

Partners Unlimited Bulletin Board

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

Spring 2003

Duke Ellington Students Pursue Critical Issues With Dickstein Attorneys

By Adam Kirschenbaum*

The war in Iraq, homeland security, the death penalty, and entertainment contracts are just some of the issues that attorneys from **Dickstein Shapiro Morin & Oshinsky** explored with juniors and seniors from The Duke Ellington School of the Arts during the second year of the Student-Lawyer Roundtable program. Two Wednesdays a month, a team of Dickstein Shapiro attorneys visit Duke Ellington for a lively lunch-time discussion with 30 curious students. Attorneys and students alike come to these Roundtables ready to explore various topics through intellectual discussion.

(Continued on page 6)



At the Big Book Party sponsored by Bracewell & Patterson, author Alma Powell reads her book "America's Promise" to students at Van Ness Elementary School.

Book Party Launches Bracewell Patterson's School Partnership

What is a good way to keep an auditorium full of elementary students quiet? Have Alma Powell read to them from her books, *America's Promise* and *My Little Wagon*. **Bracewell & Patterson** hosted such an event to launch the firm's partnership with Van Ness Elementary School. The firm's Big Book Party on May 10th also included Bracewell volunteers reading to small groups of children, magicians, a bookwalk, modeled on the cakewalk, lunch, and goody bags. Each child at the party received a bag, complete with a Big Book Party t-shirt, a take-home copy of

(Continued on page 4)

CHECK THE BOARD

Iris' Intro	2
Counselor's Viewpoint	3
New Partnerships	1, 5
Secondary Scene	6
Wider Worlds	8
FYI	10
School Partnership List	11

IRIS'

INTRO



Iris J. Toyer

“No one has yet realized the wealth of sympathy, the kindness and generosity hidden in the soul of a child. The effort of every true education should be to unlock that treasure.” —Emma Golden

As the 2002-03 school year begins to wind down it is a time for reflection and recognition that this has been quite a year for our schools. Like all in the region our students went through the awful lockdown scenario because of the snipers. Just when we thought it was safe to return to normal Mother Nature decided to make a really strong statement by delivering record amounts of snow. While our kids reveled in the white stuff on snow days—payback was just around the corner waiting with extended school days.

Through it all our volunteer firms have continued to provide their partner schools with amazing opportunities to experience and learn new things. I cannot imagine how our schools would be without the many varied law firm partnerships that we have developed. Our school partnership firms continue to be the keys that unlock the treasures that are our students. And for that I say, “Thank you.”

We must remind ourselves that there is lots of work left to do. In these austere times, our schools continue to face budget cuts that will surely disrupt school programs. Principals and parents alike are working overtime to make decisions on next year’s offerings. How will they continue to pay for their favorite science teacher, or that reading resource teacher, or what about the librarian? What will happen if one or two thousand children leave the schools in favor of vouchers? These are the awful choices. It makes the work of volunteer school partnership law firms all the more important.

As you read this issue of Partners Unlimited Bulletin Board think about the words of Ms. Colon, the counselor at Van Ness Elementary School, as she speaks candidly about the needs of her students. Think about the new partnerships that have been formed and ask if your firm should be one of the keys to unlocking the treasures of D.C. public school students.

Iris

Iris J. Toyer, Director
Public Education Legal Services Project

COUNSELOR'S

V I E W P O I N T

Our first activity showed how valuable our new partnership with Bracewell & Patterson is going to be. We clearly saw that our children will benefit from contact with volunteers from the law firm.

Since I am the guidance counselor, I know how great the needs of our students are at Van Ness Elementary School. In the community surrounding the school, there are serious problems—including crime and drugs. Our students are eligible for free or reduced cost lunch because most of the people who live near the school have low incomes.

Here at Van Ness, we put a lot of effort into literacy and developing reading skills. And we do everything we can to encourage parents to be a part of their students' education. Research shows that when parents are involved in their children's education, their children achieve.

At our special Big Book Party, Bracewell & Patterson made it possible to have our parents and children surrounded by books and reading. It was wonderful. One of our parents was so impressed that she got on the phone and called other parents to say, "You need to come to the school, and you need to bring your children." This event was just what our school needed.

It all started with a meeting we had with representatives from Bracewell & Patterson. The principal and I explained the needs of the school and the type of school community we have. We were very interested in the firm's offer to host the Big Book Party. After that meeting, Randy



Guidance counselor, Linda Colon, and a student outside Van Ness Elementary School at the end of the Big Book Party sponsored by Bracewell & Patterson.

