

FEDERAL CITY COUNCIL

# CATALYST

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#YourMetro



## FC2 Work Continues

Clark Foundation  
Invests in Leadership



Emerging Leaders  
Cohort 3 Arrives

# Table of Contents



**“We’re working alongside public, private and nonprofit institutions to ensure that sustainable solutions for DC aren’t just theoretical, they’re operational and impactful!”**

**The Work Continues** p. 2

“We believe in the power of leadership to shape cities, and Tony Williams has proven time and again that he has the insight, integrity and impact to lead with purpose.”

**Clark Foundation Grant**  
p. 4

“This work goes beyond housing. It’s about dignity, inclusion and building shared experiences that enrich lives and transform futures.”

**Washington Housing Conservancy** p. 7

“This program is about developing civic stewards who understand the deep history of our city and the challenges it faces today.”

**Emerging Leaders Program** p. 8

COVER: Photograph by Ted Eytan  
TABLE OF CONTENTS: Photograph by Ted Eytan

# Letter from the CEO and Executive Director

Dear Trustees,

This edition of *Catalyst* arrives at a pivotal juncture for both our organization and the city we proudly serve. The District of Columbia faces significant economic and political challenges—headwinds that not only shape our present but will undoubtedly cast long shadows into the future.

Amid these trials, the Federal City Council (FC2) is partnering with leaders across government, business and the nonprofit community to shape a bold and necessary vision: a District that is more equitable, economically robust and resilient. This shared mission calls for transformative change that touches every corner of our city, from residential neighborhoods to commercial corridors to our most visible public spaces.

Over the past 70 years, FC2, in partnership with our committed trustees, has striven to support the District’s development of greater resilience and economic vibrancy. We recognize that these achievements are not simply given; they are built through collective collaboration, dedicated leadership and strategic investment.

In this issue, you’ll learn about generous contributions made by several of our distinguished trustees. These gifts reflect more than philanthropic goodwill; they represent a deep understanding of how targeted investments can spark meaningful progress. At FC2, financial support is never passive. It is an active, catalytic force, and it is deployed with intentionality to address the city’s most urgent needs.

FC2 has long stood at the intersection of civic innovation and enduring prosperity. We believe civic leadership has a singular role to play. It is not a substitute for public systems, but as a strategic lever for progress where the public sector alone cannot go. We are inspired by changemakers who move with urgency and purpose, and who see possibility where others see constraint.

Your continued investment in FC2 is not only advancing today’s critical initiatives but also enabling long-term institutional strength. We are deepening our strategic planning, nurturing the next generation of civic leaders and laying the groundwork for stability and succession. Together, we are future-proofing this organization to ensure it remains a force for good in the decades ahead.

This edition also proudly highlights the work of two of our affiliated organizations—the D.C. Policy Center and the Washington Housing Conservancy—both of which are advancing policies and solutions that promote equity, access and economic opportunity citywide.

So what does all of this mean? It means real progress. Measurable, needed change. The frontlines of DC’s future are not theoretical—they’re here in our schools, in our neighborhoods and across the city’s civic infrastructure. And we owe it to every District resident, business owner and visitor of our city to rise to this moment.

Thank you for standing with us in this important work.

Sincerely,

Anthony A. Williams

*Over the past 70 years, FC2, in partnership with our committed trustees, has striven to support the District’s development of greater resilience and economic vibrancy. We recognize that these achievements are not simply given; they are built through collective collaboration, dedicated leadership and strategic investment.*

# THE WORK CONTINUES: ADVANCING WASHINGTON, DC'S FUTURE

In an era marked by political volatility and economic uncertainty, the Federal City Council (FC2) remains steadfast in its commitment to shaping a vibrant, equitable and resilient Washington, DC. The organization's enduring mission is clear: to be a catalyst for progress in the nation's capital. Our work continues—guided by experience, driven by purpose and rooted in service to the District.

"For over seventy years, FC2 has served as a trusted bridge between federal and District leadership," said Anthony Williams. "That intermediary role is now more crucial than ever. We're working in close partnership with Mayor Bowser and the DC Council to promote sustainable progress while strengthening our relationship with the federal government."

