

<http://inamerica.blogs.cnn.com/2013/04/04/native-american-mascots-pride-or-prejudice/>

April 4th, 2013

## **Native American mascots: Pride or prejudice?**

By **Moni Basu**, CNN

(CNN) – Suzan Shown Harjo remembers when she walked into a store with her grandfather in El Reno, Oklahoma. She wanted to get something cool to drink on a summer day. It was the early 1950s and the storekeepers told the 6-year-old she had to leave.

“No black redskins in here,” they said.

At that moment, Harjo felt small, unsafe, afraid. Because she was a dark-skinned Native American – Cheyenne and Hodulgee Muscogee – she was being identified by just her coloring. She wasn’t even a whole human being. Not even her grandpa, whom she saw as all-powerful, could do anything to protect her.

Later in her life, that incident made her angry. Angry enough for Harjo to launch a lifelong mission to protect her people.

Part of her work took aim at sporting teams that use Native Americans as mascots. With the start of the baseball season this week, some of those teams have been front and center. The Cleveland Indians, for instance, feature a smiling [Indian dubbed Chief Wahoo](#), criticized by Native Americans as a racist caricature.

The most offensive example of a mascot, says Harjo, is the one used by Washington’s football team. She has been fighting for years to get the Redskins to change their name.

The R-word – she can’t even bring herself to say it – is the same as the N-word, says Harjo, president of Morning Star Institute, a national Native American rights organization.

She finds it unbelievable that more than half a century after she was told to get out of that El Reno store, after decades of civil rights struggles and progress on race relations, Americans have no problem with rooting for a team called the Redskins.

Fans say the name is an honorific. But the Merriam-Webster dictionary says this: “The word redskin is very offensive and should be avoided.” And to many Native Americans, nothing could be more derogatory than the use of that word.

“The Washington team – it’s the king of the mountain,” Harjo says. “When this one goes, others will.”

The controversy over Native American names in sports is longstanding and surfaces in headlines now and then, as it did in December when the Atlanta Braves baseball team was reportedly considering [bringing back a dated “screaming Indian” logo](#) for batting practice caps.

Or when Amanda Blackhorse, a 31-year-old Navajo social worker, went to Washington last month to attend a hearing of the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board. She has petitioned to cancel the Redskins trademark on grounds that the name is racist. Harjo filed a similar petition in 1992 and won, but she later lost in the appeals process.

[Harjo was defeated in the courts](#), but public opinion has been shifting steadily on the matter.

In March, several lawmakers introduced a bill in Congress that would amend the Trademark Act of 1946 to ban the term “redskin” in a mark because it is disparaging of native people. Among the sponsors of the bill is civil rights activist Rep. John Lewis, D-Georgia.

Harjo says she hopes the legislation will accomplish what litigation has failed to do so far.

If passed, the bill would force the Washington football team to discard its trademarked name and ban the use of any offensive term in any future trademarks.

Proponents believe that Native American mascots pay homage to the people and help promote a better understanding of those who dominated America before Europeans landed.



The Cleveland Indians mascot, Chief Wahoo, has been criticized as a racist caricature.

But opponents say the mascots perpetuate stereotypes that are void of context and history. They argue that even if the mascots themselves are not racially insensitive, they portray native people as one-dimensional.

“A good many Americans don’t know any Indians,” says Kevin Gover, who heads the Smithsonian Institution’s [National Museum of the American Indian](#).

“The Indian you see most often in Washington, D.C., is at a football game – at the expense of real Indians, real history, real culture. The petty stereotype has become expected.”

In February, the Smithsonian museum [hosted a symposium on racist stereotypes](#) and cultural appropriation in American sports. The idea was to make people think about how these stereotypes can be damaging to Indians.

“Kids grow up and think it’s OK,” Gover says. “It’s not OK.”

There used to be more than 3,000 teams with Native American names and mascots. That's down to about 900 now – but that's still 900 too many for Gover.

He grew up, also in Oklahoma, and recalled how the University of Oklahoma became the first collegiate team to drop its unofficial mascot, Little Red, a student who dressed as an Indian chief and danced on the sidelines during football games.

Protests on campus forced the demise of Little Red. In 2005, Oklahoma adopted two costumed horses, Boomer and Sooner, as mascots who represented the real horses that pulled the Sooner Schooner. But many students didn't take to them.

One of them was Royce Young, who wrote about the university's "mascot crisis" in an online forum in 2007:

"But why can't OU bring back Little Red? Oklahoma prides itself on being 'Native America.' American Indian heritage is something that is more prevalent in this state than any other in the nation. Would it be so wrong to have Native American imagery representing 'Native America?' "

Young, 27, and a writer for CBS Sports, said he now believes he would have written a more educated post after having discussed the mascot issue with Native Americans.

"I wouldn't say I regret writing it," he said. "But I'd be much more sensitive of understanding why Little Red was insensitive to some instead of saying, 'What's the big deal?' "

Royce said he saw nothing wrong with Oklahoma honoring its native people, but not with a tasteless mascot.

Several college teams followed Oklahoma's footsteps and dropped Native American mascots – Stanford and Syracuse among them.

The movement to do away with Indian mascots gained momentum after the [American Psychological Association in 2005 called for the immediate retirement of the mascots](#) based on studies that showed the harmful effects of inaccurate racial portrayals.

The following year, [the NCAA, the governing body of collegiate sports, adopted a policy](#) banning teams with "hostile or abusive racial/ethnic/national origin mascots, nicknames or imagery" from competition. The ban affected high-powered football schools such as Florida State University with Chief Osceola and the University of Illinois, whose official symbol was Chief Illiniwek.

Some states have put the morality of the Indian mascots up for a vote.

Last year, voters dumped the University of North Dakota's Fighting Sioux mascot. [And Oregon prohibited public schools](#) from the use of Native American names, symbols or images. The names on the banned list include: Redskins, Savages, Indians, Indianettes, Chiefs and Braves.

[At Florida State University, a white man dresses up as Chief Osceola](#), smears war paint on his face and rides an appaloosa called Renegade to the middle of Doak Campbell Stadium. He plants a burning spear on the field before every home game. The marching band plays Indian-themed music, and the crowd goes wild doing the "tomahawk chop," a move picked up by the Atlanta Braves.

FSU student Lincoln Golike, who played Osceola in 2002, told the Florida State Times back then that it was tremendous honor to have so many admiring fans.

The Seminole tribe in Florida made an agreement with FSU to allow the use of its name that allows the university to continue competing in the NCAA. The university says its relationship with the Seminole tribe is one of mutual respect.

However, the Seminole nation in Oklahoma, comprised of the descendants of a majority of the Seminoles forced from their lands by the Indian Removal Act, has voiced its opposition to FSU's mascot.

The [real Chief Osceola](#) fought U.S. soldiers in the Seminole Wars. He was captured in 1837 under a flag of truce and died in prison. Before his burial, the soldiers chopped off the head of the Indian warrior to keep as a trophy. That Osceola serves as a mascot at FSU doesn't sit well with the Seminoles in Oklahoma and many other Native Americans.