Rich and Carlyn Carey from the law firm were in constant touch with our school about plans for the event, and they came to the school several times. Because of the thorough planning and organizing, everything went very smoothly.

Our students remember the Big Book Party, and they will remember it for some time to come. Their worlds are very limited, and so are their contacts. Spending the day with 40 attractive, successful adults who are interested in them and their reading was an extraordinary occasion for them. Our students are now more motivated to read, and our faculty and staff are eager to explore future activities with our new and very special partner.

Linda Colon
Guidance Counselor
Van Ness Elementary School

NEWSWORTHY

NEWSPARTNERSHIPS



At the Big Book Party, Bracewell & Patterson attorney, Scott Segal, reads to a group of Van Ness students

For Bracewell Attorneys And Van Ness Students, Books Equals Fun (cont'd)

a brand-new age-appropriate book, a writing journal, other treats and balloons.

Linda Colon, the school's guidance counselor is certain that the Big Book activities captivated the students: "For some students the temptation to wiggle, to be on the move, is a constant challenge. But when Alma Powell was reading to them, they showed that they can remain still and pay attention for an extended period of time. I asked myself, 'How can these be our kids?' The children also asked wonderful questions, and the parents were responsive too. When it was time to move from one activity to another, they followed directions and immediately became engaged. It all worked very smoothly with almost no effort on the part of school staff and faculty."

Everybody at the firm was involved in the Big Book Party. Forty volunteers from Bracewell & Patterson helped on the

day of the event. Those who could not attend on May 10th helped fill goody bags or worked on other aspects of the preparation. Attorneys and staff at Bracewell & Patterson consider the Big Book Party a successful launch of the partnership with Van Ness. "Everyone is very excited and enthusiastic about doing other things with the school," says Carlyn Carey. In keeping with our book theme and the school's literacy focus, we're looking at a library improvement project."

Since Bracewell & Patterson is a firm with headquarters in Texas, the Big Book Party was a Texas-size event. On May 10, the firm also sponsored Big Book Parties at schools in five Texas cities—Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio.

A Van Ness student with Randy Rich at the conclusion of the Big Book Party. Randy Rich is a partner at Bracewell & Patterson and a leader in the firm's school partnership program.





Coordinators of school programs at Spring 2003 Partnership Luncheon. L/R: April Ferguson from Foley & Lardner, Iris Toyer, Director of the Committee's Public Education Legal Services Project, Faye Jones and Laura Cordero from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Elementary Students Educated About Law By U.S. Attorney's Office

By Laura Cordero*

Project LEAD is a fifth-grade curriculum that prosecutors and staff from the **U.S. Attorney's Office** teach to fifth graders at more than ten DC Public Schools. LEAD is an acronym for Legal Enrichment And Decision Making. The program has been so successful that we are hoping to expand it to additional schools.

We have teams who teach this very engaging and interactive curriculum to fifth-graders twice a month. The curriculum consists of skits with criminal justice scenarios—drunk driving, graffiti, auto theft, hate crimes, gun violence. All the parts in these skits are played by students.

This project provides students with an elementary criminal law education. We teach them about the people involved in the court system. We also teach them about sentencing and penalties, and about the differences between the juvenile justice and adult justice systems.

The students learn legal terms, such as the language of search and seizure. Many of them watch law-related shows on television, and are very interested in such topics as fingerprints, surveillance cameras, and alibi defenses.

However, the reason we teach this course is to send the students messages warning about the

perils of gangs, drugs and violence. In our curriculum guide, each skit is followed by a series of questions. Half of the questions are law-related, and half focus on the social consequences of their decision-making. For example, when we perform a

(Continued on page 9)

More New School Partners: Winston & Strawn And Mayer Brown

Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw is launching a partnership with Gage-Eckington Elementary School. The first activity will be participation in the school's field day on June 13th. The Mayer Brown partnership team is having a series of meetings with the school principal and guidance counselor, and preliminary plans focusing on tutoring, mentoring, and computer support are being developed for the 2003-04 school year.

Winston & Strawn has formed a partnership with the Kamit Institute for Magnificent Achievers, a new public charter school, often called by its acronym, KIMA. The firm's initial involvement has been to respond to the wide range of organizational and operational legal needs that a new charter school must address. Employment, environmental requirements, real estate, and District of Columbia regulations are among the areas in which Winston & Strawn has provided volunteer legal services for KIMA.

