



**J. Patrick Swygert**  
*President, Howard University*



**Eleanor Holmes Norton**  
*Congresswoman, Washington, D.C.*



**Anthony Williams**  
*Mayor, Washington, D.C.*

## A Community and Collegial Celebration

The dream is well on its way to becoming a reality — a comprehensive and multifaceted initiative that will not only help Howard University attract students and faculty, but also provide a quality residential environment in which area individuals can live, work, and play. On December 14, 2000, the Initiative celebrated its Phase I successes by throwing a block party. Dignitaries, including D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, Howard University faculty and staff, and new and old LeDroit Park residents, joined together to celebrate many accomplishments and focus on future aspirations.

In a recent interview, President Swygert talked about his first tour of the area upon returning to Howard as president. As a student at Howard during the sixties (undergraduate and law degrees), LeDroit Park was a vibrant community, different from what he viewed on his tour. President Swygert had two concerns during his tour. The first concern focused on the deterioration of the neighborhood and possible ways to improve this valuable area's condition, while his second concern told him that universities typically do not undertake real estate development projects. As his concern for LeDroit Park continued to surface, he accepted the fact that to be successful in a redevelopment initiative, Howard needed a partner who knew real estate. Recognizing Howard's lack of expertise in the real estate arena prompted President Swygert to contact an organization that could make this project a reality — Fannie Mae. Integral to the success of the Initiative were Jim Johnson, Frank Raines, and Jamie Gorelick of Fannie Mae. "We are very fortunate to have Fannie Mae as a partner," President Swygert says.



**Jamie Gorelick**  
*Vice Chair, Fannie Mae*



**Maybelle Taylor Bennett**  
*Director, Howard University  
Community Association*

*Historic Howard (bottom right), and LeDroit Park look forward to a long and successful association.*



*Today, President Swygert has other universities inquiring about the lessons learned in this successful “town and gown” endeavor.*

The project has brought President Swygert great satisfaction, and he knows that Howard has been fortunate in the respect that all of the project partners and long-time homeowners committed to stay in LeDroit Park through its worst times. President Swygert and those involved in the Initiative are most pleased with the fact that no long-term residents of LeDroit Park were displaced in the process. President Swygert hopes to encourage the D.C. government to provide tax relief assistance to those long-term homeowners so they will not be displaced as the future value of the area increases, as he credits the Civic Association and these homeowners with much of the project’s success. Today, President Swygert has other universities inquiring about the lessons learned in this successful “town and gown” endeavor.

