

Willis Ward Praised By Southern Journal

ATLANTA, Ga., Oct. 11 (ANP).—Writing in the Atlanta Daily World last week, Art Randall, recent graduate of the University of Michigan and a former roommate of Willis Ward, Big Ten track star and stellar end for the Wolverine football team, made the following comment on the reported barring of Ward from the coming Georgia Tech game on Saturday, October 20:

"Many persons have condemned what they chose to call Willis Ward's spineless attitude in regard to the reported decision of the University of Michigan officials not to allow him to play in the Michigan-Georgia Tech game.

"They say that any player who knuckles down under a raw deal like that after he has clearly proved his merit to a position in the starting lineup is a coward. He should turn in his suit, they say, and refuse to play in another game for a school that has discriminated so grossly against him.

"Such an act upon Ward's part would be foolish indeed. It would be the emotional reaction of a person who proceeds without thought and I, for one, am pleased greatly that Ward was thoughtful enough to take a cool stand in circumstances that would have made even rash actions excusable.

"I am only a player,' said Ward, 'and I shall do as my coaches and officials order.'

"In effect, he said this: 'If my school chooses to make a martyr of me, who at all times has been loyal to my school and obedient to their orders, I shall accept their decision without question. The responsibility rests in the hands of those men who dictate the policy of this "liberal" institution.'

"What if Ward had turned in his suit in a burst of justifiable, though hasty, emotion? If he were but an individual, such a course would perhaps be the right one to take. It would be a tit-for-tat affair; if the team doesn't appreciate using his services, he doesn't appreciate the team enough to lend his efforts to its winning of games.

"Willis Ward, however, is not an individual. He is a symbol. He is the first Negro to win a place on the football team in that school for recent years, and he must consider himself a foundation stone upon which all future colored athletes who attend that school must build. Truculence and cullenness upon his part would probably mark 'finis' to the Negro football player in his university.

"Furthermore, Ward has a wonderful chance of gaining an All-American berth this year. The splendid and liberal Coach Kipke of Michigan has already told newspapermen that Ward is to be 'atched.' He has brought great honor to his race by clinching a position on the best team of the country. He could bring far more honor to it by showing up all of the other ends in the country, and so earning, if not getting, that bid to football immortality than he could by righteously exploding and going down into the oblivion that yawns wide for all discarded athletes, carrying with him the future chances of other colored athletes who might attend his school.

"No!—Ward should not be condemned as a coward. He should be praised for swallowing his pride and disappointment like a man and sticking on the glory trail, despite its bitter humiliations.

"If there is any censure to be given let it be given to Georgia Tech, which demanded that a star football player and a gentleman be removed from the game because his skin is dark and because of its fear that he might humiliate its team by dumping their superior bodies on the grass in a truly

disconcerting manner, and to the University of Michigan, which allows the invaders to dictate the contemptible terms of the grid battle to be fought on its own soil."