Jason Hutt (left) and Al Krachman from Bracewell & Patterson enjoy the book walk with students at Van Ness Elementary School.



SCENE

SECONDARY



Roundtable participants: Students from The Duke Ellington School for the Arts with members of the Dickstein Shapiro Morin & Oshinsky Roundtable team. Back row, second from the left, Michael Weinstein; end of the row on the right, Rhonda Dickens; front row, second from the right and far right, Eden Polatnick and Valerie Furman.

Ellington Students Explore Critical Issues With Dickstein Shapiro Attorneys (cont'd)

One of the key features of our Roundtable program is the significant role that students play in shaping it. Our recent Roundtables on entertainment law contracts, for example, were requested by the students. We provided the students with an entertainment contract riddled with vague language and other defects. This sparked a spirited and productive discussion about the problems in the contract and what it would mean if the students agreed to the contract's terms. After the exercise, the students realized how important it is to review contracts carefully and to understand their meaning.

We have also modified our Roundtable schedule in response to student recommendations. For example,

instead of trying to cover a different topic at each session, we are now focusing on fewer topics and delving further into them to provide more in-depth coverage. Since making this change, we have noticed that the opportunity to discuss Roundtable topics with family and friends or research an issue between sessions has increased both the students' analytical capacity and their interest in a given topic.

It has been exciting for both attorneys and students to see how the Roundtables have stretched young minds. For example, we could clearly see intellectual growth from the Roundtables in which the students debated the death penalty. Our goals for this debate were (1) to help the students

(Continued on next page)

Ellington Students (cont'd)

understand and articulate both sides of an issue and (2) to develop the students' public speaking skills. We divided the students into two groups – one for and one against the death penalty - without allowing the students to decide which group best reflected their beliefs. Although many of the students initially claimed that they would not be able to support their assigned sides, once divided into their respective groups, they quickly formed arguments to support their positions. The students also found that their ability to see the other side's point of view presented them with an advantage in formulating their own arguments.

Each student was required to express a viewpoint that countered the opposing side's argument and each student was required to make at least one point during the debate. The students not only presented ideas advocated in their preparatory discussion groups, but refined their arguments as the debate continued. The debate covered many aspects of the issue, including the financial cost of the death penalty, the moral questions of putting someone to death, and the legal guidelines to establish a death penalty case.

We found the debate very rewarding. As my colleague Rhonda Dickens pointed out, "Every student posed very challenging and intellectual arguments to the opposing side. The students listened to each other and respected the debate process. It is very rewarding to see the students so eager and interested to participate in the

(Continued on page 10)

Dickstein Shapiro staff arrange pastries for the bake sale to raise money for the firm's partner school, the Ellington School of the Arts



Caroline Mew from Fulbright & Jaworski and Tommy Swinton from Macfarland Middle School watch the Sea Lion at the National Zoo. See story on Page 9.

Fried Frank To Launch High School Course

Next September, a team of attorneys from Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson will begin teaching The Elements of Persuasion at the School Without Walls. This elective, open to all sophomores and juniors at the school, will cover many types of persuasion including legal arguments, advertising campaigns and individual presentations.

D.C. Office of Corporation Counsel Brings Jury Experience To Junior High Students

Last fall, the D.C. Office of Corporation Counsel joined the Council for Court Excellence in sponsoring a civic awareness program for Terrell Junior High School. Over 50 students, teachers and parents attended an evening showing of the well-known video, "Guilty or Not Guilty? You Decide", a participatory jury experience for students. Led by Judge Gregory Mize with help from several Assistant Corporation Counsels, the group watched a homicide trial to the point of jury submission. The students then deliberated while

(Continued on back page)

WORLDS

I D E R



Principal, Dr. John Sparrow, introduces the Marie Reed Glee Club to Fannie Mae's Legal Department.

Fannie Mae's Legal Department and Marie Reed Celebrate Valentine's Day with Art and Music

The **Fannie Mae Legal Department** and its partner school, Marie Reed Learning Center marked Valentine's Day with a special event at Fannie Mae to honor and support the elementary school's art and music programs. In an auditorium decorated by artwork created by the students, the Marie Reed Glee Club, 41 members strong, presented a delightful toe-tapping musical program including a robust patriotic finale. Attorneys, staff, and school faculty all joined the Glee Club in singing the final song, "God Bless America."

