

DETROIT NATIVE SUN

Enlightening the Community

Telford Telescope: A racial confrontation at the NYC

By Dr. John Telford
SUN COLUMNIST



As more and more racist occurrences come to light in the midst of this deadly pandemic and the nationwide protests concerning George Floyd's murder, three ladies of color among my five guests at the recently re-opened Detroit Yacht Club

restaurant on Saturday, June 13 were subjected to racial comments by a man who I was later told is a former NYC commodore, plus his inebriated wife.

The incident erupted after this former commodore opened a large window-blind and intentionally let the sun flash into the eyes of prominent Grosse Pointe builder Joseph Corrado, my guest along with his dark-skinned East Indian wife Dr. Sunanda Corrado and their little son. The commodore then made an insultingly inane comment to my party about him believing that we needed to see the flag being lowered outside, and presuming to instruct us that we should all "honor the flag." However, I soon learned that it was I who was this commodore's true target when he called out my name, grabbed me, and attempted to remove my hat as I was going to the men's room, but I wrenched vigorously out of his grasp, slightly injuring my shoulder. The club has a no-hats rule, but the bill on my hat forms a natural lens and helps my degenerating 84-year-old eyes to see better under ceiling lights; thus I had fittingly exempted myself from that rule. Being 84 and highly susceptible to the corona virus, I was concerned that in grabbing hold of me, he hadn't observed the recommended six feet of distancing.

While I was in the men's room this former commodore accosted my guests at our tables again, thrust his nose into the frightened face of retired DPS teacher Michelle Rhea-Greene, and told her and Dr. Corrado and Mrs. Virginia Starkey--the other two ladies, "You colored girls need to understand that we've got no problem with colored people. We've been letting colored people in this restaurant for

years. It's about Dr. Telford's HAT." As I returned from the men's room, this officious unknown-to-me individual called out my name YET AGAIN and accosted me YET AGAIN, whereupon I informed him that if he put his four-syllable-expetive hands on me one more time, something physically painful was going to happen to him despite my advanced age and me being on a cane.

It was good that my MS-ravaged wife Adrienne couldn't be there that night to witness this assault, which had she been present would have distressed her. Subsequently, I advised the NYC board that this issue could be resolved one of two ways--either they let me wear my hat and protect my future guests from this man's harassment, or I would sue him for assault and the NYC for neglecting to restrain him. The former commodore then called me--undoubtedly at the behest of the NYC board--to apologize to me, and me being a man who tries to be forgiving, I accepted his apology and forgave him, but I also told him that ignorance of what constitutes racially offensive language--whether the speaker be drunk or sober--doesn't excuse it.

Also, the NYC board being aware that I'm a longtime club member, a retired superintendent of the Detroit Public Schools, a radio host, a columnist with the Detroit Native Sun, and an active member of the National Action Network, the board has now formally honored my request to wear my hat. I also suggested that it prevail upon its former commodore to apologize to my guests--and he did try--but it turned out that the three ladies wanted no part of any apology from him, and they presently will negotiate with the board to work out an amicable form of restitution.

John Telford will be a candidate for the DPSCD board on Nov. 3. He was a world-ranked sprinter at WSU in the 1950s. Get his Detroit-oriented books on amazon.com (type in Dr. John Telford). Contact him at DrJohnTelfordEdD@aol.com or (313) 460-8272. Hear him Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. and Mondays at 6:30 p.m. on WCHB AM1340. He also posts his shows on Facebook. His website is www.AlifeontheRUN.com.

Michigan's new auto insurance law goes into effect, consumers encouraged to shop around

LANSING, MICH. - New choices are now available to Michigan drivers under Michigan's historic bipartisan auto insurance reform law, which Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed into law in 2019 and goes into effect July 2.

"Choice is finally here for Michigan drivers," said Governor Whitmer. "I'm proud that drivers will now have auto insurance options to better fit their insurance needs and budgets."

In May 2019, Governor Whitmer signed auto no-fault legislation to lower costs for Michigan drivers, maintain the highest coverage options in the country, and strengthen consumer protections. These changes apply to auto insurance policies issued or renewed beginning today. The new law:

- Offers drivers new choices on the amount of Personal Injury Protection (PIP) medical coverage they purchase.
- Mandates statewide average savings for PIP medical premiums for 8 years.
- Establishes new consumer protections, including prohibiting insurers from using certain non-driving factors when setting auto insurance rates.
- Allows uninsured drivers to get coverage without penalty for the next 18 months.