Rather than be deterred by today's fiscal constraints and heightened polarization, FC2 views this moment as a catalyst—an opportunity to sharpen its focus on revitalizing the urban core, expanding pathways to employment and investing in transformative infrastructure that can reimagine downtown DC as a thriving civic and economic center.

"Our work doesn't pause," said Williams. "It builds on what's come before and pushes forward with purpose for the people and businesses in the District."

## A Champion for a Dynamic and Self-Governing City

FC2 has long championed home rule, recognizing that true autonomy is essential to Washington's long-term vitality. At the heart of this vision is a commitment to fiscal responsibility, regulatory modernization and the efficient delivery of public services, which are all essential pillars of a high-functioning and self-governing capital city.

Equally important is FC2's role as a premier conduit between local leaders and federal decision-makers. The organization continues to work to align priorities across these spheres, promoting strategic cooperation

that strengthens the District's independence while advancing mutual interests.

Among the most pressing responsibilities of local government is public safety. FC2 persists in its support of the efforts by the Mayor and DC Council to modernize safety infrastructure and enhance coordination between federal and local law enforcement.

Economic diversification also remains a top priority. In response to recent challenges, FC2 has reaffirmed its commitment to reducing reliance on the federal government by cultivating a robust, multi-sector economy. Through targeted investments and strategic planning, FC2 continues to attract innovation, capital and high-quality jobs to the city.

## Driving Signature Projects Forward

The work on FC2's long-term economic goals will come to fruition through its continued support of several high-impact initiatives, developed in collaboration with public and private partners:

- **Union Station Renovation:** Transforming the historic transit hub into a vibrant, multi-use destination that generates economic momentum for Capitol Hill and reinforces regional transit through sustained support for WMATA.
- **Federal Asset Reimagining:** Advocating for the transfer and redevelopment of underutilized federal properties, enabling local control and productive reuse that benefits residents, workers and visitors.
- **Revitalizing DC Federal Parks:** Spearheading efforts to transfer certain National Park Service to local management by a parks trust, conservancy or government agency.

Meanwhile, FC2's comprehensive workforce-development initiative remains a long-term commitment to building DC's talent pipeline. The **HireLocalDC partnership** has broad membership and serves the hospitality, construction and technology sectors. By actively working with sector leaders as well as

workforce-development nonprofits and government agencies, FC2 is building and strengthening District employment opportunities as well as the resiliency of its economy.

## Mobilizing Collective Impact

In 2025, FC2 has brought together a powerful coalition of public, private and civic leaders around a shared mission: building a stronger, more self-reliant Washington, DC.

One pressing federal issue has been preserving the District's Medicaid Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) at 70%. A proposed rollback to 50% would have cost DC \$1 billion in local funds and \$2 billion across the health care community.

"A loss of this magnitude would devastate the District's ability to invest in core priorities like safety, education, infrastructure and human services," Williams warned.

FC2 swiftly organized more than 300 local businesses and associations to co-sign a unified letter to Congress, urging preservation of the FMAP rate. This collective stand highlights the citywide consensus that maintaining FMAP is essential to DC's fiscal stability and public wellbeing.

FC2 is also addressing local barriers to housing development by advocating for reforms to the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA), which has been criticized for discouraging investment. In 2024, the city saw a sharp decline in new multifamily housing projects—many of which required deep subsidies.

FC2's Becky Strauss provided testimony supporting the RENTAL Act, a measure that retains TOPA protections for tenants in small, older, rent-controlled buildings—where displacement risk is highest and homeownership pathways are viable. The legislation would introduce exemptions for new market-rate properties and streamline investor entry and exit.

In a city where longstanding disparities intersect with rapid development and political complexity, FC2's work remains both vital and uniquely demanding. Despite rising needs, shrinking resources and growing public distrust, the organization and its trustees press forward.

The stakes are simply too high to do otherwise. The work of building a more equitable, resilient and prosperous Washington, DC is ongoing, and FC2's resolve is stronger than ever. ■

## "WILLIAMS" AND "EXECUTIVE" FELLOWS AMPLIFY IMPACT

At the Federal City Council (FC2), visionary leadership is the engine of transformative change. Through the Williams Fellowship and the Executive Fellowship, FC2 is mobilizing some of the District's most respected civic and business minds to tackle DC's most pressing challenges, from public spaces to economic development to cultural revitalization.