Following the musical presentation, the Legal Department honored the school's music and art programs by presenting a check for \$500 to the school principal, Dr. John Sparrow. This contribution will support the school's efforts to continue the art and music programs. An additional \$200 was collected and donated to the school from individuals in the Legal Department.

After the presentation, attorneys and staff from the legal department shared a lunch that featured some of the students' favorite foods, including Valentine pink punch and heart-shaped brownies.

This event provided a special treat for the Fannie Mae attorneys and staff who participate in the tutoring program because several members of the Glee Club are students who were tutored when they were in third grade. The Fannie Mae tutors really enjoyed seeing how the students had matured.

"Our Fannie Mae/Marie Reed Valentine celebration was rewarding for everyone," says coordinator Melissa Reese. "The students got to ride on a fancy tour bus, perform for a very appreciative audience, enjoy their favorite foods, and meet new people. It was effortless for the attorneys and staff in our Legal Department. They had a chance to interact with the students and teachers without leaving Fannie Mae, and they all participated. This activity will definitely be repeated."

3rd Graders Visit White House With Baker & McKenzie

A visit to the White House followed by a picnic in Lafayette Park was one of the highlights of the 2002/2003 school year for the Baker & McKenzie/Payne Elementary partnership. Volunteers from the firm arranged for the entire 3rd grade of 40 students to tour the White House and then enjoy a picnic in Lafayette Park. This was an activity for 3rd graders because this was the year they were introduced to the concepts of landmarks and historical buildings.

The students were every attentive throughout the White House tour. They seemed particularly fascinated by practical questions and asked how all the drapes and rugs and silver and china are cleaned today and how they were cleaned 100 years ago. They were thrilled with the historical postcards they received at the end of the tour.

After the tour, Baker & McKenzie volunteers guided them over to Lafayette Park. There they were met by more volunteers from the firm who had wheeled coolers filled with sandwiches, apples, brownies, and beverages from their Connecticut Avenue office less than two blocks away. It was a beautiful day, and they enjoyed their picnic in the park. This special trip meant a lot to the students. Almost none had been to the White House, and this was the first visit to Lafayette Park for three-fourths of the children.



After their White House tour, made possible by Baker & McKenzie, 3rd graders from Payne Elementary School pose for a picture.



Fulbright & Jaworski mentors and Macfarland Middle School students at the National Zoo. L/R: Ben Konop and Kristin McGovern from Fulbright & Jaworski with students Ashley Franklin and Michael McLaughlin.

Fulbright Attorneys And Macfarland Students Share Experiences

Attorneys from Fulbright & Jaworski are currently completing their second year of a mentoring and enrichment program for students at Macfarland Middle School.

Half a dozen times a year, the attorneys and students get together to enjoy a variety of activities, ranging from community service to preparing for standardized tests. Attorneys take turns planning the activities. The activity for May was a trip to the National Zoo that featured a scavenger hunt. In between the scheduled activities, there are often communications and informal get-togethers between the attorneys and students.

U.S. Attorney's Office (cont'd)

skit on shoplifting, the question we want the students to consider is: "do you really have to shoplift the CDs you want from Tower Records, or is there another way to get them?"

If there's a shooting and you are going to be charged as aiding and abetting the crime when you only drove the car and served as a lookout, what are the consequences of your actions? How are

(Continued on back page)

FYI

Dickstein Shapiro Roundtable (cont'd)

Roundtable. When the students asked us to plan a future debate, we were certain that it had been a success.

This year's Roundtable culminated with year-end projects. Each student or small group of students designed either an oral or a visual presentation that demonstrated what they learned from this year's Roundtable. The students presented poems, songs, and paintings at the final Roundtable session in late May.

One reason for the success of our Roundtable is the team approach. Our Roundtable Team has seven attorneys. They include firm partner Margaret Feinstein and six associates – Eden Polatnick, Rhonda Dickens, Valerie Furman, Alicia Insley, Michael Weinstein, and me. There are frequently developments, such as briefs, court dates, and other projects that make it impossible for an attorney to participate in a particular Roundtable, but we can always count on having at least three of us at every session, and usually five or six. The students know all seven of us, so there is consistency. The team approach has been invaluable in giving us the flexibility to participate in the education experience.

Our partnership with Duke Ellington has so many benefits. It provides an opportunity for attorneys who might not normally work together to regularly collaborate on a joint project. It also presents an opportunity for the firm to have a presence in and to contribute to the local community. Finally, it allows us to make a difference in the students'

learning experience by providing them with a forum for discussions about various topics that they would otherwise not learn about during their regular school curriculum. With the success of our second year of the Roundtable program, we know that our third year will be even better.

