



## **Ald. Yannette Figueroa Cole**

### **District 10**

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April 19, 2023

To Alder Matt Phair, District 20 – City of Madison

Matt served as an alder before, but our relationship only started ten months ago. Matt stepped up to the plate when District 20 needed representation; we met in person for the first time shortly after he was appointed. When I first met him, I sensed a humility that is hard to find in the political arena and a genuine sense of duty. He wanted to know what motivated me to run and shared his experiences as a prior alder. We met at a coffee shop and talked for a couple of hours. When Matt asked me to speak on his behalf, I immediately said yes but worried about disappointing him with my send-off speech.

In chambers, Matt didn't shy away from difficult conversations. When our votes did not align, there were no hard feelings because our trust has been built on the principle that we are here to advocate for others, not for self-preservation or self-interests. We share a vision for a safe Madison where violence prevention is essential for the well-being of our youth and for generations to come.

Campaigns tend to bring out the worst in people. But Matt focused his campaign on the issues; his canvassing efforts motivated me to get out in the cold to emulate him. We checked in on each other and kept each other motivated and centered on Madison's residents. Running a campaign and serving as an alder takes a toll on your social and family life. Matt has taught me to prioritize time with family regardless of how intense work gets at times.

Thanks, Matt, for reminding us of the importance of having a two-way support system. A system where your family's sacrifices are recognized, valued, and prioritized not just with words but with actions like taking time off to reconnect in meaningful ways, even in the middle of a brutal campaign. To know how special Matt is, we only need to give the floor to those closest to him, his three precious children Sofia, Owen, and Garret.

### **Matt's daughter 16-year-old Sophia is a Junior in High School, and she wrote:**

*"Dear Dad,*

*On your last day as an alder, I want to congratulate you on all the hard work you've done for our city over the past 12 years. For the majority of my life, I have known you as an alder, which has largely shaped the way I view public service and local government. You've taught me how government on a local level is in many ways the most important for creating direct change in our community. You've also taught me that anyone is capable of taking action, big or small, if they have the courage to speak up and make a difference.*

*Although the outcome of this election is not what you had envisioned, there is still plenty to be proud of. Your continuous hard work and countless hours spent on this campaign have truly proved your dedication to the city of Madison. Having to balance being an educator, a parent, a coach, and a friend all on top of running a political campaign is not a simple task that anyone could have accomplished. I*

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*hope you understand how admirable that is and how incredibly lucky my brothers and I are to have you as our dad.*

*Despite all of your hard work, you've also taught me the importance of time off, so I hope you use this new open window of opportunity to pursue other things you enjoy.*

*It is an honor to be your daughter. Love, Sophia"*

**From Garrett, your 11-year-old 6th grader:**

*"Hi Dad!*

*I'm very proud of you for putting in all the hard work and dedication into being an Alderman for the past 9 years or something or something like that. I remember how many boring meetings I had to go to because I was too little to stay home. All of the time spent knocking on doors and on your computer showed how dedicated you were and how great you were for the city. To be honest, I'm kind a glad that you're not an alderman so now we can go play catch or go to the park to hit some balls but you've done a great job.*

*From your favorite child, Garrett"*

**From Owen, your 15-year-old freshman:**

*"Dear Dad, your service on the common council has meant so much to me. For one, it gave me an example of what it means to be a leader and a strong member of my community. Also, I admire your hard work during your campaign, and how you never complained about all the work. Your dedication to making your community better for everyone really left a positive impression on me and I am grateful for it and proud.*

*Love,  
Owen"*

In a short ten months, I have had the pleasure to know Matt and to share difficult moments in council but also funny moments. As a Puerto Rican, I speak with my hands and facial expressions; eye rolling is part of the package. I will miss those moments when Matt catches me in the middle of an eye roll, and his response is to roll his eyes, followed by a head nod & gentle shoulder shrug. Without exchanging words, he reminds me to relax and to let whatever is going on go! This is a gentle reminder to pick our battles and not let things become personal.

To Matt's wife, Connie, thank you for sharing Matt with us and allowing us to hear the voices of your wonderful children. Matt, I cannot wait to see what is in store for you and your family!

Thank you for your dedicated service to District 20 and Madison.

Sincerely,

Yannette

Alder Yannette Figueroa Cole (she/her/hers)

District 10 - Madison Common Council