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## College basketball

# Watson is stress free

**Tom Markowski / The Detroit News****DETROIT** -- There is life after basketball.

Perry Watson made that clear on Monday at Detroit Mercy's postseason basketball banquet at the Detroit Golf Club. Watson officially resigned as the men's basketball coach at Detroit Mercy on March 5. On Jan. 7, he took a medical leave of absence 14 games into the season.

Watson said it was stress but that he's feeling better now and is looking forward to a future away from coaching.

It's not easy to walk away from something that has been so much a part of your life for 40 years or so.

"The bottom line is stress can kill you," Watson said. "I'd rather error on the side of caution."

Watson played basketball at Detroit Southwestern before graduating in 1968. After graduating from Eastern Michigan, Watson returned to Southwestern as a volunteer assistant under his coach in high school, Bob Whitehouse.

"Sometimes opportunities present themselves," Watson said. "Talking with (interim coach) Kevin Mondro, and helping Kevin, I thought maybe this was the time for him to have his opportunity.

"It was tough. It's been something I've been doing all my life. Coaching is such a grind; a time-eater. There are 14-hour days sometimes; the toll that it takes. But I'm not retiring to a wheelchair. I want to do something that has to do with youth and/or with the city of Detroit."

Watson also said he's involved the school's search for a new coach. He said he's available to athletic director Keri Gaither in whatever capacity he is needed.

Watson reflected on the changes the game, particularly at the high school level, has gone through since he became head coach at Southwestern in 1982. He spent nine highly successful seasons there winning state championships his final two seasons in '90 and '91.

"Not long ago the high school guys (coaches) were educators first, who valued an education for their players," he said. "Now they're not educators, a lot of them. I'm not saying that's good or bad. Ed Rachal (former Detroit De Porres head coach) wasn't an educator but he did a good job. We should not let anybody take us out of our mission."

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