WEST GEORGETOWN CITIZEN TESTIMONY
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
PUBLIC HEARING ON JULY 18, 2000
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY MASTER PLAN (BZA APPLICATION 16566)

Madam Chair:

My name is Rick Scobey and my family and I have lived for seven years at 1411 35th Street in West Georgetown, about three blocks from the University's main entrance gate.

While our neighborhood welcomes the University and its students as important members of our community, we believe that the proposed ten-year campus plan is flawed and urge its rejection.

Our biggest concern is the proposed increase in undergraduate enrollment, without any suitable housing arrangements. The additional 400 students would negate the impact of the new dorm under construction and keep the rowdy group houses owned by absentee landlords in full swing in our neighborhood. We have more than 20 group houses within a one block radius of our home, which undermine the residential character of our neighborhood in many ways.

- Noise is our biggest complaint, particularly the irritating weekend ritual of disruptive late-night parties, loud music, and shouting on the streets.

- Second, many of the group houses routinely ignore the City's sanitation regulations and dispose of garbage improperly, resulting in front and back yards full of unsightly debris.

- Third, many of these houses have multiple cars, which aggravate the perennial problem of limited parking and leads to crowding out of spaces on 35th Street.

- Finally, group houses that turn over every year generally make no contribution to the long-term stability and development of our neighborhood – such as rebuilding Volta Park, volunteering in CAG, and keeping our streets and sidewalks safe and clean.

We certainly have no objection to students as neighbors and I particularly enjoy the periodic game of basketball with them in Volta Park -- but the current heavy concentration of group rentals in our neighborhood undermines key values of stability, safety, and civic improvement that are the cornerstones of sustainable communities.

In view of the District's basic zoning objective of preserving residential quality and stability, I therefore urge you to reject the campus plan until the housing requirements of the proposed additional enrollment are properly addressed.

BZA
Case No. 16566
Exhibit No. 126

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16566
EXHIBIT NO.126