanding and renovating the school's main library, enhancing classroom libraries, and providing new books to be given to children as incentive awards. Through various fundraising activities generating \$2,500 and the collection of gently used books, the Department has successfully completed these projects. The "classroom library" is a set of 100 books donated to grades K through six, to enhance the classroom libraries in each grade. The Legal Department also provided funds to make it possible for the school to participate in the District's "Reading is Fundamental" program.

Senior vice president and general counsel Ann Kappler presented the books to Reed School principal John Sparrow on February 24, 2004, as



*Senior Vice President and General Counsel Ann Kappler presents books to Marie Reed Principal Dr. John Sparrow.*



*Marie Reed's Dancing Stars entertain Fannie Mae's Legal Department.*

part of their Legal Department appreciation luncheon at Fannie Mae's headquarters. Members of the school's dance troupe, The Dancing Stars, accompanied Principal Sparrow to the luncheon and enthusiastically entertained Legal Department staff with several dance routines.

Activities planned for the remainder of the school year include book presentations at the Spring Awards Ceremony, a library clean-up day, and participation in the 6th grade graduation ceremony. The school and Legal Department will also work together to determine how to spend a \$5,000 grant recently awarded to Marie Reed by the Fannie Mae Foundation in recognition of the highly successful partnership. The odds are that some of the money will also be used for book projects.

## Firms Find Other Ways To Provide More Books For Partner Schools

A number of law firms have found a variety of ways to provide books for their partner schools. Employees are often asked to donate new or lightly used books. **Step toe & Johnson**, for example, places large boxes on each floor. At the end of last year, attorneys and staff filled up half a dozen boxes, which were delivered to Scott Montgomery Elementary School. **Reed Smith** persuaded bookstores and publishing companies to donate books for Park View Elementary. At an **Arnold & Porter** sale, employees had the opportunity to buy new books for Garrison Elementary in memory of a colleague who was an active school volunteer before his untimely death.



# WORLD OF WORK

# WORKING IT OUT



*Three Bancroft Elementary students at work on their peace quilt squares.*

## **Howrey Simon Supports Art Projects on Peace**

Simon provides conflict resolution training for the 4th, 5th and 6th graders who have been chosen as peacemakers by their teachers and school staff.

The law firm also provides conflict resolution orientation for the Bancroft faculty. The purpose of the faculty orientation is to let teachers know who the peacemakers are, what their mediation capacities are, and how to refer disputes to the peacemakers. After the orientation for the 2003/04 school year, art teacher Carlos Graupera, and his colleagues decided to complement the peer mediation program with art projects that express peace and peacemaking in a variety of ways. Involving all 400 of Bancroft's students put a real strain on the school's

very modest art supply budget. Howrey Simon provided \$500 to be used for what came to be known as the Peace Art Project. The Advisory Neighborhood Commission for Mount Pleasant, where Bancroft is located, also contributed \$500.

"I worked with the teachers to come up with projects that reflect what the students are studying in their academic classes," explains the art teacher. One 6th grade class, for example, was studying historical figures, such as Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth. In their social studies classes, the students discussed the qualities that made these people important leaders. The art project related to the study of historical leaders was a series of peace and justice puppets. As they created these

*(Continued on page 10)*

## Sidley Austin Supports Peer Mediation Project At Thomson Elementary

For the past eight years, lawyers, legal assistants and staff from **Sidley Austin Brown & Wood, LLP** have sponsored a peer mediation program at Thomson Elementary School. Every Thursday, volunteers from Sidley teach a peer mediation class to students ranging from 4th to 6th grades. Their teachers, in consultation with the school's principal, Dr. Gladys Camp, and counselor, Doris Mercado, select the student mediators. Volunteers from the firm, with the help of conflict resolution experts, train the young mediators in conflict resolution, active listening, and other communication skills. This training makes it possible for the student mediators to hear and help resolve real conflicts between their classmates.

Every spring, as the school year comes to a close, the peer mediators are brought by bus to Sidley's K Street office, where they participate in a moot court competition and enjoy a pizza party and other snacks. The firm also arranges for peer mediators to tour the United States Supreme Court.