"Native Americans feel offended, they feel hurt. They feel their identity is being trivialized," says Carol Spindel, who wrote "Dancing at Halftime," a book that explored native mascots.

"This is such an ingrained part of American culture that it's very hard to get people to question it," says Spindel, a professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where the official symbol used to be Chief Illiniwek. He was the subject of debate for decades and made his last appearance in 2007 under the threat of NCAA sanctions.

But five years later, there are still some who want Illiniwek back. A nonbinding student referendum held just weeks ago strongly favored making him the official mascot again.

Spindel concluded in her book that mascots such as Chief Illiniwek were a reflection not of native people but of those who invented them.

"If we do a census of the population in our collective imagination, imaginary Indians are one of the largest demographic groups," Spindel writes in her book.

"They dance, they drum, they go on the warpath; they are always young men who wear trailing feather bonnets. Symbolic servants, they serve as mascots and metaphors. We rely on these images to anchor us to the land and verify our account of our own past. But as these Indians exist only in our own imaginations, they provide a solipsistic connection and leave us, ultimately, untethered and rootless."

At 67, Harjo believes she has made strides in her struggle to do away with racial stereotypes but says Native Americans have a long way to go.

"Because we as Indians, we don't have the numbers," she says, referring to the dwindling population. The latest census listed 2.9 million people as American Indian and Alaska Native.

"So we don't pose a threat," she says. "If we organized a march, the numbers would be so small. We've done it school by school. State by state."

Harjo knows if the powerful Washington football team is forced to discard its name, then everyone else will follow. But for now, she takes pride in small victories.

Just a few weeks ago, a high school in Cooperstown, New York, decided to retire its R-word mascot.

C.J. Hebert, superintendent for the Cooperstown Central School District, said students approached him regarding their discomfort with the mascot that had been around for decades.

“I do think that times change and perspectives change, and certainly it’s historically a time for us to reconsider what the name is,” Hebert said.

That’s a statement that makes Harjo feel her campaign has been worthwhile.

*Tell us what you think about Native American names and mascots below.*

## **comments**

### **• Donna**

Mike I would have to say "out of respect". I proudly graduated from Atchison High School located in Atchison, KS in 1983. Our school mascot is an Indian Chief. Our teams are know as The Atchison Redmen (the Jr. High's is a Brave). NEVER in the history of our school has anyone complained or even thought of it as being racist. Atchison is small town in NE KS. We have Native Indians that live here in town, on reservations, and in smaller towns further in the country. No one has ever said they were offended. If you go to Atchison, you will hear only pride in the voices of the people there when they talk about the Atchison Redmen. Well, that's if they're not having a losing season. I proudly continue to show pride in my high school mascot. I'm an Atchison High Redman till I die.

April 9, 2013 at 4:25 pm | [Report abuse](#) |

### **• Don Black**

Mike, I challenge you to use the term "Redskins" in a sentence in a way that is honorific and doesn't sound like a racial slur.

It's a racial slur pure and simple, nothing honorific about it.

April 10, 2013 at 10:40 am | [Report abuse](#) |

# 'Redmen' name and logo history at Bedford Road Collegiate

Saskatoon Public School Board Trustees vote eight to two to change the name

Reported by **Kelly Malone**

First Posted: Mar 5, 2014 7:03am | Last Updated: Mar 5, 2014 7:32am

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The Saskatoon public school board voted to change the name and logo of the Bedford Road Collegiate Redmen.

In a packed room at the Board of Education meeting on Tuesday night the sports team name which has been around since the 1920s and the logo which has been around since the 1960s was voted down.

"We've come to a point in our time where things need to be changed. We are not really changing the history of the school but an ingredient of the recipe," explained Trustee Vernon Linklater during the meeting.

"Now we recognize the ingredient is not important enough for the recipe.... We live in 2014 I think it is about time we do retire the name and logo."

[The original presentation to the board came on February 4.](#) Trustees explained that since then, they had been researching and talking with people invested in the change.

"I think it has been a good process to go through and to have consultations with the many groups we have," said Trustee Holly Kelleher adding that she had also received numerous emails, calls, and letters.

"The people who I have spoken to who are in favour of keeping the name and logo, it really comes from a sense of pride that they have for the school and the blood sweat and tears that they have put into the sports... I think that that needs to be honoured and I don't think that those feelings will be changed by changing the name and logo.

With a final vote of eight in favour of change and two against not all trustees were on board.

Trustee Kevin Waugh argued against the change after he explained that the origin of the name was not rooted in indigenous issues. He also added that his decision came from a discussion that he had with the public schools' First Nations adviser Darlene Speidel.

"(She said) the logo has actually drawn students in to accept the school of Bedford Road for its culture as it is today. That was a big statement for me from our elder," Waugh explained.

"As a group that came here just... 28 short days ago I do wonder if we are making a decision in haste."

In the end it was only Waugh and Trustee Donna Banks who voted against the change.

## **Public response to the Redmen name change**

The boardroom erupted in cheers after the motion passed to change the name. One of the loudest celebrations came from former Bedford and current Oskayak High School Student Andre Bear.

"It's an awesome step and the Saskatoon public school division is going to be a great leader in this. A lot of people will hopefully follow and realize what is socially accepted racism and how can we change and provide diverse and modern education for all people," he said.

Bear along with Dr. Alex Wilson, the Academic Director of the Aboriginal Education Research Centre at the Department of Educational Foundation at the University of Saskatchewan made the initial presentation to the board last month.

"I think that they realized that the mascot and the name are archaic and that that reflects on the school board. If they didn't change it then it would be like making a stance that we are not a progressive city, not a progressive school board, and that education isn't about moving forward and changing," explained Wilson.

"I think when they said it's been only 28 days, it's not been 28 days it's been decades and decades... It's been 28 days since it's been officially an agenda item for them."

Wilson said that the mascot issue is just one of many that Aboriginal people face in the process of undoing racism within the educational system, but it is still worth celebrating.

"We always need to acknowledge when advancements are made and acknowledge the hard work that people have done, the school board for doing the work, and all for these young people here," she said with a beaming smile.

"These young people who went to that school and were afraid to speak at the time and now have been able to come up and speak, I am so proud to know them."

One of those people is Bedford alumni Erica Lee. She has been publicly working to change the name for nearly three years.

"I am so thrilled that the school board chose to make this decision and I think that it shows that they are ready to turn over a new leaf with relations to First Nations People and students," she said.

"It still hasn't hit me I think because we have been working on this for the past three years and before that people have been working on it for decades. To have it at this moment is amazing... I think that the fact that this name and logo is changed now it will give (students) a chance to feel real pride in their school that isn't rooted in something that is a stereotype."

It was not only cheers of elation in the room. Many people who had attended and voiced their disapproval of the change were visibly disappointed.



