

TESTIMONY FOR
ERIKA HIGLEY
FOR
ZONING COMMISSION HEARING
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY 2010 CAMPUS PLAN

Good evening members of the Zoning Commission. My name is Erika Higley. I am a graduate of Georgetown University (GU), undergraduate class of 95. I also received an MBA and Master's in Public Policy from Georgetown in '05. My husband and I live in Glover Park with our two daughters, Violet, 20 months and Stella, 2 weeks (both born at Georgetown) in a house the I purchased in 1999. I chose to live in Glover Park partly because of the proximity to Georgetown University. I knew the proximity to GU would help the home retain its value and I wanted to live in a community with the energy of university students. I also liked the fact that I could always rent out a room to graduate students.

Before marrying my husband, I rented to a GU law student, a Georgetown doctor working on her maternal fetal medicine specialty, a fellow Georgetown MBA candidate, and a Georgetown surgical nurse. I have always had good experiences with my tenants and my neighbors.

My husband and I are taxpaying, home-owning, registered voters in the District and plan to send our daughters to public school. I give back to the community when I can (coached 2 seasons of basketball at the local Boys and Girls Club), and My husband I are both committed to making DC and our neighborhood a good place to live for all residents

I first learned of the objections to the Georgetown University 10-year plan through emails on the Glover Park list serve. I was particularly surprised to see objections to things that would have no negative affect on the neighborhood whatsoever (like the renovation of Yates Field House and Kehoe field). In fact, since local residents can join Yates, take advantage of other University services, and stand to benefit in other ways from having a first class University nearby, I was perplexed and decided to investigate further. After reading all the blogs, the Burleith list serve, the *Georgetown Current*, and attending the Glover Park ANC meeting, I came to the conclusion that the opposition is not being very logical or constructive. I felt I had to weigh in on all of the uninformed commentary coming from those opposing the plan since most people with no objection to the plan are not very vocal. I contacted Linda Greenan to ask how I could help Georgetown University and she encouraged me to come to the hearing.

In my senior year at Georgetown, I lived in Burleith in a group house. We were all rowers on the crew team and were in bed before most of our neighbors in order to wake up at the crack of dawn. When we moved out of our house on T street, it was in better shape than it was in when we first signed our lease. In fact, I recall my housemate Kathrine scrubbing 20 years of grime off of the old stove during senior week so assure we would get our security

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deposit back. I chose to live in Burleith that year in spite of getting pick # 10 (out of the entire campus) for on-campus housing through the lottery. Living in that little house was one of the best decisions I ever made. The friends I made in that senior year are still my best friends. I obviously also loved the neighborhood.

Many of the Georgetown students who live in Burleith, Georgetown, or Glover Park are good people and, like me, will stay in DC and become part of the resurgence in the city. I think this fact is getting lost in all of the arguments. I am concerned that the residents fighting the 10-year plan are doing themselves and their neighbors a disservice by seemingly opposing all things Georgetown instead of just addressing the particular issues that are really bothering them. This is most likely a noisy group house. At least there is someone to turn to should that house be occupied by GU students. If you live next to a noisy family with a constantly barking dog or a group of noisy young professionals, you have little recourse. If you live next GU students, at least there is someone you can call who will try to help.

If this fight against Georgetown University continues, GU may be forced to make compromises that hurt students, hurt the community, and ultimately hurt higher education.

The worst part is, after all of this, the local residents will not be better off and actually stand to hurt their own home values. In short, we are headed towards a lose-lose solution. I am frustrated by some people's inability to see past old grudges and look toward a brighter future. I am hopeful that Georgetown is allowed to execute its plan for the good of the University and of the community that I joined largely on account of Georgetown's presence.

Sincerely,
Erika Kuswa Higley
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