"These fellowships are about investing in the people who have a history of investing in the city," said Anthony Williams, FC2 CEO and Executive Director.

These prestigious fellowships are more than honorary titles. They are high-impact, high-return investments in the people who have spent their careers investing in Washington, DC.

Barbara Mullenex, a principal at Perkins Eastman, is driving forward the DC Neighborhood Parks Project while helping to grow FC2's membership pipeline.

Robin-Eve Jasper, former president of the NoMa BID, is spearheading efforts to create a new theater district near Penn Quarter.

Joe Sternlieb, who led the Georgetown BID, is focusing on transportation reform, park revitalization and strengthening the federal-local partnership.

These changemakers are the inaugural cohort of Fellows, and their work is already yielding momentum. This powerful model only works because of our trustees. Linda Rabbitt, Founder and Executive Chairman of rand\* construction corporation, made the first \$100,000 Williams Fellowship gift to support Mullenex's work. Trustee Charles C. "Sandy" Wilkes, Chairman of The Wilkes Company, is backing Robin-Eve Jasper's efforts through an Executive Fellowship contribution.

FC2 trustees are encouraged to invest in the Williams and Executive Fellowships to leverage the skills of their talented peers while also accelerating transformative work across the District. This is an opportunity to activate the extraordinary capacity within FC2's.

To give or learn more, contact Becky Strauss at [bstrauss@federalcitycouncil.org](mailto:bstrauss@federalcitycouncil.org).

# SECURING THE FUTURE:

## Clark Foundation Investment Affirms FC2's Leadership and Legacy

The Federal City Council (FC2) has long stood at the nexus of policy innovation and civic transformation in the nation's capital. And for more than a decade, it has been led with trademark pragmatism and vision by CEO and Executive Director Tony Williams.

In January 2025, an evening of celebration brought together FC2 trustees, public officials and long-standing civic partners to honor Williams' transformative impact, not only as the former mayor who stabilized DC's finances and restored trust in government, but also as the architect of a modern, ultra-responsive FC2.

The highlight of the event was the announcement that turned appreciation into action: the A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation made a \$1.5 million investment in FC2 to support the CEO position for the next five years. The support ensures that Williams' strategic leadership, and FC2's momentum, will continue uninterrupted through a perilous era for the District.

"We believe in the power of leadership to shape cities, and Tony Williams has proven that he has the insight, integrity and impact to lead with purpose," said FC2 Trustee Robert Flanagan, Chairman of the Board of Clark Enterprises and a Director of the Clark Foundation. "Supporting the continuity of his role at FC2 is a direct investment in the future of Washington, DC."

The dinner, while celebratory, was anything but static. It embodied a spirit of forward motion. When Williams announced he would remain at the helm of FC2 for another five years, he drew a standing ovation.

The investment reflects the Foundation's belief in the power of strong leadership to support the evolving needs of the community. "When we think



about philanthropy, we don't just focus on immediate returns. We consider long-term impact," said Joe Del Guercio, Clark Foundation President and CEO. "We're investing in a visionary leader with the capacity to drive bold, lasting change that meets community needs over time."

Indeed, the \$1.5 million investment, managed through a dedicated account with reinvested earnings, is

more than a tribute. FC2 was able to leverage the gift to raise an additional \$1.4 million toward a \$2 million goal to support its continuity of leadership and long-term resilience.

Former City Administrator Robert C. Bobb reflected on Williams' legacy: "I've worked with 16 different mayors. Tony had that rare combination—he understood the politics and the nuts and bolts of governance. That's what moved this city in a new direction."

As the District continues to grapple with the challenges and opportunities of a changing urban landscape, this support marks a critical turning point, not just for FC2, but for the broader civic

fabric of the District. Linda Cropp, former Chair of the DC Council, captured the room's sentiment: "Tony had the vision to see what DC could become. His leadership didn't stop when he left the mayor's office, if anything, it intensified."

"We want to be stronger financially, institutionally and organizationally," Williams affirmed. "Thanks to the Clark Foundation's vote of confidence, that strength is no longer a goal. It's a reality."