*Adam Lacoursiere was among those opposed to changing the Redmen team name.*

"Personally I feel it's a victory for fear. As long as we care about this stuff we will keep being divided over this," explained Adam Lacoursiere who went to Bedford and graduated in 2009.

"This is going to create division, I think that's obvious. I think we all know that and I think that the sooner that we are all equal and are all the same thing then there won't be any division any more."

Lacoursiere said that he felt it was a step backwards.

"If we keep caring about racism, racism will keep existing," he said.

The school board has said that it will cover costs associated with the change.

### **Other teams faced with same decision**

The Bedford Road Redmen are just the latest in a series of teams across North America to experience a name change, or at the very least come under pressure to do so.

St. John's University in New York State used the name Redmen for 16 different varsity teams until the mid 1990's. They changed their name to the Red Storm because of public pressure and complaints.

In Ontario, the Nepean Redskins changed their name after 35 years. It was deemed "offensive" and divisive to the community. They will now be called the Nepean Eagles.

In the NFL, the Washington Redskins have resisted a name change for years, despite mounting public pressure.

The discussion in Saskatoon has now lead the Balfour Redmen in Regina to review their name as well.

<http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2013/03/redskins-redmen-racism/>

[Sports](#) | March 25th, 2013

Redskins, Redmen, racism?

A history of troubling team names

Written by [Queen Arsem-O'Malley](#) | Visual by Alice Shen

Shakespeare's Romeo was pretty convinced that "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." The Washington Redskins – Washington, D.C.'s team in the National Football League – would disagree with that sentiment. Clearly, Romeo didn't have \$1.6 billion invested in that rose.

The Redskins, which have been named as such since 1937, have a logo consisting of a profile of a stereotyped Native man, with reddish-brown skin and a feather sticking out of his head. The team's name and associated logos have spent years as a topic of discussion about disparaging representation of Native peoples. The team is not alone in their heavily-debated position: teams like the Cleveland Indians (which features a similar logo of a grinning, bright red face with a feather in its hair) have also been targeted by campaigns to clean up their brand. The Indians have been the focus of protests for years; an April 2012 article in the *Plain Dealer* explains the twenty-year history of annual protests, organized by the Cleveland American Indian Movement (AIM) at Indians home games.

Professional teams have largely been resistant to change, for obvious (financial) reasons. Polls organized by groups like *Sports Illustrated* have attempted to gauge how Native communities feel about the name and

logo, with results that often claim that few are offended – a claim that is disputed by decades of activism and clouded by questionable sample sizes and methodology.

Huge numbers of fans have complained that names like the Redskins' are not racist, offensive, or problematic. The idea that language – no matter how ingrained that language is in our lexicon or brand names – is isolated from political implications is naïve and dangerous. One of the Redskins' arguments in their own defence is that high school and college teams all over the country share the name, and that to change the team is to affect all of its derivatives. The argument falls flat in the face of a long list of amateur teams who have changed their names in the past, and the recent vote by students at a New York high school to change their team name from 'Redskins'.

At McGill, the university's sports teams are known as Redmen and Martlets (men's teams are the Redmen, while women's are the Martlets). In past years, students and members of the university community have expressed concern about potentially problematic origins of the name 'Redmen'.

A media guide released by McGill Athletics addresses the origin of the name, quoting McGill historian Stanley Frost. "A look into the history of the nickname 'Redmen' reveals that it was first used in 1927 and was originally written as two words (i.e. 'Red Men'), in reference to the red school colours and red jerseys worn by McGill teams," the guide reads. It goes on to explain that Frost draws the connection between the nickname 'Red Men' being used for ancient Celts due to their hair colour, and the Scottish heritage of McGill founder James McGill. (A similar explanation was used by the University of Massachusetts, which argued that the origin of its teams' name 'Redmen' was jersey colour. In 1972, UMass changed its teams' name to the Minutemen.)

Earl Zukerman, communications officer for Athletics & Recreation, explained the history of McGill team names. He attributed the start of the nickname 'Red Men' to media outlets in the 1920s. "Papers didn't have a lot of room in their headlines, so they came up with nicknames," Zukerman said in an interview with *The Daily*. He said that he was unsure when McGill officially adopted the name.

A quick search will turn up the *Montreal Gazette's* reports on the 'McGill Indians' in the 1950s. Zukerman said that the media attached the name to junior varsity teams, back when McGill had senior varsity, junior varsity, and intermediate teams. Around 1970, in a funding crisis, McGill "stopped all funding for athletics," Zukerman explained. When that happened, junior varsity teams were cut, effectively ending the use of the name.

It's a somewhat convoluted history, complicated further by logos that Athletics has tried to separate from the names. A text by Zukerman, originally posted on a former incarnation of the McGill Athletics website, explains that, "of the 48 varsity sports teams at McGill, only football and hockey have for a brief period of time, used an aboriginal symbol as part of their playing uniform." The text explains that a 1992 inquiry by the McGill Athletics Board in 1992 decided to remove the logo that had been in place since 1982 – which is described just as "an aboriginal logo" – because it had "nothing to do with the origins of the team name." The 1992 decision by McGill was a positive step toward recognizing the impact of culturally insensitive team names which may someday extend to the professional ranks; however, the refusal by McGill to address the problems with the name 'Red Men' – regardless of what they claim its origins to be – shows that we still have a long way to go.

<http://www.mascotdb.com/displaymatches.php?mascot=Redmen#.U049Rqh97Pk>

Search results for Redmen mascots

**Your search produced 32 results. Results 1 through 32 shown here.**

[Atchison Redmen](#)

[Bellevue Redmen](#)

[Brantford Redmen](#)

[Brantford Redmen](#)

[Bucyrus Redmen](#)

[Cainsville Redmen](#)

[Carthage College Redmen](#)

[Cedar Redmen](#)

[East Islip Redmen](#)

[Estelline Redmen](#)

[Fostoria Redmen](#)

[Gale-Ettrick-Trempealeau Redmen](#)

[Huntsville Redmen](#)

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[Marquette Redmen](#)

[Moore Redmen](#)

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[Rib Lake Redmen](#)

[Rib Lake-Prentice Redmen](#)

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[University of Rio Grande Redmen](#)

[Wilson Redmen](#)

[Woonsocket Redmen](#)

[http://cjonline.com/stories/121700/kan\\_mascots.shtml](http://cjonline.com/stories/121700/kan_mascots.shtml)

# American Indian mascots top list in KS

**Posted:** Sunday, December 17, 2000

By By MATT MOLINE

Special to The Capital-Journal

American Indian mascots are expected to continue generating school spirit across Kansas, despite a decision last week to retire the controversial Redskins nickname at one northeast Kansas high school.

Board members of Hiawatha Unified School District 415 voted 4-3 on Monday to discontinue use of the high school's American Indian mascot at the end of this school year, ending a six-decade tradition at the Brown County school.

The decision was the first involving a Kansas high school since the American Indian-related symbols became the object of renewed national controversy about a decade ago.

