

Final Release May 1, 2018

Statement regarding the Federal lawsuit filed in connection with the May 9, 2016 event featuring Ambassador Dennis Ross.

The Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Kansas City and the Truman Library Institute co-sponsored a lecture on May 9, 2016 featuring Ambassador Dennis Ross. The event was privately sponsored and the Kansas City Public Library served as the venue. The event included a live question-and-answer segment to encourage open dialogue. Two lines formed at separate microphones on either side of the stage behind which more than a dozen questioners stood. The first questioner to be called upon was Jeremy Rothe-Kushel, who spoke for a minute and a half, uninterrupted, and asked a question, which was answered. During this exchange, in which the Ambassador disagreed with a number of Mr. Rothe-Kushel's assertions, Mr. Rothe-Kushel interrupted. The Ambassador attempted to move on to the next questioner but instead of relinquishing the microphone, Mr. Rothe-Kushel continued to press his point, disrupting the question-and-answer segment and impeding the right of others to engage in dialogue with the Ambassador.

Security approached Mr. Rothe-Kushel initially to direct him away from the microphone, not because of the content of his speech but in order to let others have their turns to speak. Mr. Rothe-Kushel then reacted belligerently, at which point Kansas City Police Officers approached. This disruption then was magnified by the sudden appearance of a person, unknown to security, who protested loudly, and physically interfered with Police Officers as they were navigating Mr. Rothe-Kushel away from the stage. This person was Steven Woolfolk, a library employee, whose intervention significantly escalated the situation. Both Mr. Rothe-Kushel and Mr. Woolfolk were escorted out of the lecture hall where they continued to interact with the Police Officers. They were later arrested. It is the understanding of the Foundation that the Kansas City Police Officers believed that the

individuals arrested were in violation of Municipal ordinances, which were their duty to enforce.

After their departure from the lecture hall, the question-and-answer segment resumed, providing many others the opportunity to be heard and to engage with the speaker.

In light of recent violent incidents, here in our own community and around the world, the safety of the event attendees and Ambassador Ross was a top priority. The restoration of order at the event ensured that the dialogue could continue and that the disruption did not escalate further.

In summary:

1. The event was planned for the benefit and enrichment of the community.
2. Planning for public safety is an important and necessary part of our responsibility as event organizers.
3. There was a disruption at the event and local law enforcement became involved.
4. We respect the decisions made by the officers which we believe were made in good faith.

The Foundation will vigorously defend itself and its employees and agents against any and all claims in connection with this incident and will continue to prioritize safety and to insist on civility in discourse and respect for others at all events in which it takes a leadership role. As it has for nearly 60 years, the Foundation also will continue to provide generous support to effective charitable organizations and programs and to make a positive difference in the lives of millions of people in Kansas City, throughout the country, and indeed, the world.