

**Testimony of Barbara Zartman, Chairman, The Committee of 100 on the Federal City
D.C. Council Committee on Public Works and the Environment**

June 22, 2005

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on a project that has engendered both considerable support and equally forceful opposition.

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City has long held that transfers of public parkland to private hands should be extraordinarily rare and, where proposed, should meet every test of equity and impact. In this case, those tests have not been applied; rather, any number of special – favorable – arrangements have been made to move forward what everyone acknowledges is a huge new structure on the edge of the Potomac, in a National Park.

First, because the proposed boathouse would never meet zoning requirements (and because "spot" zoning is illegal), a new zoning category was created to accommodate the particular circumstances of GU's preferred site; lack of parking, of fire and safety access – all were accommodated.

Second, the supposedly equal swap of this prime Potomac location for another landlocked parcel to the west has never been examined in accordance with NPS's own standards for assuring that the Federal interest does not suffer. The Committee has called for a full Environmental Impact Statement covering the several boathouses proposed for the National Park.

Third, the Park Service has apparently agreed to violate the agreement signed in 1998 that limits the size and location of structures in the "non-motorized boathouse zone" of the Georgetown Waterfront Park. This will be 23,000 square feet, not 4,000 as contemplated.

The rowing public benefits from the freeing up of a score of boat locations at Thompson's Boathouse, while they see the University gain a facility that adds roughly five times that number of spaces, plus a huge in-river structure that impedes use of the river by others.

The long-approved Federal construction project to create a new Canal Road entrance for GU (dependent on still other land swaps), just above the boathouse site, will change the topography of Canal Road from a naturalistic setting to a manmade built environment, and this massive structure will further define away natural elements of the Federal parkland. A final EIS was released in 1998, but for some reason the project has not yet begun; this is particularly interesting in light of the new connecting ramp designed to ease GU traffic's access to the Whitehurst Freeway.

I have appended to my testimony copies of our position on the need for an EIS, on the Federal policies we believe are being ignored or violated, on the flawed provisions of the W-O zoning. Collectively they make the case that this project needs impressively greater review; to use these special arrangements is to set a standard that can only lead to similar "arrangements" on the water's edge, just as we are trying to encourage responsible development in the public's interest