American Indian mascots at Kansas high schools

Andale Indians

Argonia Red Raiders

Atchison Redmen

Bazine Indians

Bern Indians

Bonner Springs Braves

Clearwater Indians

Council Grove Braves

Grinnell Warriors

Hays Indians

Hoxie Indians

Kiowa-South Barber Chieftains

Larned Indians

Leavenworth-Immaculata Raiders

Leoti Indians

Liberal Redskins

Little River Redskins

Manhattan Indians

Marion-Florence Warriors

Medicine Lodge Indians

Miltonvale Southern Cloud Warriors

Osage City Indians

Oswego Indians

Peabody Warriors

Pomona Indians

Powhattan Kickapoo National Warriors

St. Francis Indians

St. Paul Indians

Satanta Indians

Shawnee Mission North Indians

Smith Center Redmen

Tonganoxie Chieftains

Wamego Red Raiders

Wichita North Redskins

Across the state, 34 Kansas high schools employ an American Indian-style nickname to identify athletic teams, ranging from Redmen to Warriors to Raiders. That theme tops mascots.

Despite the popularity of school-related American Indian nicknames, high school principals in northeast Kansas reported last week on efforts to eliminate potentially offensive aspects of mascot use.

At Leavenworth's Immaculata High School, a costumed student-mascot was retired two years ago, although athletic teams' Red Raider nickname remains, principal Mike Connelly said.

"About every two or three years, we'll have an 'ugly' mascot, and people have complained more about the looks of it than anything else," said Connelly, a 20-year veteran at the school. "The most recent mascot wasn't a handsome Indian -- an Indian head with a big nose."

By eliminating the live mascot, formerly a fixture at football and basketball games, the school will save about \$1,500 per costume, Connelly said.

"We don't want anything negative to reference the nickname," Connelly said. "You just want it to be respectful of people, and that's what we've always tried to do."

At Manhattan High School, a costumed Indian warrior mascot was banished from the sidelines at MHS football games in 1994, along with the so-called Tomahawk Chop, a wildly popular spectator activity that has been described by some Indian activists as demeaning.

"We don't allow drums to be played, which might lead to a cheer, which might have something to do with a Tomahawk Chop," said MHS principal Sylvester Benson. "I always feel that the one thing we do is to have pride in the Indians, and I get a lot of compliments not only from our students but from Native Americans."

Bern High School principal Brad Butler said the Hiawatha mascot issue might have far-reaching implications for other Kansas high schools. The Nemaha County school's athletic teams have been known as Indians since the 1920s.

"In our last report to the board, I've told them it might come up, here or anywhere," Butler said. "Our students have had discussions about mascots in the government class. It would also have other implications -- like buying new team uniforms, and we've got Indian pictures and logs all over the place."

Last month, Joni Tucker-Nisbeth, a Hutchinson member of the American Indian Movement Kansas Support Group, filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice against Little River USD 444, alleging that the continued use of the Redskins nickname and logo at the district's high school has perpetuated a derogatory image of American Indians.

<http://www.kansascity.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/midwest-voices/article1179173.html>

# Hampton Stevens: Kansas City Chiefs should lead the way and take a new name

By HAMPTON STEVENS

Midwest Voices

08/08/2014 3:30 PM

Kansas City's NFL franchise should change its name. It should do it now, before the Washington Redskins are forced to change.

The team should change names because it will make the ownership and city look progressive. The franchise should do it because, incidentally, it'll make money for the team. But mostly the Chiefs should change its name because it's the right thing to do.

The name "Chiefs" is offensive. Granted, it isn't as offensive as "Redskins" or Chief Wahoo, the Cleveland Indians' grinning mascot. But, really, is "least offensive stereotype" where we want to set the bar?

We can do better. The "Chiefs" moniker, along with the Arrowhead logo and tomahawk chop, are blatant appropriations of Native American imagery for the purpose of making money. Worse yet, that Native American theme encourages the truly embarrassing spectacle of fans coming to games in fake headdress and warpaint. That's not only offensive, it's tacky — exactly the same as white folks putting on blackface.

Yes, the Chiefs are named in honor of a former mayor, "Chief" H. Roe Bartle. But Bartle got that nickname after founding the Tribe of Mic-O-Say — a Native American-based honor society in the Boy Scouts of America. In other words, more minstrel show-like appropriation of Native American imagery.

Frankly, the fierce resistance to team name changes is baffling. As Jerry Seinfeld famously said, sports fans are basically rooting for laundry. For baseball fans in Boston and Chicago, that's literally true. Their clubs are named after socks. Or, more accurately, sox.

Mascots simply aren't why we care about our teams. What matters is how the players represent the city. Rest assured, Jamal Charles breaking free for touchdown will still be exciting no matter what logo he happens to have on his shirt.

For proof, look across the state line. Sporting KC has no appropriated imagery. It has no imagery at all. The club is simply named for the city.

Yet the Cauldron still boils on game day, and fans still buy merchandise by the truckload. Whine though they might, football fans would do the same. We would flock to the store to buy the new KC gear, meaning new revenue for the league.

People opposed to changing racist team names invariably come up with a list of objections, mostly based on nitpicking semantics and reduction to absurdity. They will note how the Pittsburgh Pirates are named for criminals on the high seas or wonder whether animal rights activists are upset by Dolphins, Bears and Tigers. They will point to all the place-names derived from Native American words, like Shawnee, Wyandotte, Kansas and Missouri, and ask whether those, too, must be eradicated from the language.

These arguments are willfully obtuse. Yes, someone afflicted by gigantism could be offended by “New York Giants.” That doesn't have the slightest impact on whether the names Chiefs, Indians, Braves and Redskins are racist. And there's a painfully clear distinction between place-names taken from tribal culture and a huge corporation like the NFL using a cartoon version of that culture to make millions of dollars.

The Redskins are already losing the right to do so. In June, the U.S. Patent and Trademark office canceled six of the team's trademarks because they are disparaging to Native Americans. The Chiefs, Braves and Indians are probably next.

Rather than buck history's tide, fighting for the right to offend Native Americans, we should embrace change. Nothing would be lost by changing “Chiefs” to something like Red Dogs or Red Shirts, and much would be gained.

Getting rid of our racist symbols and iconography would, in itself, be a powerful symbolic gesture. Doing so now, before the courts force it, would show that Kansas Citians are modern and thoughtful.

The change would make national news, bringing Kansas City into the spotlight for all the right reasons. The Hunt family would look smart and progressive compared with Dan Snyder, the self-destructively combative Redskins owner.

It would give us all an opportunity to buy some sweet, new red and gold merchandise. Most importantly, it's simply the right thing to do.

Hampton Stevens of Kansas City is a national and regional freelance writer. Reach him at [oped@kcstar.com](mailto:oped@kcstar.com).