For more information, or to help the Federal City Council get closer to its fundraising goals, please reach out to Kevin Clinton at [KClinton@federalcitycouncil.org](mailto:KClinton@federalcitycouncil.org). ■



FC2 Trustee Robert Flanagan, Chairman of the Board of Clark Enterprises and a Director of the Clark Foundation

Photo credit: Alfredo Flores and Federal City Council

*"We believe in the power of leadership to shape cities, and Tony Williams has proven that he has the insight, integrity and impact to lead with purpose. Supporting the continuity of his role at FC2 is a direct investment in the future of Washington, DC."*

The Federal City Council would like to thank the Host Committee members for *A Special Dinner celebrating the Honorable Anthony A. Williams* listed below for their generous support of our mission:

- Joshua B. Bernstein
- Katherine Bradley
- Christopher Bruch
- Robert "Bob" E. Buchanan
- Vince Burke
- Jane Cafritz
- Russell "Rusty" C. Lindner
- Linda Rabbitt
- Martin "Marty" Rodgers
- Deborah Ratner Salzberg
- Rob Stewart
- Charles "Sandy" C. Wilkes

The Federal City Council would also like to thank the generous supporters listed below for their continued commitment to our organization:

- William B. Alsup III
- Francisco Gonzalez
- Bob Murphy
- Matthew Pestronk
- Kyle Schoppmann



If you are interested in watching a video of the February celebration dinner for Tony Williams, please scan the QR code.

# A LAW AT A CROSSROADS: TOPA AT 40

Forty years after it was first enacted, the District's Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) is at a crossroads. Originally intended to prevent tenant displacement, the law has evolved into a complex web of negotiations, payouts and unclear objectives, according to a recent report from the D.C. Policy Center.

"TOPA was born out of a different era," said Yesim Sayin, the Executive Director of the D.C. Policy Center and co-author of the report. "Back then, the priority was to keep tenants in place and prevent them from losing their homes to condo conversions. The housing landscape in D.C. has changed dramatically."

Meanwhile, DC's broader housing challenges continue to grow. Permit applications for new housing construction are declining sharply, and affordable housing providers are struggling to compete in a market where quick cash deals often win out.

Without legislative reform, the report concludes, TOPA may continue to serve as a well-intentioned but inefficient mechanism. Sayin emphasized that the law could be effective, if modernized. "Policymakers need to define what they want TOPA to do and support it with funding and data," she said.

The D.C. Policy Center is an independent think tank dedicated to analyzing policy issues that impact the District of Columbia. The report, *TOPA's Promise and Pitfalls*, was prepared under the auspices of The Wilkes Initiative for Housing Policy, and supported, in part, by The Developer Roundtable.

The report analyzed TOPA using data from multiple sources, including housing and tax records, multifamily sales data and reports on subsidized housing. It also evaluated sales and data on tenant association formations from 2012 and 2023 to measure TOPA's effectiveness, and interviewed 13 key stakeholders to gather qualitative information.

The report found that TOPA has become as much a bargaining chip as a path to home ownership today, and housing experts say it's time for a reckoning. Between 2007 and 2023, over 42,000 new rental units were added to the city, largely in high-density developments like NoMa and The Wharf.

Yet most of the tenant association (TA) formations, which are required to exercise TOPA rights, occurred in much older buildings. According to the report, 96% of TA formations happened in properties built before 1978, with 88% of those in buildings with fewer than 50 units.

*"These older buildings are where TOPA has the most traction. But even there, tenants rarely purchase the property outright. Instead, the law is often used to negotiate for rent reductions, repairs or even cash payouts."*

– Emilia Calma, D.C. Policy Center Director of Research and Policy

"These older buildings are where TOPA has the most traction," explained Emilia Calma, the report's co-author and the Center's Director of Research and Policy. "But even there, tenants rarely purchase the property outright. Instead, the law is often used to negotiate for rent reductions, repairs or even cash payouts."

That shift in use has come at a cost. For developers and investors, the law introduces unpredictability that can derail financing and delay sales. "We heard repeatedly from investors who said the mere threat of a TOPA-triggered delay can prevent investors from financing D.C. buildings," Calma noted. "It's not about opposition to tenant rights; it's about a lack of clarity and data."

