

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT INFORMATION:

**Kristen Berlacher, 312.606.2030
(evenings) 610.812.7873**

A Life Changing Mentorship

The Story and Friendship of an Unlikely Pair

CHICAGO – In recent weeks, stories of the fears and anxieties of elementary students in Chicago Public Schools have continued to surface. While they may seem like an unlikely pair, Amos Pittman and Pat Lauderdale were first introduced to one another through the WITS Workplace Mentoring program over six years ago. The program brings students from inner-city CPS schools to different office locations downtown where they receive one-on-one tutoring and mentoring from a business professional.

Amos, then a struggling student at Doolittle East, joined the program with the hope of receiving the one-on-one attention he could not get in the classroom. Amos was paired with Smith Barney financial analyst, Pat Lauderdale on his first day of the program and Pat has been mentoring Amos ever since, intent on seeing him go to college.

Six years after their first tutoring session together, Amos has graduated from the Chicago Military Academy and received a full scholarship to Ohio State University, which he has turned down in order to pursue his military aspirations at the Citadel Military College.

The relationship between Amos and Pat has grown into a unique friendship over the years and extends well beyond the walls of Smith Barney. "Pat is my best friend," Amos testifies. But they are not the only ones who think their relationship is special. Just this past May, they were both asked to introduce Mayor Daley at his 2008 City of Chicago Address.

Having mentored with the WITS program for many years now, Pat states, "Amos is living proof that WITS works. Through the Workplace Mentoring program, Amos and I were able to form a relationship that benefited us both. It is evident that just one hour of one-on-one reading a week can have a lasting, positive impact on a child's life."

Asked if Amos' move to college will be the end of his mentoring role, Pat replied, "It's only just begun."

Working In The Schools (WITS) promotes literacy and the love of reading among Chicago's youth by providing one-on-one tutoring and mentoring. The organization mobilizes nearly 1,200 trained volunteers - corporate and government employees, retirees and community volunteers of all ages and backgrounds - to "give back" to neighborhood schools. www.witsontheweb.org

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