# Video of Smithsonian Symposium on Racist Stereotypes and Native American Mascots

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_gd0QmJDhcQ&index=2&list=PL5516617CCA2D0C81](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gd0QmJDhcQ&index=2&list=PL5516617CCA2D0C81)



Racist Stereotypes and Cultural Appropriation in American Sports

<http://nmai.si.edu/connect/seminars-and-symposia/archive/>



*February 7, 2013*

Sports writers, scholars, authors, and representatives from sports organizations engaged a capacity audience with lively panel discussions on racist stereotypes and cultural appropriation in American sports. Speakers explored the mythology and psychology of sports stereotypes and mascots, and examined the retirement of "Native American" sports references and collegiate efforts to revive them despite the NCAA's policy against "hostile and abusive" nicknames and symbols. The day-long symposium ended with a spirited community conversation about the name and logo of the Washington, D.C., professional football team, with sports writers from the *Washington Post* and *USA Today*, along with eminent members of the D.C. community.

**Related resources:**

The symposium advances a movement endorsed by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in 2001 and addressed last year by the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

In 2005 the American Psychological Association (APA) called for the immediate retirement of all American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities by schools, colleges, universities, athletic teams, and organizations. [The APA's position](#) is based on a growing body of social science literature that shows the harmful effects of racial stereotyping and inaccurate racial portrayals, including the particularly harmful effects of American Indian sports mascots on the social identity development and self-esteem of American Indian young people. See also "[Of Warrior Chiefs and Indian Princesses: The Psychological Consequences of American Indian Mascots](#)," Stephanie A. Fryberg, University of Arizona; Hazel Rose Markus, Stanford University; Daphna Oyserman, The University of Michigan; Joseph M. Stone, Stanford University.

The [National Collegiate Athletic Association \(NCAA\) policy](#) limiting the use of Native American mascots, nicknames, and imagery at NCAA championships.

A broad list of resources examining the origins of Native American mascots and the history of Native American resistance to them is available on the [University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, American Indian Studies Program website](#).

"[Entities Opposing 'Indian' Sports References](#)," compiled by The Morning Star Institute, October 2009.

Kevin Gover, "[Native Mascots and other Misguided Beliefs](#)," *American Indian Magazine* (Fall 2011): 10-13.

Linda M. Waggoner, "[On Trial—The Washington R\\*dskins' Wily Mascot: Coach William 'Lone Star' Dietz](#)," *Montana, The Magazine of Western History* (Spring 2013): 24-47.

[Case No. 339242, William Henry Dietz, Investigative Case Files of the Bureau of Investigation](#). The content of this record—the case files from an FBI investigation for the 1919 trial of Dietz—is referenced in an article by Linda M. Waggoner, "[On Trial—The Washington R\\*dskins' Wily Mascot: Coach William 'Lone Star' Dietz](#)," that appeared in the Spring 2013 issue of *Montana, The Magazine of Western History*. This record has since been provided to the NMAI by Ms. Waggoner as supplementary information to the original article.

Sep 5, 2014

## [The 2,128 Native American Mascots People Aren't Talking About](#)

By [Hayley Munguia](#)

When Samuel Henry was a kid growing up in D.C. in the late 1950s, he and his friends were devoted Washington Redskins fans — they had the jerseys and knew the lore. And as the lore had it, the “reddish-brown tint” of paint on the team’s downtown D.C. headquarters came from the blood of Native Americans. “When I was a kid, me and my friends, we really thought that they had captured and killed Native Americans and pasted them all over the building,” Henry said. “We were just kids, we didn’t know any better. But we really, honestly believed that.”

Now, almost 60 years later, the Redskins are enmeshed in a debate about whether their name is a racist epithet and should be changed. Advocates for keeping the name reference its origins: In 1937, owner George Preston Marshall changed the team name from the Braves to the Redskins. Marshall said the change was in honor of the head coach at the time, William Henry Dietz, who claimed to be part Sioux (although that claim is [suspect](#)). Critics including Henry say its origins are irrelevant and that the name is [racist and demeaning](#). “I’d love to see a boycott of all things Redskins,” he said.

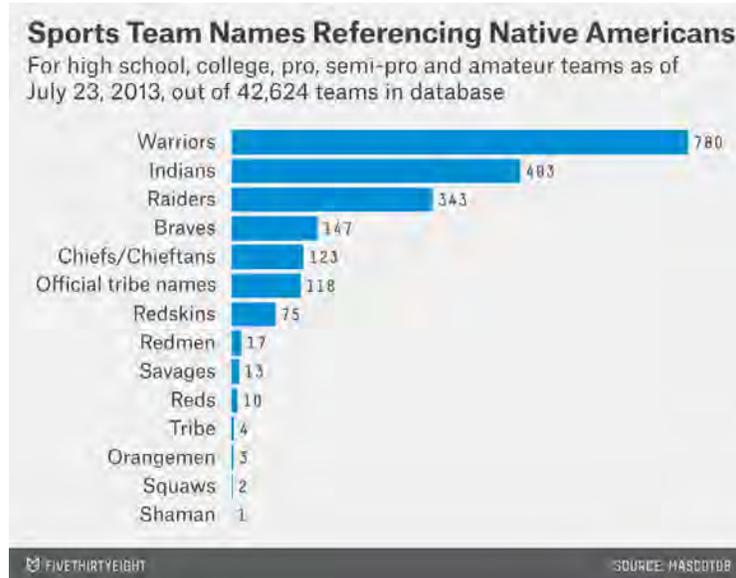
Dan Snyder, the current owner, purchased the team in 1999, when it was fighting its first legal battle over the name. The lawsuits have continued, and earlier this year, the Trademark Trials and Appeal Board [canceled the franchise trademark](#) because “a substantial composite of Native Americans found the term Redskins to be disparaging.” Snyder has faced mounting pressure to change the name, even from [President Obama](#) and [George Preston Marshall’s granddaughter](#). But Snyder plans to appeal the trademark decision and says he will “NEVER” change the name. Polling suggests Snyder has the backing to ignore the calls; most [NFL fans](#) (and [Redskins fans](#) in particular) oppose a name change.

What’s considered an outrage in the NFL is embraced or at least tolerated all over the country. While we’ve been consumed by the debate about the Washington Redskins, we’ve overlooked thousands of team names and mascots depicting Native Americans, often stereotypically. These teams are not feeling the kind of pressure that Snyder is. To understand the Washington Redskins, we have to understand the Esteline Redmen, the Natick Redmen, and the Molalla Indians, too.

Terry Borning, the proprietor of [MascotDB](#), has kept a database of the nation’s mascots since 2006. He gathers his data from a variety of sources, including state high school athletic associations, websites and local newspapers. Borning’s database doesn’t have every high school, college and pro team in the country, but it does have 42,624 of them. Looking at MascotDB is as close as we can get to understanding how prevalent Native American team names and mascots are across the country.

“There were a lot of interesting mascots where I lived growing up,” Borning said. “But those have mostly fallen by the wayside. Some of those things of the past were definitely offensive, but also more interesting than the generic mascots we have now.”

