

District

EXTRA

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**DISTRICT
NOTEBOOK**

Council's Patterson Is Honored

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D.C. Council member **Kathy Patterson** (D-Ward 3) was the recipient last week of a public service award by the watchdog group D.C. Prisoners' Legal Services Project for her efforts to improve conditions at the District's jail.

In presenting the award, **Douglas R. Sparks**, a lawyer and board member at the legal services project, referred to a four-day period in December 2002 during which two detainees were stabbed to death and another was wounded.

"Kathy took swift action. Along with her staff and other council members, she toured the jail, consulted with experts and others knowledgeable in the field of corrections, and introduced legislation designed to remedy a number of the most urgent and dangerous conditions at the jail," Sparks told the gathering.

"A series of public hearings was held during which Kathy Patterson and her staff looked behind . . . assertions of correctional officials that jail administrators were providing sufficient security for pre-trial detainees," he said.

This week, Patterson, who chairs the council's Committee on the Judiciary, said in an interview that she was "very flattered and honored, because these are important issues, and the prisoners' project is a first-rate human rights organization."

In her acceptance speech, Patterson reflected emotionally on a night last year after a hearing on the D.C. Jail. Patterson, driving in her car, was listening to radio news reports about U.S. troops mobilizing in Iraq.

She put on a CD and, as she listened to Bruce Springsteen singing "Blowin' In The Wind," vowed to fight her own war at home—for decent and humane conditions at the D.C. Jail.