DC Zoning Commission
Case No. 0230
Georgetown University and the US Park Service – Map Amendment

Testimony offered by
Faith Wheeler

June 19, 2003

Madam Chair, Carol Mitten, other Commissioners. Thank you for holding a hearing on this case.

I first came to Washington DC in 1962 and was immediately struck by the extent of parkland – both wild and manicured -- throughout this capital city. It was definitely one of the factors that convinced me to live here, in the city, rather than in its environs.

The proposal of Georgetown University to build a large boathouse on what has been public parkland is deeply disturbing. The C&O National Historic Park was established 30 years ago for public use and to preserve the natural character of the parkland. The space requirements of Georgetown's proposed boathouse are simply not consistent with either objective at the location in question -- at the head of the Canal walkway and Capitol Crescent Trail, on the shores of the Potomac.

Georgetown University – which is one of my alma maters -- professes to instill societal values in its students. Georgetown's corporate behavior should be a shining example of finding a win-win solution that will accommodate the public interest while meeting its own needs. Georgetown University is certainly capable of the creative thinking that this would require.

Virginia Governor Mark Warner, in his address during the George Washington University graduation ceremonies on May 18, advised their graduates: When you have the chance to get ahead at the expense of others, I hope you'll respect the community." He went on to say, "It won't be easy, but the country needs these values now more than ever."

Madam Chair, I urge the Zoning Commission to NOT allow Georgetown University to "get ahead at the expense of others". This means that they should NOT use what is meant to be public parkland for their private use. I further urge you to encourage them to explore the proposal to build their boathouse at the site two or three hundred yards downstream, which has been presented as an acceptable alternative.

Thank you.

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Exhibit 352

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