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- FRESH COAST BASKETBALL CLASSIC

Statement from Alderman Willie C. Wade March 29, 2010

Last week I received a written account from the Milwaukee Police Department regarding my “hat wearing incident” that occurred at Riverside University High School on February 19 as I was making my way into the gym with my two children to watch the Vincent vs. Riverside girls basketball game. I specifically requested the written account (**see attached**) of the interaction police had with me that day because I knew it would refute several falsehoods that were reported in a *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article on March 1.

So, let’s set the record straight.

The discussion about my hat – and the forceful demand made by MPS security that I remove it before entering the gym – took place in the lobby and not in front of a crowd of onlookers or anyone else. The only people present were the security officers, me and my children and a Milwaukee police officer who I summoned in hopes of having the officer mediate our discussion. My demeanor was peaceful and polite at all times. MPS spokeswoman Roseann St. Aubin didn’t have her facts straight when she told the *Journal Sentinel* that the discussion was “heated” and that police “had to be called.” I called over the officer to mediate, in hopes of avoiding any escalation or trouble.

Secondly, I left the building with my kids on my own to comply with the MPS rule. **The police did not force me to leave nor did they escort me out of the building (contrary to what Ms. St. Aubin told the *Journal Sentinel*).** I chose to leave on my own because it was a proper way for me to comply with the rule while also showing my disappointment and protest for how security – who definitely weren’t being “customer friendly” with me – handled the situation. Again, this was a dignified and quiet exit and not in front of a crowd of onlookers. Had I been shouting and carrying on, then I believe a crowd would have gathered to watch, but that was not the case.

Talk radio lit up the day the article appeared, with hosts fueling the false story line that I “made a scene,” and that I was trying to use my position as an alderman to skirt the MPS no hats rule. The allegations and falsehoods bothered me greatly, because they simply weren’t true.

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I have always believed strongly in setting a good example for young people in Milwaukee, and in being a positive role model. I have served as a coach, I've founded scholarships and scholarship programs, I've run an after-school mentoring and reading program, I've chaperoned many MPS field trips, and I regularly speak to youth groups and visit our schools.

Each and every day I try to instill in our community's young people the importance of doing one's best and following the rules. The day of the basketball game, I was following the rules.

Lastly, I also told the reporter that I had attended many MPS games wearing a hat, and that I've seen other adults and even MPS security officers wearing hats at games in recent years. Apparently the reporter decided not to interview anyone else or look into my contention that enforcement of the MPS no hats rule is spotty, at best.

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