Indeed, the report reveals an absence of comprehensive data on TOPA outcomes. No central repository tracks how many sales result in tenant purchases, what kinds of repairs or amenities are negotiated or how much tenants are paid to assign their rights. In one example, payouts to tenants reached as high as \$100,000 per unit, and those payments are not tied to long-term affordability. ■

# WHC TRANSFORMS HOUSING THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

When the Washington Housing Conservancy (WHC) was established in 2018, its mission was both focused and urgent: preserve affordable housing in high-opportunity neighborhoods for the "missing middle" of the workforce: teachers, nurses, first responders and others whose incomes weren't keeping pace with escalating rents.

From its beginning, WHC has also fused its real estate strategy with a bold social mission. Affordable living is achieved not merely by stabilizing rents, but also by cultivating inclusive communities that promote connection, opportunity and upward mobility through place-based engagement strategies.

"Our affordability plan has always been strategic and deliberate, but a true community doesn't always emerge on its own," said Kimberly Driggins, CEO of WHC. "This work goes beyond housing. It's about dignity, inclusion and building shared experiences that enrich lives and transform futures."

At the heart of WHC's model is a commitment to mixed-income communities where relationships naturally bridge economic and social divides. Inspired by the research of economist Raj Chetty, WHC operates on the principle that upward mobility is deeply tied to social capital. Everyday interactions and cross-class friendships serve as powerful catalysts for opportunity.

In partnership with Case Western Reserve's National Initiative on Mixed-Income Communities (NIMC), WHC

created a four-pillar framework for its social impact model: community building to create relationships; placemaking to foster connection; human capacity and wealth building to bolster economic mobility; and inclusive property management to promote inclusion and connection across lines of difference.

This model is driven by two key players: social impact coordinators and resident stewards. Coordinators are on the ground, listening to residents, supporting their aspirations and helping organize everything from financial workshops to playdates and health fairs. Resident stewards volunteer from within the community, offering feedback, organizing events and serving as informal ambassadors. The result is a collaborative environment where residents can thrive together.

Two examples of this model's effective programming are the neighborhood collaborative tree plantings supported by Casey Trees to replenish the city's urban canopy; and the opening of new playgrounds co-designed with nonprofit playground-builder KABOOM! Both initiatives were remarkably successful in engaging residents with their communities.

As WHC's social impact efforts mature, the focus is increasingly on sustainability and scale. "It takes time," Driggins said. "By embedding intentionality into every aspect of property management and community design, WHC is seeking to transform affordable housing into a platform for prosperity." ■



The WHC and Casey Trees joined forces for a tree-planting event, uniting residents, staff and volunteers in a shared effort to foster a stronger, more connected community.

Photo credit: Alfredo Flores and Washington Housing Conservancy

## EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM WELCOMES THE THIRD COHORT OF CIVIC CHANGEMAKERS

The Federal City Council (FC2) launched the third cohort of its Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) this spring, continuing its commitment to nurturing mid-career professionals poised to make a lasting impact on Washington, DC.

The program is growing a pipeline of dynamic young leaders who are equipped to shape the city's future. Established in 2023, the ELP was designed to provide rising professionals with the tools, networks and perspective they need to elevate their influence within DC's civic landscape.

"This program is about developing civic stewards who understand the deep history of our city and the challenges it faces today," said Anthony Williams, FC2 CEO and Executive Director. "Through shared experiences and connection with FC2's broader network, participants emerge with a deepened sense of connection to our community."

The program's third cohort reflects FC2's enduring commitment to diversity, inclusion and excellence.

We invite you to visit our website to read the professional profiles of our 2025-2026 cohort members. Please see below for the list of participants:

- Isaac Agbeshie-Noye, Adjunct Professor, George Washington University
- Fawzia Ahmedali, Principal, Perkins Eastman
- James Barlia, Executive Director, STATION DC
- Zachary Brewer, Human Resources Senior Director, Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind
- Gordon Fletcher, Professor, American University
- Alex Halas, Acquisitions Associate, Post Brothers
- LaJoy Johnson-Law, Representative, DC State Board of Education
- Mitch LaRosa, Director, Mobility Innovation District
- Chris Marshall, Vice President of Development, The NRP Group



Members of Cohort 3 of FC2's Emerging Leaders Program gather for the official kickoff of the 2025-2026 program year.

