



NEWARK HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR ADDS NICE,
TIMELY TOUCH TO THIRD GRADERS' STUDY ABOUT
ASSOCIATE SUPREME COURT JUSTICE SONIA SOTOMAYOR

Marcy Peters' third grade pupils at Kelley School watched with interest the inaugural swearing in ceremonies January 20th of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris.

A couple hours later, they learned someone they've come to know in recent months had actually met Associate Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, who administered the vice-presidential oath to Kamala Harris.

That would be Newark High School senior Alexandra Briggs, who had a chance meeting with Sotomayor in Seneca Falls the day she was inducted into the Women's Hall of Fame September 14, 2019.

During the time Newark Schools switched to fully remote learning December 16th until the holiday break began Dec. 22nd because of COVID-19 concerns, Briggs had occasion to read some stories via

Zoom to Peter's students. That's because her mom, Cynthia Briggs, Kelley School instrumental music teacher and Pre-12 district music leader also is a partner in the Caring Schools Community Program at Kelley with Peters.

Twice daily, Briggs goes into Peter's classroom to work with students during the morning circle and afternoon closing circle program to bolster Social Emotional Learning among students.

"Having another adult in the room, provides the students with another adult connection and the opportunity to build a relationship of warmth and compassion. I have had the opportunity to really get to know these students, who I would normally not have a relationship with unless they joined band, and connect with them on a more personal level," Cynthia Briggs explained. *"We share thoughts on kindness, how to be a good friend and so many skills that are lifelong lessons in my time with them during our morning or closing circles. This has truly been a highlight of my year and being with them daily, is certainly a bright spot of my day!"*

And on Jan. 20th, Peters' students got to meet Alexandra Briggs in person. They were equally excited to learn she'd met Sotomayor, who only a few hours earlier they'd seen swearing in Harris at the inauguration, and whose early life they'd been reading about this past week in their Making Meaning literacy program.

Briggs showed Peters' students Sotomayor's

autographed biography *"My Beloved World"* she received as part of her trip to Hall of Fame induction. And also, since it was inauguration day, she shared some videos she took as an 8th grade student when she went to President Donald Trump's inauguration as part of the Newark Middle School field trip in 2017.

"After reading with the kids on the remote classroom, I looked forward to a time I could meet them in person. The students were very attentive when I had read over Zoom and each had very unique questions," Alexandra Briggs said.

"When I heard that the students were learning about Sonia Sotomayor, an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, I was excited to share that I was within feet of her when she spoke at her induction to the National Women's Hall of Fame. The students seemed intrigued with this information as well as asking very good questions to better their understanding. After

watching the induction of Biden, I informed them about how I watched Trump's induction four years ago. By having firsthand knowledge of my experiences for his induction, the students had a better understanding on what is really happening in D.C., as well as within our government."

"My students were engaged during our Making Meaning read aloud about Sonia Sotomayor," Peters said. *"They were eager to share what they learned and what they still wondered about her life. Students were excited to learn about her life journey and the road to becoming Supreme Court justice. They appreciated Alexandra visiting our class to share about her experiences."*



Thanks to Cynthia Briggs for sharing photos!