



**WADE KAPSZUKIEWICZ**  
**MAYOR**

One Government Center • Suite 2200 • Toledo, Ohio 43604    Office (419) 245-1001    Fax (419) 245-1370    E-mail [mayor@toledo.oh.gov](mailto:mayor@toledo.oh.gov)

---

May 15, 2018

Joseph H. Zerbey, IV  
5502 Citation North  
Ottawa Hills, Ohio 43615

Dear Joe,

I received your letter yesterday. I think most people would not take issue with honoring Jim Harbaugh, a Toledo native, with a Key to the City. When I learned that the University's Athletic Department took its concerns to local media, and after reading your letter, I realized that I should respond.

I am enclosing the email that Steve Cavanaugh sent to you regarding your letter. Unfortunately for Mr. Cavanaugh, it appears he inadvertently hit "reply all" on an email he intended to send only to you, and so I have the benefit of his thoughts as well.

To be clear, I think recognizing a Toledo native who returned to his hometown to raise \$100,000 for economically disadvantaged Toledoans is one way to "act like a mayor." I must confess I have a soft spot for individuals who help the poor. I will continue to recognize people who make grand contributions to Toledo.

My administration has issued more proclamations than I can easily count – all to support or recognize local people doing good work. The University of Toledo has not been excluded.

In fact, Dr. Gaber and Mr. O'Brien have been aware of my intention to honor Kareem Hunt for being named NFL Rookie of the Year with a Key to the City. That was my idea. It is something we have discussed for at least two months, and we have been coordinating schedules to find a time when Mr. Hunt would be on campus to receive such an honor. I also participated in a video (you can view online) early this year with Rocky to support and market the university. I have proudly worn a UT pin – that was presented to me by Dr. Gaber – on my lapel almost every day. City and UT officials at the highest levels have sat down many times to talk about partnerships, making Toledo better, and forming a mutually beneficial relationship. All of that work continues. My staff has also invested countless hours preparing "Rocket Week" for later this year (see proposed logo enclosed). These

facts make the Athletic Department's concern over the key presentation all the more baffling. I assume you were unaware of these positive things. Mr. O'Brien, however, was aware of at least the plan to honor Mr. Hunt.

The key presentation to Mr. Harbaugh had nothing to do with football. It had everything to do with honoring someone who donated his time to helping the poor – again, an admitted weakness of mine. I take issue with the assertion that my actions were those of a “star struck fan,” since as I told Mr. Harbaugh last week, I am not a fan of the University of Michigan's football team. In fact, I am a fan of The Ohio State University's and The University of Toledo's football teams, and I enjoyed tremendously watching both teams score victories over Michigan in recent years.

I am well aware – and extremely proud – of the University of Toledo's accomplishments on the football field last year. Had I been mayor at the time of the MAC championship, I would have certainly honored the team.

I cannot believe anyone at UT would think what transpired this week is good PR for the university. Yet this is not the first time the Athletic Department has created a controversy where none existed. When the city of Oregon playfully renamed itself “Oregon, Ohio: Buckeyes on the Bay, City of Duck Hunters” for one day before Ohio State played the University of Oregon in the national championship game in 2015, the City of Oregon received an unpleasant phone call from the Athletic Department.

As with everything in life, I hope we can all learn from this. I have definitely learned some very important things, and I hope the university has too. Certainly, the negative attention the Athletic Department has brought upon the university this week cannot be a good thing. I am certain when you pause to review all we have done and plan to do together, you will realize that we are better off working together. Perhaps you can play a role in preventing the Athletic Department from doing the university any more harm than it has already done.

As always, I look forward to working with the University of Toledo and celebrating its many accomplishments.

Sincerely,



Wade Kapzukiewicz  
Mayor

cc:

Mr. Steve Cavanaugh, Chairman, Board of Trustees

Dr. Sharon Gaber, President University of Toledo

Mr. Michael O'Brien, Athletic Director, University of Toledo

Mr. Jason Candle, Head Football Coach, University of Toledo



## Lucas, Angela

---

**From:** Albanese, Leslie on behalf of Mayor  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 15, 2018 12:04 PM  
**To:** Lucas, Angela; DeBacker, Gretchen; Poore, Karen; Arnold, Abby  
**Subject:** FW: Zerbey letter to Mayor

FYI see below a message that I do not believe Mr. Cavanaugh realized he was sending to Mayor.

---

**From:** Cavanaugh, Steve [mailto:scavanaugh@hcr-manorcare.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 15, 2018 11:53 AM  
**To:** Joe Zerbey; Mayor  
**Cc:** Sharon L Gaber; Michael E O'Brien; Jason Candle  
**Subject:** RE: Zerbey letter to Mayor

Sorry it took me so long to respond. I was traveling back and forth to NYC and participating in meetings the last few days. I think this is really good. It is a very polite way to tell him he should act like the mayor and not some star struck fan. All I have are a couple of suggestions for paragraph four to make it a little more crisp. I would suggest the following small changes:

Instead you put the spotlight on a football coach from a university in another state; a university with all of its prominence *that* does *little or* nothing to enhance Toledo. A university that can't hold a candle to UT in terms of *its positive community impact and its potential to create a better life for the citizens of our community including many whom you represent.*

Take these suggestions for what they are worth and feel free to go with your original language if you prefer. Otherwise, I think this great and I am comfortable with it being sent. Thanks for taking the time to pull this together.

Best regards,

Steve C.

**From:** Joe Zerbey [mailto:jzerbey@toledoblade.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 14, 2018 11:44 AM  
**To:** [mayor@toledo.oh.gov](mailto:mayor@toledo.oh.gov)  
**Cc:** Sharon L Gaber; Michael E O'Brien; Jason Candle; Cavanaugh, Steve  
**Subject:** Zerbey letter to Mayor