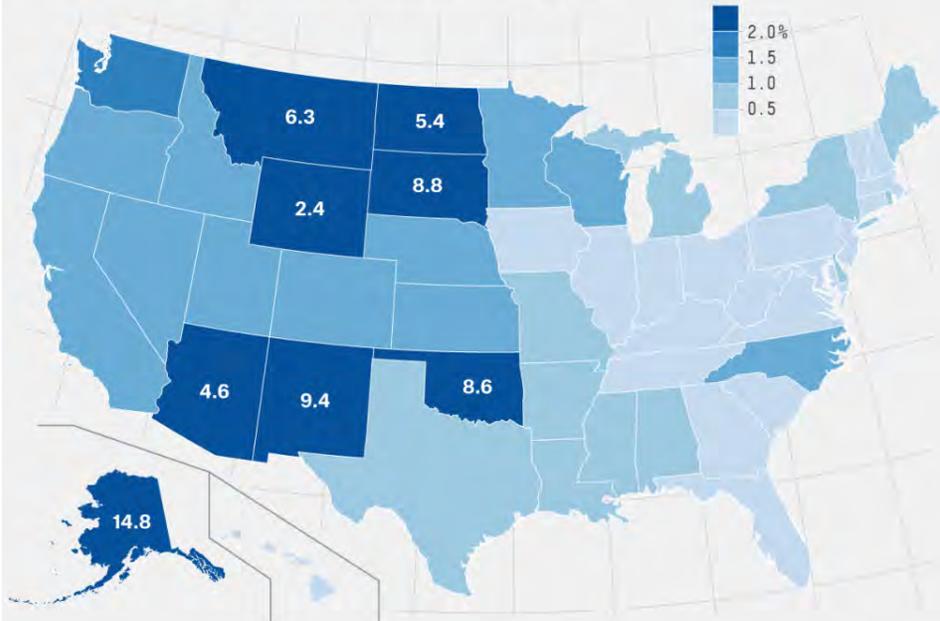
I searched the database and found 2,129 sports teams that reference Braves, Chiefs, Indians, Orangemen, Raiders, Redmen, Reds, Redskins, Savages, Squaws, Tribe and Warriors, as well as tribe names such as Apaches, Arapahoe, Aztecs, Cherokees, Chickasaws, Chinooks, Chippewas, Choctaws, Comanches, Eskimos, Mohawks, Mohicans, Seminoles, Sioux and Utes. (Not all teams with the names “Raiders” and “Warriors” are referencing Native Americans, but we spot-checked 20 schools with each name and a majority of each did.)



Some 92 percent of those 2,129 team names belong to high schools (the rest were college, semi-pro, pro and amateur league teams). Of all the active high schools in the database, 8.2 percent have Native American team names.

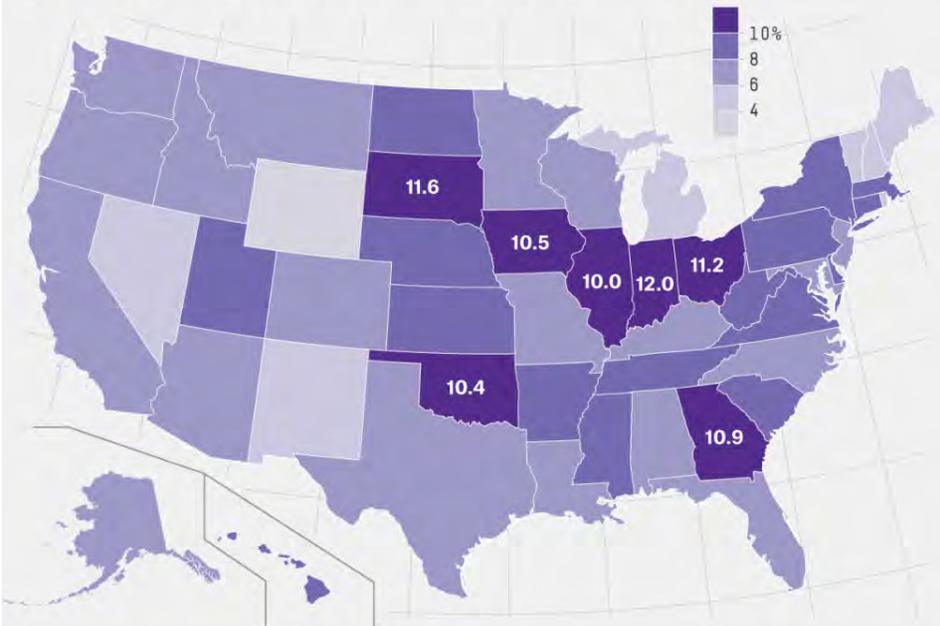
## Where Native Americans Live ...

Native American share of the population, 2010



## ... And Where High School Mascots Reference Them

Percentage of high schools with Native American mascots



REUBEN FISCHER-BAUM

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS, MASCOTDB

I reached out to about a dozen of those high schools, and most didn't want to comment on a controversy that hadn't yet arrived. But the conversations I did have suggested that the way communities regard their teams' Native American names and mascots depends on the makeup of the communities themselves.

Estelline High, home of the Redmen, is located in a small town in South Dakota, 24 miles west of the Minnesota border. South Dakota has the third-largest Native American population share in the country, but Estelline hasn't seen the kinds of protests directed at the Washington Redskins. The town has experienced little, if any, controversy over the Redmen name.

The mascot dates back to sometime between 1915 and 1920, when a local newspaper referred to the Estelline athletic team by the color of its uniforms — “the men in red.” The name wasn't officially adopted, but the team soon became known by its unofficial moniker, the Redmen. According to Estelline superintendent and high school principal Patrick Kraning, the association with Native Americans didn't come until around 1930. Estelline followed with its own depiction of a “Redman” as a stereotype of a Native American chief wearing a headdress. Events such as the annual naming of a “Moon Princess” and “Big Chief” at homecoming became part of the tradition.

“There's been very little controversy over the team name,” Kraning said. “In the '90s there was some discussion about changing the name for a series of schools [throughout southeastern South Dakota] that still referred to themselves as 'Redmen.' But in the end, a lot of us — Estelline included — decided to keep the name and just keep away from any Native American imagery associated with it.”

Since then, the only symbol associated with the Estelline Redmen is a [logo](#) of an E with two feathers attached. Kraning believes that this change, combined with the fact that Estelline doesn't have a significant Native American population, is why there hasn't been much local debate on the topic.

“There's a community feeling that since the origin of the nickname was not a Native American reference, there's not a desire for change,” he said. “If there were a discussion, most people would probably view it as going against 80 or 90 years of tradition.”

Natick, Massachusetts, did go against tradition. In 2007, the school board dropped its high school mascot — also the “Redmen” — after an alumna of Native American descent came to the board and said she was offended by the activities surrounding the team she had experienced at Natick High School. The historian for the local Nipmuc tribe told me that the logo and mascot used by the school depicted a “stereotypical northern Native with a headdress,” but that depiction bore no resemblance to the actual indigenous people who lived in the Natick area. Nevertheless, protest groups soon sprouted up, claiming that the Natick Redmen honored Native Americans and were an important tradition.

