**Testimony of**
**Frederick W. Allen**
**Before the**
**Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia**
**June 5, 2003**

***Re: Case 02-30, Georgetown University & U.S. National Park Service - Map Amendment***

Good evening Madam Chair and Members of the Commission.

I am Frederick W. Allen of 3807 48th St., NW, Washington, DC 20016. I am here to support Georgetown University's request for a zoning determination that would permit them to build the boathouse that they have been planning along the Potomac River on Tract 102-114.

I am a member of the High School Boathouse Coalition, representing the 13 high schools that row on the Potomac River, and have been working on boathouse issues for several years. For three years I was Co-President of the Woodrow Wilson High School Crew Boosters Club, the parents group that supports the only DC public high school crew. I am familiar with zoning issues and have testified before your commission when I served two years as President of my citizens association in Northwest Washington, DC. I also consider myself a strong environmentalist.

It is very clear that this zoning proposal is appropriate and in the public interest. The objections that have been raised are poorly informed, insubstantial, late in the process and not in the public interest.

**(1) This zoning proposal is appropriate and in the public interest.**

The Potomac waterfront has historically supported a variety of uses. At one time there were as many as six boathouses along the Georgetown stretch of the Potomac River. The sport of rowing has become very popular in the last two decades. High school participation along this stretch of the Potomac has more than quadrupled in this time, and college and adult participation has also grown dramatically. Men and women participate in nearly equal numbers at all these levels. It has been estimated that 1500-2000 people participate actively here. Rowing accounts for more people-hours of recreational river use per year in this location than any other activity. Obviously, the only place that you can put boathouses is along the river. Use of land for boathouses along the river is therefore both appropriate and in the public interest.

As the Commission is aware, members of the rowing community have worked for a number of years with each other and with various governmental bodies, such as the National Park Service, to develop a comprehensive plan for boathouse space that respects the many uses that the waterfront must serve. The Georgetown University boathouse is an integral part of the overall plan. Without the Georgetown University boathouse as it is envisioned, the rest of the plan will not hold together and the public interest would not be served. Not only would the entire rowing community (including the high schools) suffer but other members of the public would

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impacted if boathouse space must be relocated where it would be more intrusive on other waterfront uses.

**(2) The objections that have been raised are poorly informed, insubstantial, late in the process and not in the public interest.**

A small number of citizens have lately seized upon this zoning decision as an opportunity to oppose the Georgetown University boathouse without regard for the interests of the full range of park users. They have made arguments that are weak (and in some cases wrong) and that are not sufficient to deny the request for zoning that would permit a boathouse on the currently planned tract. The boathouse that is envisioned would be of reasonable size (not "giant"), would be non-polluting, and would not create any regular vehicular traffic to the site (only occasional service vehicles). The dock would not be in the way of other river users. The planned site would preserve park space east of Key Bridge for other uses.

It is no coincidence that the plan for the Georgetown University Boathouse has these qualities. The details have been worked out in years of very public negotiations. Where were those who are now raising eleventh-hour objections? To give serious weight to their comments would not be in the public interest.

I urge the Commission to approve this request for rezoning to permit Georgetown University to build a boathouse according to the plan that they and many others have worked out.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.