5440 30th Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20015
May 8, 2003

Washington, D.C. Zoning Commission
Carol Mitten, Chair
441 4th Street, N.W.
Suite 210 South
Washington, D.C. 20001

2003 MAY 19 PM 3:03
D.C. ZONING COMMISSION

Re: *Case # 02-30, Georgetown University Boathouse*

Dear Ms. Mitten:

I understand that on May 19, 2003, Georgetown University will appear before the Board of Zoning to request approval of its proposed Georgetown Boathouse to be situated along the Potomac River. As a resident of D.C., I request that you approve its application.

First, there is a need for additional rowing facilities on the Potomac River. Rowing has proliferated in D.C. My wife recently coached a high school rowing program, which, like many area rowing programs, did not exist ten years ago. Many of these rowers are concentrated in two locations: Potomac Boat Club and Thompson's Boathouse. There is simply not enough space at these two boathouses. There is a waiting list at Potomac's boathouse, where my wife currently rows with the women's master's program, for space for one's rowing shell. Likewise, pent-up demand for rowing has exceeded the capacity of Thompson's Boathouse. On Saturday morning races last year, I tried to navigate our baby stroller with our two infants to Thompson's Boathouse. Much has changed since I rowed out of Thompson's Boathouse in the mid-1980's. Rowing shells are now stored outdoors, and there are traffic jams of students trying to bring their rowing shells to and off the docks. Moreover, my wife was recently involved in one accident, and witnessed other accidents, attributable to the number of rowing shells trying to navigate the crowded docks at Thompson's Boathouse. By approving Georgetown's proposed boathouse, you would free up Georgetown University's current space at Thompson's (two shell storage bays) for other programs who currently store their rowing shells in these crowded outdoor racks. Thus, other rowing programs, especially the many high school programs at

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Thompson's, would benefit with much needed space for their racing shells.

Second, Georgetown's proposed boathouse would continue to nurture the popularity of this sport. Crew, at first blush, may appear to be an enclave of the elite. But this is not so. As a middle-class, nearsighted, uncoordinated kid from Queens, New York, I never stepped foot in a rowing shell before coming to Washington, D.C. in the mid-1980's. Most collegiate sports (which recruited talented high school athletes) were off-limits. Rowing, however, was the one sport at Georgetown that accepted me and others without prior experience. As recently described in *Washingtonian* magazine's list of the 50 individuals or groups who are among the finest in the world (http://www.washingtonian.com/people/personbrightest.html), rowing is available for people of all ages, and all skill levels. It is a demanding sport, which places a premium on teamwork. Many coaches volunteer, and students often train in the early morning before school. But it imparts such invaluable lessons as determination, collective effort, and mastering the little things within one's control.

Finally, these benefits to the D.C. rowing community (which spans from high school to master's programs) could be achieved without negatively impacting others here in D.C. Rowing is a quiet, pollution-free sport, whereby people of all ages use the river and public resources in a healthy, constructive manner. Having seen the plans for Georgetown's proposed boathouse, I believe that the proposed boathouse will complement the other boathouses currently along the Potomac River. It will provide a pleasing image to those driving along the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Other cities, such as Philadelphia and Boston, have distinctive and renowned boathouse rows, where boathouses line the cities' rivers. These boathouse rows, in turn, are promoted by the cities as tourist attractions.

In short, this will be a great step for D.C. and its citizens. Thank you for your consideration. If I can offer any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-305-1489.

Sincerely,

Maurice E. Stucke