



State Senate candidate Hal Patton releases statement in regards to blackface photo

by Steven Spencer, Staff Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - State Senate candidate and Mayor of Edwardsville Hal Patton released a statement regarding the release of a photo depicting him in blackface as part of what he says was a Halloween costume.

The statement, which can be found on his website, reads in full:

Having served the public for almost twenty years as an Edwardsville Alderman, Madison County Board Member, and now as Mayor, I have been on the ballot ten different times and involved in many challenging races. So nothing really surprises me in terms of the nasty tricks opponents will try. Typically, the more desperate the opponent, the lower they will go.

There have been threats to use this particular picture in my last three races. It was taken at an annual couples' Halloween costume party where husband and wife try to pair their outfits. My wife was set on wearing a pink dress and wrapping it cellophane to look like a piece of bubble gum. My choices to pair up we're going as a school desk or as a "wrapper". A rapper outfit with a microphone and face paint was chosen, not as a racial statement, but due to the fact that most rappers are African-American.

Looking back, it was a bad choice for an outfit. I regret it and apologize to those it offends. I never imagined it would be viewed as a racial image, much less saved by someone for nearly nine years before using it to impugn my character.

Any one who knows me, knows that I do not judge people by their race or nationality. I grew up in a household that taught how to love others, not to hate them. My friends, former classmates, employees, dental patients, and current co-workers at the city would

all confirm this. In my dental practice I care for people of many different races and backgrounds yet all my employees will tell you that we consider them family. At the City of Edwardsville, we have always hired the best candidate, and I am pleased to report that we have more minorities and females working for us than ever before. In fact, my last three appointments that I have recommended for the city council have been females.

I am saddened that I need to write about these things, but feel it is important for those who do not know me, to not judge my character from a Halloween costume. Moreover, I am sickened by and worried for the individual or individuals who would keep such a ridiculous picture for nine plus years and use it such a cheap manor. If these persons or anyone would like to discuss any issue with me, I have always made myself available.

This is the second desperate act taken against me in this election cycle. Clearly, my opponent and her allies will use any methods, no matter how pathetic, to maintain power and control of our political system in Illinois. The more I get into trying to change the disfunction in Springfield, the more disgusted I get and the greater resolve I find.

Sincerely, Hal

Patton's statement can be found at www.halpattonforsenate.com.