F&M Security and the Community

"We were just exercising our first amendment rights," Rosie Gross says of her protest with others on Harrisburg Pike across from Franklin & Marshall College. "The F&M police came across the street and said 'This is private property – you must leave!'"

Rosie, a veteran pro-life protester was there to protest the handing out in mass condoms by an F&M student she referred to as the "condom queen." Agree or disagree with her cause, Rosie knew she had a right to be there. "As long as we don't block the sidewalk and keep moving, we have a constitutional right to protest," she says.

That morning before the protest, several years ago, Rosie called City of Lancaster Chief of Police, William Heim, to make certain the protesters were following the law. "He explained that as long as we stayed on the public sidewalk and didn't prevent others from passing, we would have no trouble with the law."

But F&M security told Lancaster Township Supervisor, Tony Allen, who was also a protester that day, that not only were they are on private property and must leave, they better not cross over to the other side of the street. Tony said, "I walked across the street – it's a public street and a public sidewalk, they have no right to tell me I can't walk there."

City police were called out and observed the protesters and intervened on their behalf. "They are not doing anything wrong, let them alone" the cops told F&M security and drove away according to Rosie and Tony.

But that wasn't the end of it as far as F&M security was concerned. According to Rosie and Tony, shopkeepers were told not to serve protesters. Rosie said, "One of the protesters went to buy ice cream afterwards without a sign or anything that indicated any message and the shop owner refused him service."

Several days later Rosie received in the mail a reminder of how far F&M will go to intimidate those exercising first amendment rights – she received a letter from F&M saying that she will be arrested if she steps foot on their property!

"I did nothing wrong and now they say I can't go to Doc Holidays or the bank? How do they know I don't have an account with them? Are they saying they will arrest me if I mail a letter in the US Mail box?" Rosie asks today.

Rosie said at least one other person also received a "no trespass notice," which was confirmed with Constitutional Attorney, Jim Clymer. Apparently, F&M security uses their police access to PennDOT records to get the citizens' names and addresses!

But that's not all F&M security did. Rosie said that one lady pulled over to let her children out, so they could join with other protesters and F&M security sternly talked to them. "They had the kids crying saying, 'Mommy, I don't want to be arrested.' She left the protest because F&M security had upset them so badly."

Neither F&M president John Fry, vice president Kevin Orr, spokesperson Dulcey Antonucci, nor director of public safety Maureen Kelly responded to questions about their questionable use of the F&M police access to Pennsylvania Department of Transportation records to squash First Amendment speech.

Additionally, the "No Trespass Log" in F&M security office holds hundreds of pages – how much does the security force use the "no trespass notice" to intimidate those that have a differing opinion? No answers from F&M.

Beverly Uehlein, another participant in the protest on Harrisburg Pike, says "We had a right to protest. I felt like I wasn't in America."

by Ron Harper, Jr., *Lancaster Post*