

Five Members of Class of 2000 Successfully Work Together to Help Save Greater Southeast Hospital in Washington, DC

by Dr. Marc Weiss, Class of 2000

During the fall of 1999, a major news story in metropolitan Washington was the potential closing of Greater Southeast Hospital, the largest private employer and full-service medical facility east of the Anacostia River in Washington, DC. This drama was being played out in federal bankruptcy court, city hall, street rallies and demonstrations, the hospital, and community meetings.

In the end, with lots of hard work, cooperation, and a little bit of luck, the hospital was saved from closing its doors, a bankruptcy settlement was approved, and Greater Southeast was purchased by the Doctors Community Hospital Corporation.

One interesting aspect of the tense negotiations and bitter public disputes that raged on for months before a miraculous deal and sale was concluded in December was the major roles played by five members of the Leadership Washington Class of 2000. Though they were on different sides of this issue representing a variety of constituencies and interests, eventually all five came together to produce a victory for the city and region in maintaining over 1,000 health care jobs and providing quality service to residents of Washington, DC and Prince George's County.



Marc Weiss ('00), Bob Malson ('93), Ivan C.A. Walks, and Ana Raley ('00) at the Greater Southeast Hospital press conference.

They are: Alice Rivlin, Chair of the DC Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority; Ana Raley, President and CEO of the new Greater Southeast Hospital; Sandra Allen, DC Council member from Ward 8 and Chair of the Human Services Committee; Regina Woods, Director of the DC State Health Planning and Development Agency; and Marc Weiss, Senior Fellow at the Center for National Policy, who served as the strategist and media spokesman for the Health Care Now/Greater Southeast Community

Coalition. The coalition organized and mobilized citizens, churches, health care workers, and neighborhood organizations in support of keeping the hospital open.

These five members of the Class of 2000 spent several hours during Leadership Washington lunches and coffee breaks on program days discussing the issue of how to save Greater Southeast Hospital, and their "bonding" in

the class helped them work together more effectively to address this important regional challenge. They all participated in a press conference and reunion at Greater Southeast Hospital on February 25 to celebrate the victory.

Among many others at this event who played key roles in saving the hospital were Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, and Robert Malson ('93), President of the DC Hospital Association and a member of Leadership Washington's Board of Directors.