

**Councilmember Patterson's Remarks Accepting
The D.C. Prisoners' Legal Services Project
Public Service Award
June 17, 2004**

Thank you, Doug.

I'd like to acknowledge several people who are here with me tonight, including my family – my husband, Dale Leibach; our children, Patrick and Gillian Leibach; Dale's mom and her husband. And I'd like to introduce Renee McPhatter on my staff who is the Judiciary Committee lead on corrections issues, and the person who did most of the work for which I am getting the credit tonight.

I would like to share with you a very personal vignette, and I do so because it underscores just how deeply moved I am by this award. Last year on March 18, 2003, we held an evening hearing on the Jail Improvement Act at River Terrace Elementary School in Ward 7. It was during that hearing that Doug recounted, in very graphic detail, the horrific stabbing death of Givon Pendelton in the D.C. Jail. Driving home across the city that night I had my radio on. Keep in mind the date – March 18, 2003. We were hours away from launching the war on Iraq. Troops were mobilized, ready to move. We were poised to engage in an unjust war. That night, thinking of what was going to happen I felt real pain because something was going to happen that I believed was wrong, and there was nothing I could do about it.

I switched off the news; switched off the radio, and put on a Springsteen CD. When it got to Springsteen singing "Blowin' in the Wind," I made a promise to myself. I decided that while there was nothing I could do to stop an unjust war on the other side of the world, I would do something, as much as I could, to fight a war in my own back yard; I could fight for human, decent conditions at the D.C. Jail. And that is something we have worked on, together. I share this story because, as Doug noted, we have made some progress – thanks in very large measure to the work of people in this room. And we have a very long way to go.

Thank you for helping me keep that promise. This honor and this recognition touches me to the bottom of my heart. Thank you.