

dent of the College of San Mateo. She plans to travel and enjoy life with her husband, **Michael Kelly '66**.

1968 Mark Avelar, E '69, MA '75, E '75, retired after a 37-year career in San Mateo County. In addition to spending more time with his wife of 38 years, Linda, he plans to golf, garden, and travel to Cabo San Lucas, Lake Tahoe, Palm Springs, and Acapulco. Avelar is also acting as chair of the U.S. Golf Association's 2007 U.S. Amateur golf championship. **Susan (Bird) Fox and Cheryl A. Clark, JD '82**, are the co-authors of *Grant Proposal Makeover: Transform Your Request from No to Yes*, published this year by Jossey Bass. The book shows grant writers how to transform their "ugly ducklings" into "beautiful swans" that have a better chance of getting funded. Fox and Clark also organize the "Reality Grantmaking" programs at nonprofit conferences. **Lawrence Russell** received a 2006 International Davey Award. The awards honor creative excellence by

small agencies and companies. **Vernon Smith, JD**, retired as a judge with the Marin County Superior Court in January. **Michael Wootton** is living in Sherman Oaks and is senior vice president for corporate relations and administration at Sunkist Growers, the 113-year-old global citrus marketing cooperative. He has been with Sunkist for 10 years following nearly 25 years working with the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives.

1969 Rich Goodwin, E '70, recently retired from the San Francisco Unified School District after 35 years of teaching science and math, mostly at Balboa, McAteer, and Lincoln high schools. He is hiking, dancing, playing golf, traveling, spending time with his four grandchildren, and helping out his 89-year-old parents. **Katie Rose** joined the administrative team at Alta Bates Summit Medical Center in Berkeley in 1997. Since then, Rose has led a task force to build the East Bay's first family-cen-

tered neonatal intensive care unit. Rose has two children and is currently the administrative director of the hospital's women and infants division. Rose is also developing plans for a center where families could spend time and access reliable information about illnesses and treatments.

1970 Don Dana, an executive vice president for Wells Fargo Bank, is an amateur anthropologist in his spare time. He recently returned from an expedition in which he was able to find natives from a farm cooperative in the Chukchi village of Lorino in Russian Siberia who could build and crew a skinboat. The skinboat is his attempt to challenge the long-held hypothesis that primitive people migrated from Asia to the Americas via a land bridge. Dana also serves on the boards of the Leakey Foundation, Earthwatch, and St. Ignatius College Preparatory. **Mike Doogan** was elected to the Alaska House of Representatives in November. His first mystery novel, *Last Angel*, was published by Putnam in

Law Grad Brews Movie Buzz

For **Nikkole Denson, JD '95**, watching movies is simply part of the job.

As director of business development for Starbucks Entertainment, Denson handles the coffee giant's entertainment business opportunities that don't involve music. She is essentially Starbucks' liaison to Hollywood, ferreting out movies for the company to market in its stores through signage, coffee cup sleeves, and DVD sales. In return, Starbucks receives a share of a film's profit.

Denson found Starbucks' first movie—*Akeelah and the Bee*—after watching more than 100 movies and knew it was the one as soon as she saw it. With themes of family, community, and literacy, *Akeelah and the Bee* tells the story of an 11-year-old girl from the inner city of South Los Angeles who makes it to the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Starbucks' involvement, which Denson helped negotiate, brought about more exposure to the 2006 movie from Lionsgate.

"You have such a feeling of purpose beyond just a way of figuring out a way to add to your bottom line," said Denson, who looks for uplifting, inspiring movies. "I'm introducing people to content they may not otherwise have been exposed to."

Denson didn't always dream of working in entertainment, but by the time she finished USF School of Law, Hollywood had intrigued her. While waiting

for her bar exam results (she passed), she packed her bags, moved south and rented a room from a friend's family. In typical Tinseltown fashion, Denson got her first job from a friend of a friend who needed someone to assist on a set doing "total grunt work."

"What better way to learn about the business?" said Denson, who worked as a production assistant for Paramount Pictures.

With her legal background, however, Denson wasn't destined to work as a production assistant for long. Soon she was running the entertainment and film departments of Magic Johnson's entertainment company. When Johnson learned of her training, he hired her as vice president of Magic Johnson Enterprises, where she managed the overall brand, negotiated all services, and handled human resources functions.

Eager to again be more directly involved in the entertainment world, Denson eventually followed a colleague to Starbucks Entertainment into her current position. In addition to watching movies and reading scripts for Starbucks' next pick, she also looks for books for the company to promote. With the negotiations required to secure book or movie marketing deals, Denson's USF law degree has proved invaluable. Without it, she said, "there's no way I'd be able to have this position." **USF**



Jason O'Dell

Nikkole Denson, JD '95, is director of business development for Starbucks Entertainment.