

BRIEF HISTORY OF NATIVE AMERICAN MASCOTS

1969

- NA activists at Dartmouth College promote changes resulting in that school's "Indians" nickname being replaced by "Big Green."

1970

- The University of Oklahoma retires its "Little Red" mascot from the 1940s.
- Protests against the "Indians" professional baseball team's use of the "Chief Wahoo" mascot take place in Cleveland, Ohio.

1971

- Marquette University (WI) abandons its "Willie Wampum" mascot.

1972

- A petition by American Indian students at Stanford University results in that school dropping its "Indian" sports team logos.
- Dickinson State (N.D.) changes from the "Savages" to the "Blue Hawks."
- First Nations students at the University of North Dakota (UND) take steps to retire the school's "Fighting Sioux" nickname.

1979

- Syracuse University does away with its "Saltine Warrior" mascot.
- St. Bonaventure, New York, retires its "Brown Indians" and "Brown Squaws" sports team mascots.

1988

- Public Schools in Wisconsin begin to change their American Indian related sports team logos, mascots and nicknames. As of 1998, 21 schools, almost one-third of the total using such icons, had changed so far.

1991

- The National Education Association (NEA), the largest democratic education organization of its kind in the world, passes resolutions in two consecutive years (1991/92) denouncing the use of ethnic related sports team mascots, symbols and nicknames.

1996

- Newtown High School in Sandy Hook, Connecticut drops its "Indians" nickname in favor of the "Nighthawks."

1997

- Jay Rosenstein's documentary "In Whose Honor" is aired nationally on the Public Broadcasting System TV show "Point of View." Mr. Rosenstein's film highlights Charlene Teters' efforts to eliminate the "Chief Illiniwek" mascot used by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- The Board of Education for the Los Angeles, California consolidated school district moves to eliminate "Indian" related mascots from four schools in its jurisdiction.

1998

- The American Jewish Committee approves a statement on team names, it "deplores and opposes the use of racial or ethnic stereotypes in the names or titles of business, professional, sport or their public entities when the affected group has not chosen the name itself."

1999

- The Society of Indian Psychologists of the Americans issues a position statement that receives recognition in a publication of the prestigious American Psychological Association.

2001

- The New York State Education Department calls for the retirement of institutionalized "Indian" sports team nicknames, mascots, and logos from its public schools.
- American Counseling Association passed a resolution that encouraged "its members to work toward elimination of stereotypical Native American images in institutions where they are employed."
- The Modern Language Association passes a resolution on mascots and symbols. The MLA includes over 30,000 members in the fields of English, foreign languages, and linguistics.
- The Seminole, Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Muskogee Nations, representing over 400,000 people throughout the United States, passed a resolution "to eliminate the stereotypical use of American Indian names and images as mascots in sports and other events and to provide meaningful education about real American Indian people, current American Indian issues, and, the rich variety of American Indian cultures in the U.S."
- The National Conference for Community and Justice issued a Statement in Opposition of American Indian Mascots

2002

- New Hampshire State Board of Education unanimously approved a resolution calling for local school districts to stop using American Indian sports mascots.

2003

- Joining the ranks of other newspapers that have also adopted similar guidelines the Nebraska Journal Star newspaper amends its style and, along with other related changes, will no longer print the “R-word” racial slur.
- The Telegraph-Forum, a newspaper in Central Ohio, discontinues its use of “Chief Wahoo.”

2007

- Indiana University of Pennsylvania changed its nickname from the Indians to the Crimson Hawks

2013

- The Cooperstown Central School Board of Education voted in March to remove the “R-word” mascot from its interscholastic athletic, extracurricular and academic programs. The move was prompted by a vote by the student body, asking that the mascot be changed.
- The Oneida Indian Nation was so moved by the actions of the Cooperstown students, that a \$10,000 contribution was made to help offset the cost of changing mascots.

2013

- Ten members of Congress including Tom Cole, R-Okla., and Betty McCollum, D-Minn., co-chairs of the Congressional Native American Caucus, sent a letter to Washington “R-word” owner Dan Snyder and National Football League Commissioner Roger Goodell asking them to consider changing the team’s name out of respect for the country’s native people.
- Congress introduces bill that would amend the 1946 Trademark Act and cancel any trademark that used the “R-word”
- In December the Houston Independent School District approved a policy change to ban the use of offensive or culturally insensitive mascots. The ban affects four schools within the district.

2014

- In January the U.S. Patent and Trademark office denied a company’s request to sell pork rinds with the name “Redskins” under trademark laws because the term is “a derogatory slang word.”
- In April, human rights expert and United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples James Anaya today called the Washington NFL team’s current R-word team name a “hurtful reminder of past suffering of Native American.” Oneida Indian Nation and National Congress of American Indians applauded the UN for condemning the hurtful name of Washington’s NFL team.
- In May the Oneida Indian Nation and the National Congress of American Indians praise 50 U.S. Senators for sending a letter to NFL urging change for the D.C. team’s mascot.
- In the beginning of June Civil Rights Icon and Olympian John Carlos and former Washington, D.C. NFL player Tre’ Johnson speak out against the Washington mascot, joining several other current and former NFL players speaking out against the name, including Richard Sherman and DeAngelo Hall.

Quotes:

Chimamanda Adichie - “The single story creates stereotypes and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete”

Beverly Daniel-Tatum - “Even when firsthand experience is limited by social segregation, the number and variety of images of the dominant group available through television, magazines, books, and newspapers provide [marginalized groups] with plenty of information about the dominant [culture]. However, dominant access to information about the [marginalized] is often limited to stereotypical depictions of the *other*.”

Jason A. Okonofua - “Stereotypes serve as glue, sticking otherwise unrelated behavior together to make it seem like a pattern....”

Beverly Daniel-Tatum - “The dominant group assigns roles to the subordinate that reflect the latter’s devalued status, reserving the most highly valued roles in the society for themselves... To the extent that those in the target group internalize the images that the dominant group reflects back to them, they may find it difficult to believe in their own ability.”

Why Are Stereotypes So Damaging?

They make one story become the only story; the narrative that everyone learns.

- Indigenous people having little control, or place to share our authentic voice.

Images affect all children, modeling what we are supposed to look like, act like, and do.

- The songs, dances, art, and stories that are “taught” are not our true songs, dances, art, and stories – nor, in some cases, *should* they be taught (appropriated).

They do not focus on contributions, role-models, or resistance.

- The photographer, musician, doctor, teacher, actor, politician, activist, author... is notably absent.