

Transcript of Jon Waters' speech at the “We Stand With Jon” Rally, Flannagan's, Dublin, Ohio, Sep. 20, 2014, 6:30pm

YouTube, Sep. 20, 2014:
http://youtu.be/j1ngRUhgj_A



“We work to set the record straight—to make all of America understand that what Ohio State put out was complete and utter nonsense.” *Jon Waters, Sep. 20, 2014*

JON WATERS: I would just like to say on behalf of my wonderful family, Molly, my wife is around here somewhere, and our kids, we would not be here today had it not been for your generosity and your love.

There is only one way to describe this scenario today and that is love. Everyone in this audience, and everyone in these young men and women behind me (laughter from many decades of band alumni) are true representatives of what it means to be great people. They learned that, in part, from The Ohio State University Marching Band. (cheers, clapping)

I see here in the front row, and I just want to embarrass her for a moment. Chris Tikson. Chris had a dream of being The Ohio State University Marching Band. Except, she is a non-traditional student because she is 52 years old. (cheers) Hold on, 53.

A few years ago she came to us and said she wanted to be in the band. And, she had this dream. She worked hard, she self-taught mellophone horn. She tried out for the band. In fact, the first time she decided not to try out because she was not ready. The next year, she tried out after practicing all year and didn't make the band, as so many don't. And finally, the third time, the third year, she did try out and she did make the band. (clapping, cheers)

And she is today a third year member. (clapping cheers) But, the best part of that story is not what I just told you. The best part of that story is the following.

Every year the band votes, the band not the staff, but the band votes on one award each year called "The Most Inspirational Bandsman." And always, that award always goes to a senior band member. In its history it has never not gone to a band member who has given time and dedication to the band over multiple years.

Well, a couple of year ago, our band, in Chris Tikson's first year, the students in the band voted her Most Inspirational Bandsman. (cheers, clapping) And they say the culture is bad in The Ohio State Marching Band. (boos) They say that that decision by the students and other student decisions that they make contribute to a poor culture. Well, I am here to tell you, and say it loud and clear so everyone understands completely, that the culture of The Ohio State Marching Band is one of love, dedication and those students would not have voted Chris Tikson MIB [Most Inspiration Bandsman] if they had not felt it in their hearts. That is the culture of the band. (cheers, clapping, hugs)

So, to the generations that are here today; to the generations that are in the audience; to the students that I see here in the audience. I see current band members here, and I will, they're in disguise. (laughter) I mean, they're not here.

Those students need us now more than ever. They need every one of us to be there for them. This is not about me. This is not about my firing. This is about standing up for what is right. This is about standing up for the students. (clapping)

A year ago we met with the alumni band and honored the first five women, plus Shelly as the first female drum major (clapping), and Jan Duga as the first female "i"-dotter. That was one short year ago.

Now that is what the Ohio State marching Band thinks of Title IX. We embrace it. We celebrate it. And, because of Paul Droste and the work that happened in 1972 and 1973, women are embraced in The Ohio State Marching Band. And, that is our culture. (clapping cheering) So, as we move forward together; as we march forward together, we just ask two things.

Number one is that you support our current students. (cheers, clapping)

And number two that we work to set the record straight—to make all of America understand that what Ohio State put out was complete and utter nonsense. (cheers, clapping)

Just think about this. These people would not come [ref. alumni band]... This is a unique organization. It exists all year round. They do concerts all over the state of Ohio. They are everywhere. It wouldn't exist if the culture were bad.

We would not have decades and decades and decades of people coming back to our alumni reunion if the culture in the band were bad, if what we were teaching them, if what Paul Droste, and Jon Woods, and Jack Evans, and Charlie Spohn taught those students was bad. CROWD: And Jon Waters. (cheers)

I am a humble steward of a tradition. I am a humble steward of this great tradition. I happen to be number nine in a long line of band directors since 1878 who led our band. Number nine—that certainly is threatened right now.

But, if you will walk with me. If you will uphold the good name of The Ohio State Marching Band. If you will defend our students. If you will stop people from approaching our students in a football game situation, and making a snide remark about something was put in the media that was incorrect.

If you will stand up for them, I will stand with you. I will stand up for every one of you. (cheers, clapping) This is not just a happenstance gathering of people. The Ohio State Marching Band is not a community of students endeavoring in academic pursuits at The Ohio State University. This is a family. (cheers, clapping) And so, for the honor of our students, for the honor of the alums, for my own honor, for all our honor. We indeed will defend it. We will indeed be victorious. Thank you so much.

*Our Honor Defend,
We Will Fight To The End*

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