Photo credit: Alfredo Flores and Federal City Council

- Candace Nelson, Chief of Staff, The Office of Janeese Lewis George
- Cory Peterson, Vice President of Community Engagement and Local Government Affairs, Georgetown University
- Whitney Royal, Membership Initiatives Specialist, Girl Scouts Nation's Capital
- Geoffrey Sparks, Associate, Arup
- Cherrelle Swain, Filmmaker, Creative Strategist, Terra Rossa
- Zachary Williams, Partner, Venable
- Robinson Woodward-Burns, Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, Howard University

Participants engage in a series of curated experiences, including behind-the-scenes site visits, policy briefings, leadership development workshops, and collaborative group projects. The curriculum is designed to expose participants to the key issues facing DC while strengthening their leadership and policy fluency.

"The Emerging Leaders Program gives participants a front-row seat to the policy making and planning that shapes life in the District," said Melissa Crawford, FC2 COO.

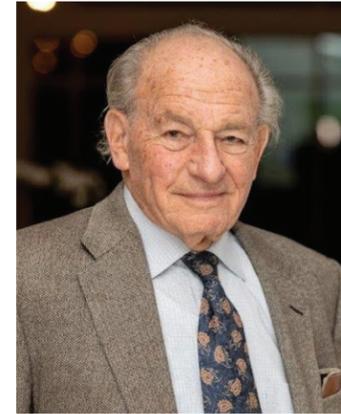
ELP participants are supported through a combination of program fees and need-based scholarships, ensuring accessibility for talented leaders regardless of background.

As the ELP continues to grow, FC2 remains focused on one overarching goal: to build a strong, diverse and civically engaged network of future leaders who will help drive positive change in Washington, DC for decades to come. ■



If you are interested in learning more about the program or sponsoring the ELP, an ELP candidate or providing an in-kind contribution, please scan the QR code or contact Melissa Crawford, Chief Operating Officer, at [mrcrawford@federalcitycouncil.org](mailto:mrcrawford@federalcitycouncil.org).

# CHARLES MILLER: FOR FAMILY AND COUNTRY



Trustee Charles "Chuck" Miller holds one principle above all: family is your greatest wealth—priceless and unwavering. His own roots run deep. His Jewish grandparents fled pogroms in Poland at the turn of the last century, settling in Oakland, California, where the family name changed from Malnick to Miller and a linen business took root. Many relatives followed, and a close-knit clan soon surrounded Miller and his siblings, though other relations were lost to history.

As a young law student at UC Berkeley, Miller once proposed a clever strategy to reduce taxes to his taciturn grandfather, who cut him short: "Why wouldn't I want to pay taxes to the government? This country gave me everything." That moment reshaped Miller's view. Since then, his life has been guided by a steadfast belief in American justice and the responsibilities of citizenship.

In the late 1950s, he made his way to DC to be a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas. A year later he was offered a temporary job at Covington & Burling LLP, with the intention of heading back West. Instead, he fell in love with his boss's secretary. She was also from out West (Idaho) and came from a strong family she missed. When he was offered Partner at Covington, they decided to settle in DC. He would eventually run the firm as Chairman from 1991-95.

He watched DC turn from a sleepy government town to a cosmopolitan city with a fancy new Metro system and a new Dulles International Airport. From the 1970s on, the ballooning federal regulatory regime kept lawyers like him busy. By the 1990s, he increasingly focused on social service programs, helping state governments adjust to Clinton-era Medicaid and welfare reforms. Then-DC mayor Marion Barry turned to Miller to figure out how DC could comply with the new TANF cash assistance program.

Before and during the Control Board era, he was involved in what was called the "DC Agenda." City leadership turned to a group of experts like Miller for advice on how the city should build-out after the Home Rule Act on matters of governance enrollment and judicial reform.

Miller did what he could to fight for DC rights in Congress too. In 1998, he led a team that filed a lawsuit declaring that DC citizens have a constitutional right to have voting representatives in Congress. They lost the case, and the Supreme Court declined to review it, but it caused a lot of noise and attention.

He stopped practicing law at age 80 in 2015, but he isn't one for slowing down. He still takes on *pro bono* projects and serves as General Counsel for FC2. He wrote a history of Covington that ended up filling 600 pages. He enjoyed it so much, he wrote two more, centered on his forebears, one each for his mother's and father's lineages. They tell stories of struggle, immigration and how families grow and stick together. ■



If you'd like to read the full article about Mr. Miller's illustrious life and career, scan the QR Code.



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