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It is so on

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It's still about 48 hours away from the official launch of Judy Wasylycia-Leis' mayoral campaign, but all available evidence suggests this campaign is on.

Saturday night, ex-MP Wasylycia-Leis and incumbent Mayor Sam Katz both attended a star-studded fundraiser for the Society for Manitobans With Disabilities. The event - Dancing with Celebrities - is one of the most popular gala fundraisers in the long philanthropic calendar in this city.

I was there to cheer on FP columnist Doug Speirs. We had feared that he would, in the words of another, look like he was pushing a shopping cart around an empty parking lot. In fact, he looked a lot better than that doing the Rumba. Maybe it had to do with his stunningly attractive, dazzlingly adept dance partner. Either way, he Rumba good.

For political animals, the dance floor antics couldn't compete with the tension in the air as Wasylycia-Leis, a celebrity judge for the dancing competition, stole the show while Katz, a recent convert to the rubber chicken circuit, sat at a nearby table and smiled. Not laughed, just smiled.

Wasylycia-Leis was funny and only a little bit self-serving. She rocked by quoting famous dancer Ginger Rogers ("A woman can do everything that a man can do, only backwards and in heels"), an obvious double entendre that left the crowd howling. She also got a great line in after Deputy Mayor Justin Swandel got his dance on. Wasylycia-Leis applauded Swandel for his flexibility, and asked whether that flexibility extended to his political career.

Katz was a bit of a surprise guest to the event. He typically avoids gala fundraisers and sends, well, Swandel. Kat recently showed up at the Woman of Distinction dinner - the first time anyone could remember him attending that event.

Worried? Maybe not, but he's not taking the pint-sized former provincial cabinet minister and MP for granted. And if Dancing with Celebrities was any indication, this is going to be a wing-ding of a mayor campaign. Stay tuned Tuesday morning near midday for Wasylycia-Leis official launch.

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