"For decades, Detroit drivers have been forced to pay the most expensive car insurance rates in the nation, but that

changes today," said Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II. "This new law guarantees average statewide savings for drivers and adds protections against discrimination, which is why all Michiganders should review the options available to them before making the important decision of choosing their auto insurance coverages."

"Michigan has a competitive auto insurance market with more than 100 companies writing policies, so consumers may benefit by getting multiple quotes before renewing or selecting a new policy," said Department of Insurance and Financial Services (DIFS) Director Anita Fox. "DIFS is available to support consumers who have questions, concerns or complaints about their auto insurance. Drivers should also be aware that if they do not wish to wait for their renewal date on their existing policy to make changes to their coverage, they can contact an insurance agent or company to learn about the options available to them."

Educational resources, sample forms, instructional videos and a schedule of virtual town hall events are available for drivers to learn more about the new law at Michigan.gov/autoinsurance. In addition, DIFS continues to operate its dedicated, no-fault hotline with calls being answered Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Drivers can call 833-ASK-DIFS (275-3437) or email autoinsurance@michigan.gov for assistance.

Detroit Pistons partner with Michigan Secretary of State's office to drive voter awareness

The Detroit Pistons recently announced that the club is partnering with the Michigan Secretary of State's office on a series of initiatives to drive voter awareness and participation in the upcoming August and November elections. The organization also announced it will be declaring August 4 and November 3, 2020 company-wide paid days off to ensure all staff members can vote, volunteer as election workers and rally others to do the same.

"Our organization is committed to promoting informed participation in the electoral process," said Pistons owner Tom Gores. "We are pleased to partner with the Department of State on its efforts to register and enroll eligible voters for this year's elections, and to provide our employees with the day off on election day to ensure they are able to get to the polls and make their voices heard."

In partnership with Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson and Detroit City Clerk Janice Winfrey, the Detroit Pistons will act on the following initiatives to grow civic engagement and inspire voter participation in the coming elections:

- Partner with the Detroit City Clerk's office and MDOS to designate Henry Ford Detroit Pistons Performance Center as a voting "Satellite Center" for the upcoming November 3 election -- enabling people to register and vote on site
- Coordinate Pistons employee volunteer program to work the polls in concert with the Detroit City Clerk's office for both the August 4 and November 3 elections
- Partner with the Michigan Secretary of State's office on a series of PSA videos utilizing Pistons players, coaches and personalities aimed at voter education, applying to vote by mail and "how to" videos to ensure ballots are filled out correctly and returned properly to be counted
- Build a voter registration page into the Pistons.com website that integrates directly with the Michigan Bureau of Elections so that individuals can register to vote online and submit their application to vote by mail.

- Host live voter registration and education events with non-partisan community organizations featuring information on how to register, vote, complete and return voting ballots

Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson lauded the Pistons efforts to assist with voter participation and awareness for the upcoming elections and stressed the importance every individual has in making their voice heard.

"The Detroit Pistons are tremendous civic leaders and I am proud to partner with them to ensure more citizens are educated voters and active participants in our democracy," Secretary Benson said. "As we've worked with them over the past few weeks to develop this robust and comprehensive partnership, it's become clear that the Pistons' commitment to ensuring our elections are accessible to all is a reflection of their dedication to their fans and the entire Michigan community."

Detroit City Clerk Janice Winfrey appreciates the opportunity to utilize the Henry Ford Detroit Pistons Performance Center as a voting center for the November 3 election. She also noted the need for volunteers to work at polling sites on Election Day.

"The Detroit Pistons organization has deep roots in our community, supporting programs and initiatives that fundamentally make a difference in the lives of our residents," said Clerk Winfrey. "This is an organization that consistently demonstrates positive corporate values, and acts as a role model for our children. I am excited about forging a long-term partnership with the Pistons organization, to raise voter awareness and participation in the democratic process."

Uniting the community has long been a priority for the organization. The new program is one of the actionable items our players, staff and employees will execute in utilizing our platform to bring change, bridge divides and address issues that continue to divide our country.

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