Constance K. & Elbert H. Duncan, Jr.

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March 22, 2002

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 210
Washington, D.C. 20001

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Re: BZA Application No. 16852
St. Patrick's School – 4925 MacArthur Blvd.

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board:

As a new resident of the Wesley Heights neighborhood, we have been following the discussion in the Current and other venues about the proposed expansion of St. Patrick's School. Although new to the neighborhood, we are long-time residents of the city – having lived in southwest D.C. since the middle 1960's - and have been concerned about school issues there and elsewhere in the city. We do not have children of our own but are concerned about the well-being of our young people as part of the larger community in which we all live.

It is our considered judgment that schools can enhance the lives of everyone in the community because of the impact education has on the lives of our young people. For some, public schools do the best job, for others, the more individualized attention found in generally smaller classes of private schools is very valuable and ought to be encouraged. Although we share the concerns for safety expressed by many with respect to additional traffic, it seems to us that this problem is one which can be solved and should not be allowed to deter the establishment of St. Patrick's Grade 7 & 8 program.

We believe that the citizens of this community can teach our young people a critically important lesson as it addresses this zoning issue. If we work on resolving the issues instead of getting angry with someone who may have a different point of view, we will demonstrate that behaving in a "grown-up" manner is productive. It seems that this should be an objective we all seek as citizens.

While we are not as cognizant of the history of this particular property as others who have lived in this neighborhood for a longer time, we note that a school has been authorized for the site; and that the current use is not residential. While discussion focuses on various aspects of the St. Patrick's plan for a Grade 7 & 8

BZA
Case No. 16852
Exhibit No. 57

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16852
EXHIBIT NO.57

discussion focuses on various aspects of the St. Patrick's plan for a Grade 7 & 8 program, we need to keep in mind the possibility that some other use could be much less favorable. No solution will satisfy all parties but surely a well-managed site for teaching our young people is an admirable objective.

There is a major problem with the public school system of the District at this time, one which money alone will not solve. It will clearly take concerted effort of all parties concerned – citizens, parents, teachers, administrators, and students. This level of commitment is apparently present in the neighborhood of St. Patrick's – we think this should not only be honored, but every effort made to capitalize on it for the good of the whole community. Such an effort will enhance the livability of the city as well as the neighborhood – certainly an objective of all zoning.

We therefore enthusiastically endorse the application of St. Patrick's for their Grade 7 & 8 Program at 4925 MacArthur Blvd.

Sincerely,

Constance K. Duncan

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Elbert H. Duncan Jr

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