

**TESTIMONY OF THE CAPITOL HILL RESTORATION SOCIETY
BEFORE THE DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
On the Nomination of Spingarn High School to the DC Inventory of Historic Sites
And the National Register of Historic Places
November 29, 2012**

My name is Shauna Holmes, and I'm testifying on behalf of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society to support the nomination of Spingarn High School to both the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and the National Register of Historic Places. Together with the Spingarn nomination, which makes the principal points for the school's historic significance, the staff report makes a very good case for its recommendation that the school be listed in the DC Inventory and forwarded to the National Register for listing at the local level. We agree with staff that Spingarn's significance lies in its eligibility for National Register Criteria A and C: its association with historic events and patterns of growth – i.e., segregated schools and development of an important African-American neighborhood in the city – and its architectural significance embodying distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style and building type.

As the Multiple Property Nomination says, “Many of the newcomers [to DC] during World War II were African American[,] and in the segregated school system, the hardships caused by the wartime halt in school construction were now disproportionately borne by their children....[thus] Construction of schools for African American students became a priority and included the majority of new schools...built after the war.” Spingarn was part of this spate of construction and also one of the last of the DC public schools for African Americans to be built before the dual segregated system was transformed into a single integrated system in the fall of 1954, two years after Spingarn opened its doors. Spingarn was also notable as the first new senior high school for African-American students to open in 36 years. It completed a campus of segregated schools which was begun in the 1930s and is located in an area developed for African Americans that includes the already listed Langston Terrace Dwellings and Langston Golf Course, as well as the Kingman Park neighborhood. We agree with the staff report that the educational campus in its entirety could comprise a historic district,

Spingarn is fortunate to retain its historic integrity of location, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association – and except for some alterations, of materials and design as well. It still embodies and expresses its Colonial Revival and Classical Revival style, and as many historic high schools do, it stands impressively atop its green south campus, which sweeps down to Benning Road. As I testified before you on November 1, CHRS is very concerned about a pending proposal that would compromise the integrity of Spingarn's setting.

We note that while Spingarn is eligible for individual listing, it also appears to meet the requirements for listing under the Multiple Property Nomination Form on pages 2 & 3 in Section F of that Form. CHRS is happy to support the Kingman Park Civic Association's nomination of Spingarn High School, including its landscape and grounds, to the DC Inventory of Historic Sites, as well as forwarding it to the National Register of Historic Places.