*Adam Kirschenbaum—an attorney with Dickstein Shapiro Morin & Oshinsky—regularly participates in the Roundtable at The Duke Ellington School of the Arts.



Arthur Dade, Grants Manager from Freddie Mac Foundation, left, and Carlyn Carey from Bracewell & Patterson, center, at a School Partnership luncheon.

Grants, Contributions Help To Sustain School Partnerships

Contributions from foundations, corporations and law firms help make it possible for the Committee's Public Education Legal Services Project to coordinate and support the school partnerships. On behalf of the school partnerships, the Committee gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the following funders:

Black Entertainment Television, Inc.
Bracewell & Patterson
The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
Chartered Health Plan, Inc.
Freddie Mac Foundation
The Kiplinger Foundation
Anthony Francis Lucas-Spindletop Foundation
Henry S. and Anne S. Reich Family Foundation
The Washington Post

PARTNERSHIPS

Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld

Tyler Elementary School

Arent Fox Kintner Plotkin & Kahn

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.S. 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

Fulbright & Jaworski

Macfarland Middle School

Greater Washington Area Chapter -

Women Lawyers Division -

National Bar Association

Malcolm X Elementary School

Holland & Knight

Cleveland Elementary School

F I R M S C H O O L S

Howrey, Simon, Arnold & White

Bancroft Elementary School

Levine Pierson Sullivan & Koch

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 Duke

Ellington Senior High Schools

Reed Smith

Park View Elementary School

Sidley Austin Brown & Wood

Thomson Elementary 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

District of Columbia

Amidon Elementary School

U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit

J.O. Wilson Elementary School

Washington Bar Association -

Young Lawyers' Division

Banneker & Ballou Senior High Schools

Weil, Gotshal & Manges

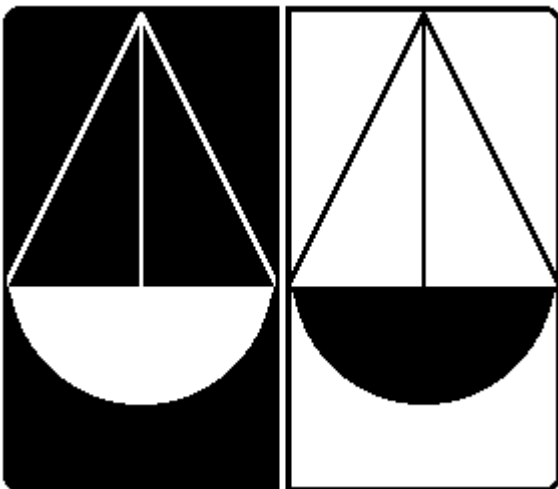
Seaton Elementary School

Williams & Connolly

Dunbar Senior High School

Winston & Strawn

Kamit Institute for Magnificent Achievers



Public Education Legal Services Project's
PARTNERS UNLIMITED

BULLETIN BOARD

Published by the
Washington Lawyers' Committee
for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs

**Roderic V.O. Boggs,
Executive Director**

Washington Lawyers' Committee
for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs

Iris J. Toyer, Director

Public Education Legal Services Project

Da'aga Hill Bowman, Director

Foundation Outreach and Public Information

Elinor Hart, Editor

Paula Jones, Layout

Washington Lawyers' Committee
for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs

11 Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 319-1000
WWW.WASHLAW.ORG

**D.C. Office of Corporation
Counsel (cont'd)**

enjoying refreshments from the Council for Court Excellence. Their verdict demonstrated that they understood the trial process. They found that the government had not proven the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, but, upon being polled, nearly all felt that the defendant probably had committed the crime. They clearly recognized the importance of proof of guilt.

U.S. Attorney's Office (cont'd)

your parents going to react? How is your mother going to feel if you are incarcerated? Will your fellow gang members visit you in jail?

Project LEAD ends the year with a mock trial, in which the children play all the parts. Each student who participates in Project LEAD receives a certificate of commendation at an end-of-year graduation ceremony that recognizes the students' successful completion of Project LEAD.

*Laura Cordero is a prosecutor in the Office of the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia.

**PARTNERS UNLIMITED
BULLETIN BOARD
WASHINGTON LAWYERS' COMMITTEE**
for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs
11 Dupont Circle, NW Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Washington, DC
Permit # 6265