*Bancroft art teacher Carlos Graupera compliments a Bancroft student on her peace quilt square.*



*This woodcut, created by a Bancroft student, depicts a bird in the ecosystem of the Galapagos Islands.*

## Law Firms Provide Career Education

Law firms with school partners serve as a valuable career education resource. For example, they often participate in career days at their schools. This spring, Seannon Fallon Meeks from **Winston & Strawn** represented her firm in a session on Law and Criminal Justice Careers at the Kamit Institute for Magnificent Achievers Public Charter High School. She described for the students what her current job as an attorney and her previous job as a legal assistant involve. She also found it necessary to explain that "LA Law" and "Ally McBeal" do not present a true picture of careers in law, and she responded to questions about salary and working hours.

Elementary schools also have career education programs. This spring, volunteers from **Fannie Mae's Legal Department** participated in Marie Reed's Career Awareness Extravaganza. The goal of the Fannie Mae team was to develop as diverse a presentation as possible. The topics they presented to the children at the school included "Utilization

*(Continued on page 10)*

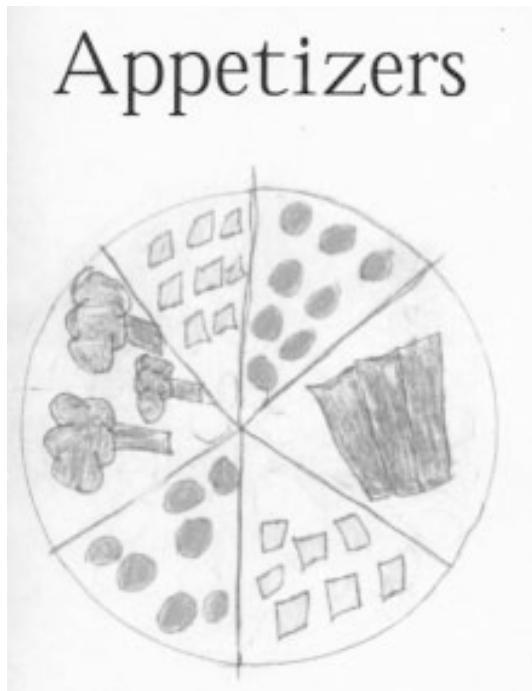
# FUN UNDRAISING

## Cooking for Kids Reveals Talented Cooks At Mayer Brown

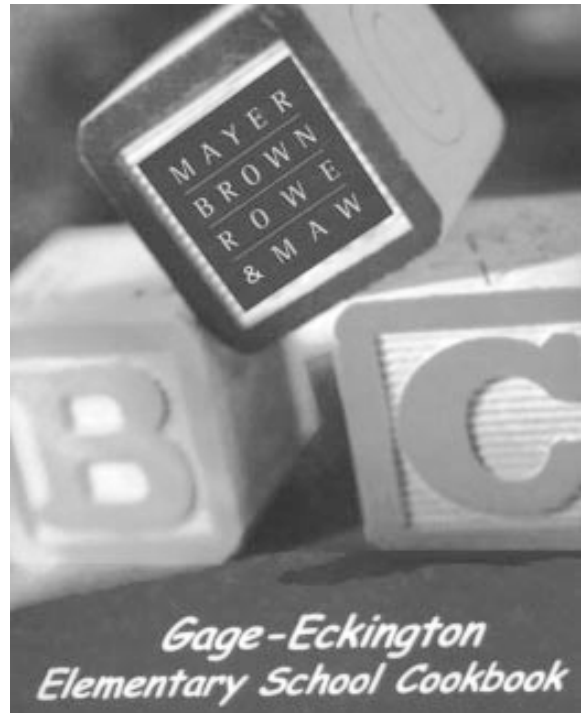
By Lynn Raymon

We did not know that entering the Washington Lawyers' Committee's 4th annual Bake-Off last June would get us started on a great project. When the event was over, our Bake-Off Committee got the idea to print copies of the recipes used for the pastries submitted by **Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw**. One thing led to another, and suddenly we were discussing our own cookbook.

Under the direction of the Cookbook Chairman, Claudia Hannigan, our "little project" took on a life of its own. Our goal was to have a finished product by mid-November so that copies would be available for our holiday craft show. The



*Cookbook divider, created by student Asia Stevenson.*



firm's information services department created an electronic recipe submission form. As recipes were submitted on line, they were reviewed by our Cookbook Committee.

Students at Gage Eckington Elementary, our partner school, participated in an art competition for food drawings. Out of over 75 entries, 16 winners were selected to introduce the 16 sections in the cookbook. At an awards assembly luncheon for all 75 participants, prizes were given to the young artists who created the winning drawings.

