

Chicago LINK Unlimited

JULY 31, 2014

Winston & Strawn has been a longtime supporter of LINK Unlimited, a Chicago-based organization that provides mentoring, college readiness counseling, leadership development, and summer work opportunities for African-American youths in need.

Over the years, 18 LINK Unlimited college students have spent their summers working in nine different departments in the firm's Chicago office. In 2013, **Fuad Akinbiyi**, a student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, worked in the attorney resources & recruitment department; **Maurice Wilson**, a student at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, assisted the docket department; and **Victoria Morrow**, a student at Hamilton College, provided support to the firm's diversity committee efforts.

Partner [Steve Gavin](#) described his personal involvement with LINK Unlimited and the organization's many win-win benefits:

My personal connection to LINK goes back to the early days of the organization. My parents were among the first LINK sponsors in the early 1970s, and my father served as Chairman of LINK's board for many years. When I returned to Chicago after law school and joined the firm, my parents encouraged me to become a LINK sponsor and mentor. I resisted at first, thinking I was too young to offer anyone much in the way of guidance or wisdom. What I did not appreciate was, first: I would learn as much from my students as I would offer them. Second: the greatest gift you can offer these kids is perspective about the world of opportunity that is before them. And third: one of the best things a young, stressed-out lawyer can do is get out and try to help others.

Thirty years and 10 LINK students later, I am so grateful for the lessons and friendships gained from LINK. LINK serves a powerful mission founded on the principle that all kids deserve an opportunity for a quality education and the chance to succeed. That success can come in different forms, but a common denominator is the ability – often earned through hard work – to use your gifts and talents to make your own life and not allow institutional, cultural, or economic barriers to define or limit your personal horizons. LINK, with the help of dedicated staff, sponsors, and benefactors, helps kids succeed – to see the world of opportunity and possibility beyond the horizons of their everyday lives.

The firm's relationship with LINK dates back to Mr. Reynolds (firm managing partner from 1968-1987; firm chairman from 1987-1992), who was an early supporter, and his son, [Tom Reynolds III](#), who was a longtime

sponsor and board member. Over the years, many Winston partners and associates have supported the organization with their time and resources – too many to mention by name, but I am proud and grateful for their support, as well as the firm’s, which has been a lead sponsor of LINK events for decades. I am also delighted that, as my involvement with LINK’s board winds down, another Winston partner, George Lombardi, and his wife, Abby, have become more involved with the organization.

Clockwise from top left: partner **Steve Gavin** with LINK Unlimited summer interns **Fuad Akinbiyi**, **Maurice Wilson**, and **Victoria Morrow**.



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