GERALD MARCHILDON'S STATEMENT TO THE ZONING BOARD IN SUPPORT OF EDMUND BURKE SCHOOL'S APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL EXCEPTION

October 14, 2003

My name is Gerald Marchildon. I live at 1315 Constitution Avenue, NE. In July, I retired after 14 years as Head of School at Burgundy Farm Country Day School, an independent elementary school in Fairfax County. Burgundy enrolls students from Virginia, Maryland and the District. The school is a member of the Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington, on whose Board of Trustees I served. I am knowledgeable about independent schools in the metro area.

Over the past several years, I have observed a steadily increasing demand for private school placement. This was true at Burgundy Farm and I know that it is true elsewhere in the DC area. What exists is simply a case of many more students seeking admission to private schools than there are spaces available. This seems especially true in the District. In Northern Virginia over

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the past few ye[redacted], new private schools have o[redacted]ed in response to this demand. Others have expanded their facilities.

At Burgundy Farm, since 1995, four new classroom buildings and a new gymnasium have been built. As is always the case with expansion, there were local neighborhood concerns to be addressed and we worked hard to address them. It is regrettable that in the District that working on similar problems is so often a difficult and arduous process but I have been impressed by the ways that Edmund Burke has met the concerns of its neighbors.

Our city needs good schools, both public and private, especially schools like Edmund Burke that are committed to serving an urban population. As Josh Levin wrote some months ago in *City Paper*, "there's more to urban living than professional neighbors, boutique shopping, art-house theaters, Thai food, and a convenient subway stop to shorten the commute."

I am a big supp[redacted]er of the Edmund Burke Sch[redacted]l. It offers an excellent program for young people in a wonderfully friendly and supportive environment. I believe educational choice will play an increasingly prominent role in the growth and vitality of the District. I urge your approval of the school's application for special exception. Thank you.