Soon after the change, school board meetings and a town-wide referendum turned the issue into a much broader discussion. The main critique came from the [Redmen Forever Committee](#), a self-described grassroots effort that sought to influence the non-binding referendum. “We added a question to the referendum asking if townspeople wanted the Redmen name restored,” said Erich Thalheimer, co-founder of the Redmen Forever Committee. “It won overwhelmingly, but the school committee didn't abide by the town's wishes.”

“If it were decided by popular vote, we would have the name,” said Anne Blanchard, a member of the Natick School Board. “But we had to take into account our nondiscrimination policy, as well as minority and majority interests.”

The Redmen Forever Committee says it won't give up the fight. “We chose the name of our committee very intentionally, very purposefully,” Thalheimer said. “This is our town. We're going to live here until we die. We will forever try to re-establish the Redmen name.”

While the controversy in Natick stemmed from a decision that affected one school, several states have taken a grievance from a single school and used it to forbid Native American mascots. One of the more sweeping bans so far was implemented with the help of Samuel Henry, the man who grew up earnestly believing that the Washington Redskins had painted their downtown D.C. headquarters with the blood of

Native Americans. Henry is currently the chair of Oregon's Board of Education, which instituted a statewide ban on Native American mascots and team names in 2012.

The story goes back to 2006, when Che Butler, a member of the Siletz tribe and a student at Taft High School, raised the issue before the board. Butler said he was offended by the stereotypical and inauthentic manner in which the mascot of a rival school, the Molalla Indians, portrayed Native Americans. He and fellow Taft student Luhui Whitebear, a member of the Coastal Band of the Chumash Tribe, made a [presentation](#) at a board meeting asking for a statewide ban on mascots that "misrepresent" Native people, who instead "should be represented with true honor and respect."

According to Henry, the board agreed that "having Native American mascots did not seem like a good idea," but decided to defer the decision.

The grievance was taken up again six years later, when the director of public instruction decided to put it back on the board's agenda. This time around, after some member turnover, the board agreed to ask its chief attorney to draft a proposal for a ban on the use of Native American mascots in public schools. The only dissenting vote came from a woman who claimed that it was too selective, and that devils and saints should be banned as well.

As in Natick, one of the major arguments against the ban came from people who said that the mascots didn't disparage Native Americans, but honored them. Many of these opponents knew little of Native American culture, Henry said. "I asked one of the students who made that argument what the name of the local Native American tribe was, and she didn't know," he said. "To me, that indicated that her reliance on saying that they were honoring Native Americans — that the support for that argument was pretty thin at best."

For high schools, a statewide ban is about as sweeping as it gets. Graduate to the next level, though, and schools have broader authorities to answer to. In 2005, the NCAA implemented its own de facto ban<sup>1</sup> on Native American mascots for all NCAA colleges.<sup>2</sup> The ban focused on a specific list of schools whose mascots were deemed "hostile or abusive," and precluded them from participating in postseason play if those nicknames or mascots appeared on any team uniforms or clothing.

The NCAA had already taken a stand on a similar issue: the use of Confederate flags. In 2001, the organization banned arenas in South Carolina and Mississippi from hosting postseason championships because the Confederate flag flew proudly on their statehouse grounds. After that decision, the president of St. Cloud State University in Minnesota asked the NCAA to impose a ban on Native American mascots.

The NCAA [called on 18 schools](#) (out of 1,046 total member schools at the time, or 1.7 percent) to drop their mascots.

Not all of the targeted schools felt that their nicknames or mascots were "hostile or abusive," and the ban was followed by a surge of criticism.

"I must have gotten 2,000 emails from people just complaining about it," the NCAA's executive committee chairperson at the time, Walter Harrison, said. Even almost 10 years later, he still remembers one persistent caller. "He, or she, I don't know if it was a man or a woman, would call my office phone at four in the morning and just play their school's chant until the answering machine cut off," he said.

But the more serious backlash came in the form of appeals. One came from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and its Fighting Illini. The Fighting Illini were portrayed at halftime performances by a student dressed in full Lakota regalia, including face paint and a headdress. He went by the name "Chief Illiniwek," and became the focus of the university's fight against the ban.

Controversy surrounding Chief Illiniwek predated the NCAA’s ruling by [decades](#). The university’s board of trustees had been quietly in the process of considering a potential mascot change since 2001, and the publicity surrounding the nationwide ban reignited already-existing tension among students and alumni. Lawrence Eppley, who was the chair of the university’s board of trustees at the time, said he received hundreds of comments from foundations and alumni organizations threatening to withhold donations. He and the rest of the board figured the only option was to strike a compromise to keep both sides — passionate students and alumni and the NCAA — happy.

Through its appeal, the school was allowed to keep its team name, but not its mascot. Chief Illiniwek portrayers, who had been a part of an official student organization called the Council of Chiefs, could continue the tradition as long as the group no longer had any official affiliation with the university. “One of the things that made it tough to retire it was making sure the fans knew that, if you loved the chief, that was nothing to feel guilty about,” Eppley said. “It’s just that times change, and there’s not much we can do about that.”

Ivan Dozier, who currently portrays Chief Illiniwek, said that officially retiring the mascot was the wrong way for the university to respond. He believes that Native American mascots are a way to reach and educate an audience that wouldn’t normally be knowledgeable about Native American culture or history. “What concerns me is if you eliminate all references to Native American culture, people aren’t asking questions anymore,” he said. “Sports fans here are the vocal majority. They’re the ones who need this information the most, and now they have no way to go about getting it.”

Eight of the schools on the NCAA’s list secured vocal support from local Native American tribes to successfully appeal and retain their team names and mascots. Eight others have changed their names and one dropped the use of a mascot entirely. Carthage College changed its team name from the Redmen to the Red Men and dropped all Native American imagery, which satisfied the NCAA’s requirements.

COLLEGE	NICKNAME PRE-BAN	CURRENT NICKNAME
Alcorn State University	Braves	Braves
Arkansas State University	Indians	Red Wolves
Bradley University	Braves	Braves
Carthage College	Redmen	Red Men
Catawba College	Indians	Indians
Central Michigan University	Chippewas	Chippewas
Chowan College	Braves	Hawks
Florida State University	Seminoles	Seminoles
Indiana University of Pennsylvania	Indians	Crimson Hawks
McMurry University	Indians	War Hawks
Midwestern State University	Indians	Mustangs
Mississippi College	Choctaws	Choctaws
Newberry College	Indians	Wolves
Southeastern Oklahoma State University	Savages	Savage Storm
University of Illinois-Champaign	Illini	Illini
University of Louisiana-Monroe	Indians	Warhawks
University of North Dakota	Fighting Sioux	None
University of Utah	Utes	Utes

Turning the Washington Redskins into the Red Skins is unlikely to appease the team's critics, though. Given that the name [is racist by definition](#) and no tribe has come out in support of Snyder, it probably wouldn't pass the NCAA's grounds for appeal, and it certainly doesn't pass in the court of Native American [opinion](#).

