Testimony Before the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia

Public Hearing on the Review and Approval of Stage 1 of the PUD and Zoning Map Amendment (Chapter 24 of the DC Zoning Regulations), 11 DCMR

March 31, 2003

Presented by Charlene Drew Jarvis, President
Southeastern University

Good evening Commissioners and staff. I am Dr. Charlene Drew Jarvis, President of Southeastern University. By virtue of the recent redistricting of political boundaries, Southeastern University is new to Ward 6, and is pleased to be represented by Councilmember Sharon Ambrose. We are excited about the growth, development, and energy being generated across Ward 6, particularly here in Southwest: the Waterfront community, the L'Enfant Promenade, the Southeast Federal Center, the Navy Yard, the anticipated move of the Department of Transportation, and Hope VI, just to name a few developments. It is an exciting time for the city, and this offers me an opportunity to publicly acknowledge the strong and visionary guidance of our elected and appointed officials. Thank you.

The YMCA founded Southeastern University in 1879. Our mission now, as it was then, is to provide students with the critical thinking skills and exit competencies that make them competitive in a very tough marketplace.

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We are very interdisciplinary. We want our MBA students to be very proficient in the use of database systems; our public administration students to be good at business management; and we want our computer science students to have a strong liberal arts core.

We want our two-year students to aspire to *graduate school*; our diverse domestic and international students to understand their classmates' cultures; and we want them to care about their communities and to be engaged in its issues.

Being actively engaged in our community is a major component of our historic mission. And it is the matter of civic engagement that brings me here tonight. I am here on this occasion to offer testimony in support of the planned redevelopment of Waterside Mall, known as "Waterfront", and the need to amend the zoning map for that lot -- Lot 60, Square 499.

On behalf of the students, faculty, and staff of Southeastern University, I am interested in the character of this planned development because it greatly enhances what is already a strong and stable community.

We support this proposal because we believe that the development of this property is vitally important to the economic health and stability of the Southwest. As the university member of this community, Southeastern strongly supports its focused redevelopment, and the energy, life, and work options such development affords our students and fellow residents. The development's location at the Waterfront Metro station brings convenience to commuters and residents who

travel to and from work each day. For our students, most of whom use the Waterfront/SEU metro stop, there will be exciting dining and shopping options that currently do not exist, as well as an ambiance that lends itself to comparison with a small college town.

We applaud the community planning process that has led to a commitment by the developer to build at least 400,000 square feet of resident space and 75,000 square feet of retail space -- neither of which is required by "matter-of-right" development. We also applaud the community's recognition that the increased height of the development on the M Street boulevard is a fair request. That is why I am here tonight to give Southeastern's support.

As the higher education resident of this community, and as a partner engaged in preserving and enhancing its health and vitality, we are pleased to support projects that enhance that economic vitality and growth. We believe that this amendment moves us in that direction.

Thank you for this brief opportunity to be heard.