Our cookbook was introduced at our craft fair, and the initial printing of 125 was gone within 3 hours. A second printing of 100 books was gone before Christmas. We raised over \$2,000 to support our activities at Gage Eckington, and we continue to sell copies. We are so proud of our success. Please contact us if you are interested in getting a copy of our cookbook.



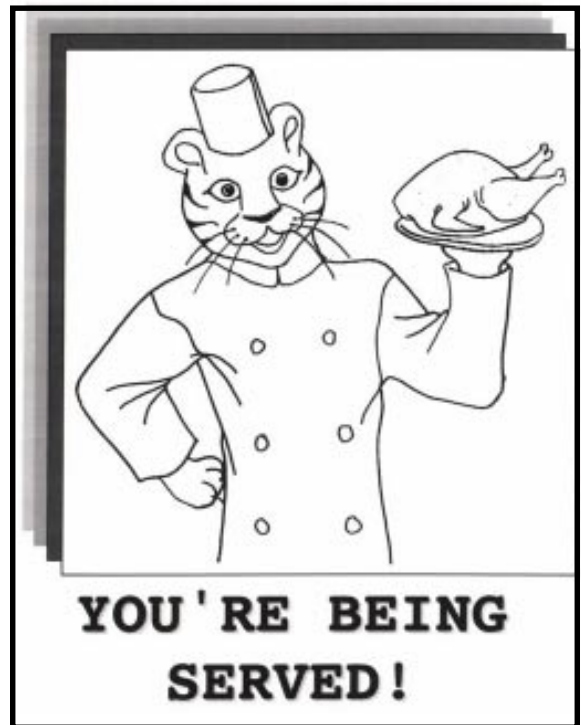
## Patton Boggs Publishes 2nd Edition Of School Cookbook

Last fall, just in time for holiday gift buying, **Patton Boggs** and its school partner, Francis Junior High, published their second cookbook, entitled *You're Being Served*. Attorneys and staff as well as teachers, students, and parents contributed over 200 recipes. These recipes, covering everything from appetizers to desserts were compiled by editor Pam Keller and other Patton Boggs staff. The cookbook cover, however, was the result of a student art competition. Printing services were donated by one of the firm's vendors. Holiday sales were brisk, and the firm was able to raise \$1,500 for Francis Junior High School. Over the past few months, attorneys and staff at Patton Boggs have made good use of the popular cookbook. For copies of *You're Being Served*, contact Pam Keller.

Another successful approach that Patton Boggs uses to raise money for Francis is the used book sale. The firm finds this so successful that twice a year employees bring in used books, CDs, DVDs, tapes, and games. The firm then sells the items to other employees. Book sales take place before the holidays in December and in late spring when people are looking for books to take on vacation.



*Reed Smith auction items ready for bidding.*



## Reed Smith Silent Auction For Park View Elementary Goes over the Top

On May 13-14, 2004, Reed Smith's Washington, D.C. office held its sixth annual Silent Auction to benefit its partner school, Park View Elementary. The ambitious goal this year was to raise \$7,000. The fundraiser successfully raised \$7,200 that went directly to the school. Reed Smith employees and several businesses and restaurants around the city contributed the items that were auctioned. They included an authentic Louisiana Gumbo Dinner for six at the home of a partner; a one-week stay in a luxury villa in Provence, France; a sumptuous cream cheese pound cake decorated like a gift box; tickets to the Prince "Musicology" Concert; gift certificates to Red Sage and Ceiba restaurants; and dinner for six in the home of the winner prepared by the chef from Georgia Brown's Restaurant.

For the past eleven years, Reed Smith has had a partnership with Park View Elementary School, located in Northwest Washington, D.C., and serving students from Head Start through 5th grade. Reed Smith's relationship with Park View generates a variety of year-round projects, such as fundraisers, book drives, essay contests and lunches for Park View students at the firm.

# FYI

## Akin Gump Establishes New Volunteer Award

This year, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld expanded its volunteer recognition program with an award named for a beloved teacher at Tyler Elementary School. The new Robin Stoep Memorial Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service is in memory of the Tyler teacher who was the firm's point of contact at the school. She was loved by students, faculty, and law firm volunteers alike. Last year, she became very ill with a rare liver disorder, and died before a life-saving transplant could take place.

Mary Alice Oliver, a secretary at Akin Gump, was the first recipient of the new award. She has worked in the firm's volunteer reading program for several years. "Mary is always ready to lend a hand on behalf of the children at Tyler," says senior partner Stan Samorajczyk. She received her award during a program that also honored several Akin Gump attorneys for outstanding pro bono representation.

