Washington, DC Zoning Commission
Carol Mitten, Chair
441 4th St., NW
Suite 210 South
Washington, DC 20001

Reference Case # 02-30, Georgetown University Boathouse

June 3, 2003

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to urge you to approve the proposed Georgetown University boathouse. I am an alumnus of Georgetown University (class of 1999) and former member of the Georgetown varsity women's crew team, but also a high school rowing coach and a resident of Washington, D.C.

First, I would like to explain why I think it is important to support rowing in Washington, D.C. Through rowing, young people develop fitness and strength-training routines that help ensure they stay healthy for many years. Perhaps more importantly, rowing teaches many valuable lessons—like teamwork, discipline and dedication. It is a rigorous sport often practiced very early in the morning, forcing high school and college students to focus on academics and athletics, rather than partying and staying out late at night.

Rowing has grown in popularity, in part because many universities have added women's rowing as a scholarship sport to satisfy Title IX requirements. This is great news for young women, as rowing helps develop strong self-esteem and confidence. My years on the Georgetown team had a profound impact on my life.

Second, I want to emphasize that the need for additional rowing facilities on the Potomac River is urgent. As one of the coaches of the Gonzaga High School team, I saw traffic jams and many near accidents as crews tried to get to the dock at Thompson's Boat Center. That facility is far too overburdened. Gonzaga finally gave up on Thompson's and moved to the Anacostia Community Boathouse. Due to Georgetown's location, though, this is not an option for the university.

It's important to have a facility with sufficient space to hold rowing equipment, which is fragile and expensive. At Thompson's, I saw several boats damaged as crews strained to lower them from high boat racks. Unlike some of the schools that Georgetown competes against, Georgetown rowers work hard to save money for new equipment. In one fundraiser called Rent-A-Rower, for example, members of the team do manual labor for area residents.

Finally, as a resident of Washington, D.C., I would like to state that I feel the proposed boathouse would greatly enhance the Capital Crescent Trail. I use this trail frequently and I find the few attractive buildings on the path a welcome variation from the almost

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uninterrupted foliage that stretches for miles beyond the boathouse site. The proposed Georgetown boathouse is quite beautiful, and the site of rowers gliding smoothly across the water enhances any river view. One hundred years from now, it will be cherished as one of the city's finest landmarks.

I hope that you will take my plea into consideration, and allow Georgetown to begin construction of the proposed boathouse.

Thank you,

Denise Kersten

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