

DES MOINES TRIBUNE

January 11, 1943

Letters from Des Moines Tribune readers

“Discrimination Against WAACs is Charged”

Freddie D. Hawkins of Des Moines writes that on Sunday afternoon, January 3, a small group of Negro WAACs were denied the privilege of roller skating precisely because they were Negro. He ends his letter with the comment that if the rink managers doesn't care to cater to Negroes he should at least respect the WAACs' uniforms!

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The Tribune's Readers Say:

(These letters are from Des Moines Tribune readers. The views expressed may differ widely from The Tribune's own views. Brief letters are the most interesting. They will be shortened if lack of space requires. You must give your name and address. Write only on one side of the paper. Contributors are limited to not more than one letter a month. Letters and their contents become the property of the newspaper and cannot be returned.)

Discrimination Against WAACs Is Charged.

To the Editor of The Tribune:

Des Moines has been made famous throughout the United States as the home of the WAACs. And judging from the letters that have been received from America's fighting men both in the training camps and abroad they are a great asset in the building of morale of our soldiers.

Most of them say that if American women have the courage and fortitude to stand the rigors of army life (especially when they volunteer to do so and when most of them left good jobs or the opportunity to get good jobs, and others the easiest life of any group of women in the world) they have the utmost respect and gratitude for them.

But it seems as if some Des Moines business men don't want to show these brave women that same respect and gratitude. One has even gone so far as to insult a small group of them.

Sunday afternoon, Jan. 3, a small group of Negro WAACs were denied the privilege of roller skating for a couple of hours on one of Des Moines' roller skating rinks. They had their own skates, were in uniform, and were accompanied by a WAAC officer of first lieutenant rank. The only reason given for the refusal was that they were Negroes.

If the manager of the rink doesn't care to cater to Negroes he should at least respect the WAACs' uniform and the organization of which they are a part. What is to be the future policy of Negro WAACs in the city of Des Moines?—Freddie D. Hawkins, 1513 School st., Des Moines. J-11-43