### Career Education (cont'd)

and Maintenance of Computer Equipment," by Robert Burroughs, Senior Project Manager, Law and Policy; "Following the Rules," by Karl Chen, a securities attorney in the Office of Corporate Compliance; and "Mediation: An Effective Method to Resolve Conflict," by Carole Jordan, an employment attorney in the Office of Corporate Compliance. At the end of May, **Sidley Austin Brown & Wood** participated in the Career Exploration Program at Thomson Elementary School.



*Senior partner Stan Samorajczyk and Mary Alice Oliver with the Robin Stoep Memorial Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service presented by Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld.*

## Howrey Simon Supports Art Projects (cont'd)

puppets, the students tried to show firmness and compassion, qualities they had discussed in their social studies classes.

Another 6th grade class was working on an environmental project with the Embassy of Ecuador. The students were learning about ecosystems, how living things in these systems are interdependent, and how all of the elements of the ecosystem are supposed to support one another. They focused on the Galapagos Islands, and each student chose one island animal to be depicted in the woodcut he or she created.

The 4th and 5th graders worked on a number of projects. They created masks representing concepts of peace—justice, harmony, understanding, creativity. And they made a spring peace quilt with squares showing how spring can inspire people to cherish life.

## PARTNERSHIPS

**Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld**

Tyler Elementary School

**Arent Fox**

Randle Highlands Elementary School

**Arnold & Porter**

Garrison Elementary School

**Baker & McKenzie**

Payne Elementary School

**Beveridge & Diamond**

Birney Elementary School

**Bracewell & Patterson**

Van Ness Elementary School

**Covington & Burling**

Cardozo Senior High School

**Crowell & Moring**

Garnett-Patterson Middle School

**D.C. Office of Corporation Counsel**

R.H. Terrell Junior High School

**Dickstein Shapiro Morin & Oshinsky**

Ellington School of the Arts

**Fannie Mae's Corporate Legal Dept.**

Marie H. Reed Learning Center

**Foley & Lardner**

Wilkinson Elementary School

**Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson**

School Without Walls

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**Greater Washington Area Chapter -**

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Malcolm X Elementary School

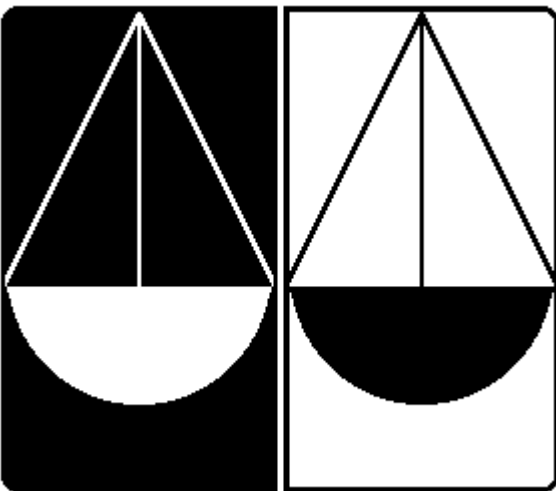
**Health Right Inc.**

H.D. Cooke Elementary School

Ferebee-Hope Elementary School

LaSalle Elementary School

Lincoln Middle School



# F I R M S C H O O L S

**Holland & Knight**

Banneker Senior High School

Cleveland Elementary School

**Howrey Simon Arnold & White**

Bancroft Elementary School

**Levine Sullivan Koch & Schulz**

H.D. Cooke Elementary School

**McDermott, Will & Emery**

Bowen Elementary School

**McKenna Long & Aldridge**

Stevens Elementary School

**Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw**

Gage-Eckington Elementary School

**Patton Boggs**

Francis Junior High School

**Pepper Hamilton**

Stanton Elementary School

**Piper Rudnick**

Bruce Monroe Elementary School;

Law Scout Program

Eastern, Dunbar and

Ellington Senior High Schools

**Reed Smith**

Park View Elementary School

**Sidley Austin Brown & Wood**

Thomson Elementary School

**Spriggs & Hollingsworth**

Backus Middle School

**Stephoe & Johnson**

Montgomery Elementary School

**Sutherland Asbill & Brennan**

Bell Multicultural Senior High School

**Swidler Berlin Shereff Friedman**

Adams Elementary School

**U.S. Attorney's Office for the**

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