But even if the Redskins became the Red Skins or the Red Flyers or the Red Snyders, there would still be thousands of other teams that reference Native American imagery. Whatever happens with the Redskins, there will still be the Estelline Redmen, Chief Illiniwek, and the [West Texas](#) Comanches, each upholding the questionable legacy of Native American sports names.

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/01/26/seeking-250-reward-settlers-hunted-redskin-scalps-during-extermination-effort-158865>

A newly discovered news clip reveals the brutal history of the word 'redskin' in the United States.

## Seeking \$250 Reward, Settlers Hunted For 'Redskin Scalps' During Extermination Effort

[Simon Moya-Smith](#)

1/26/15

A news story, dated October 9, 1885, reveals further evidence that the word 'redskin' was not historically spoken in reverence for Native Americans, but instead as an identifier during extermination efforts.

**The clip, published by the *Atchison Daily Champion* in Atchison, Kansas,** tells of settlers in Arizona fanning out across the state to "hunt for redskins, with a view of obtaining their scalps." Scalps taken from the bodies of dead Indians were valued at \$250, according to the report.

The campaign was allegedly launched in an effort to end the Apache Wars – a period between the mid to late 19th century when the Apache resisted American encroachment and the imposed reservation system.

"It is believed that several New Mexican cities and counties will adopt this plan of exterminating the savages," the report reads.

Arizona resident Bobby Wilson, Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota, told *ICTMN* that the word 'redskin' is unambiguously associated with the killing of Native Americans.

"People make this crazy argument that 'redskin' is some kind of Indian term, but when you take a look at something like this, 'redskin' is clearly referring to a bounty [on] dead human [beings]," he said.

Wilson, who's also a member of the comedy-sketch troupe the [1491s](#), said media has perpetuated the image and idea that scalps were taken solely from the bodies of dead Native American males.

"It's this idea that's been painted in media that people who were doing all the fighting and dying were Indian men," he said. "The matter of the fact was that whole families were being massacred – male, female, old, young – soldiers were going in and slaughtering countless human beings."

The *Atchison Daily Champion* clip is not the first of its kind to be unearthed in recent years. In November 2013, Dallas Goldtooth, Dakota, and also of the 1491s, [discovered](#) a news clipping dated 1863 where the advertisement stated the "reward for dead Indians has been increased to \$200 for every red-skin sent to Purgatory."

"It was only five generations ago that a white man could get money for one of my grandfather's scalps," wrote Goldtooth on a Facebook post as reported by *ICTMN* editor Rachael Johnson.

The discovery of the news clip comes days after the Change the Mascot campaign [released a new YouTube video](#) in protest of the Washington football team moniker and logo.

Last June, the U.S. Trademark Trial and Appeal Board found the word 'redskin' to be "disparaging to Native Americans" and cancelled six of the Washington football team's seven trademarks.

Team owner Dan Snyder said he will "NEVER" change the name.

*Editor's Note: The Atchison Daily Champion news clip was located during research conducted by ICTMN Culture Editor Simon Moya-Smith using Gale NewsVault at Columbia University's Butler Library in New York City.*

### **An Indian Hunt.**

DEMING, N. M., Oct. 9.—Reports are coming in from various points in Arizona that the old pioneers of the Territory, tempted by the reward of \$250 for Indian scalps made by several counties in Arizona, have started out on the hunt for redskins, with a view of obtaining their scalps. They think this is the most practicable method suggested for ever ending the Apache Indian war. The \$250 is merely incidental to the hunt. It pays for whisky and tobacco. It is believed that several New Mexican cities and counties will adopt this plan of exterminating the savages. The fight at Gallarp's ranch yesterday has thoroughly aroused Western New Mexico, and the additional troops who were forwarded from Albuquerque, and who went to the ranch, are now being held in readiness. The Indians are roaming about in small bands, and this enables them to commit crimes and escape or hide easier than when they were all together. Some killing is looked for.

# Atchison Globe Online Poll

From 4/14/2014

## Saving history: St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

Updated: April 11 | Comments

## Websites bleeding information due to bug

Updated: April 11 | Comments

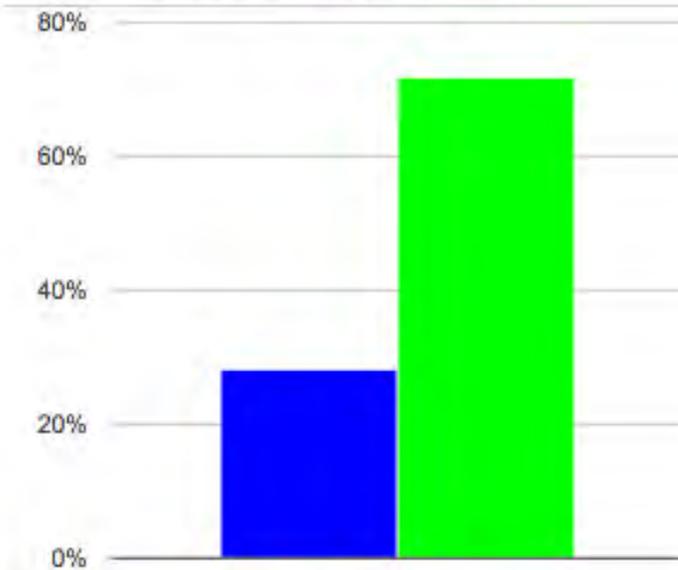
## MGPI CEO search continues

Updated: April 11 | Comments

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### ONLINE POLL

Do you think the Atchison Redmen mascot name and logo are inappropriate?



**Yes, it's insensitive and should be changed.** 28%

**No, I don't like disrupting tradition.** 72%

**You voted:** Yes, it's insensitive and should be changed.

## Roosevelt has a purp

### PHOTO GALLERIES



### VOICES

## We need governmen

posted: April 14 | Comments

## Good and bad days,

Updated: April 11 | Comments

## Sacred Heart Thrift S expensive

<http://bigstory.ap.org/899206bfd85a44e9bc1784f029b36a7b>

# Go! Fight! Hamsters! Amherst College closes in on new mascot

Jan. 10, 2017 10:21 AM EST

AMHERST, Mass. (AP) — Students and alumni at Amherst College could soon be rooting for the Hamsters.

Hamsters was among the most popular nicknames submitted to a [committee](#) put together to come up with a new athletic mascot for the Massachusetts school. Trustees dropped Lord Jeffs last year in part because 18th century British Gen. Jeffery Amherst suggested giving smallpox-infected blankets to Native Americans.

The committee has winnowed a list of nearly 600 unique suggestions to 30 semifinalists.

Many people noted that Hamster is an anagram for Amherst. Other semifinalists include Moose, Aces, Dinosaurs, Irradiants, Fighting Poets and Mammoths.

Among the nicknames that didn't make the cut were Biddys and Purple Martins, nods to current college President Carolyn "Biddy" Martin.

The committee hopes to have five finalists for a community-wide vote in March.