



"EDUCATE NOT ERADICATE"

Native American Guardian's Association
PO Box 742
Devils Lake, ND 58301 - 0742

DATE: July 15, 2020
TO: Gaston County Board of Education
FROM: Native American Guardian's Association (NAGA)
RE: South Point High School Red Raider name and image

The Native American Guardian's Association (NAGA) is thankful to the Gaston County School Board members for this invitation to have our voice heard at the next public board meeting.

NAGA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which was formed to be the voice of the "silenced majority" of American Indians whose voices have been completely ignored and censored from the debate concerning Native identity in sports and other public venues. Further, NAGA advocates for increased education about Native Americans, especially in public educational institutions, and greater recognition of Native American heritage. In our short existence, we have too many accomplishments to list in this short time but are prepared to do so at your request whenever needed.

NAGA has been active since 2014, just after the publication of the book "Aren't We Sioux Enough." This book lays bare the truth of just who is behind the movement to remove all Native American imagery from public schools and their deceitful tactics used against the American Indian and community members.

Many Americans do not even realize that American Indians are still around. NAGA is committed to keeping Native identity at the forefront of mainstream America. In addition, NAGA is lobbying state legislatures to pass resolutions in support of Native-themed public schools, citing their importance in keeping Native Americans in the public conscience.

This issue does not just affect the local tribes or your community, but all-American Indians regardless of where they live. We at NAGA are used to this wave of "intolerance" where our message cannot be countered so the opposition is left to silence us or attack the messenger, and

sadly this trend is becoming quite prevalent in the education system. We hope that in the days to come, an effort to at least hear the other side of the issue will be allowed to be presented.

What is the truth that has been denied to the community and most of the school board members?

EVERY independent poll since 1996 has consistently found 80-90% of American Indians support the continued use of Native American names and images. The only tribe to allow a full membership vote (2009) on the subject voted just over 67% in favor of the continued use of these names and images. Incidentally, this number matches to the 2002 *Sports Illustrated* results which found 90% of Native Americans overall and 67% of those on reservations supported these names and images.

A majority of U.S. states have sports teams with names based on American Indian tribes and vocabulary, along with official state and city seals carrying images of the American Indian as symbols of "Pride, Honor, and Respect," where the earliest inhabitants of this land are fittingly recognized."

What started out in the 1960s as a sincere and valid campaign to eliminate blatantly degrading, cartoonish, and otherwise stereotypical Indian sports mascots and logos has been hijacked by extremists to become what is now a damaging campaign intent on eradicating ALL Native American identity from sports and the American landscape. This movement continues to be spearheaded by a relatively small percentage of radical Indian activists aided by their allies in academia, media, government, and a variety of "grievance" groups motivated by an anti-American, "decolonization" agenda.

We would like to challenge the key assertions of this radical change movement, chief among them is the 2005 Dr. Stephanie Fryberg study which was published by the *American Psychological Association*. The study was widely criticized in the social science community for issues pertaining to gross generalization and the tactic of effectively priming the study participants to elicit a desired outcome. The conclusions of this study that Native American sports imagery may contribute to low self-esteem and even suicide among Native youth is in and of itself a humiliating stereotyping of Native Americans as psychologically fragile and weak-minded. This ludicrous assertion serves only to downplay the very many real causes of low self-esteem and suicide in Indian country which include poverty, drug abuse and alcoholism to name but a few actual contributors. Objectivity to truth suggests that if Native names and images were in any way harmful, then why would so many tribal schools uphold the very same images to represent their sports teams as the ones being eradicated elsewhere?

With little to no peer reviews for this highly biased study, Fryberg made a second attempt in 2008 in which she offers two options relative to Native American mascots. The first option is to eliminate them completely, the second option (preferred by Fryberg) is to "create, distribute, and institutionalize a broader array of social representations of American Indians." This is also the preferred solution of NAGA.

It is true that a great number of Native American organizations have come out in opposition to Native identity in sports. You must keep in mind that these organizations are led by political activists, many of whom subscribe to the same radical ideology of "decolonization." This destructive world view is

what is driving this activist movement to eliminate all Native American references from sports and mainstream America. In order to avenge the sins of the past, decolonization activists encourage exacting revenge upon current generations. One way to accomplish this is to take away your school's cherished Native American traditions.

In 2015, the *National Congress of American Indians* passed a resolution in support of decolonization along with a laundry list of other extremists' agenda items. NCAI used to be a moderate organization but its leadership has become increasingly radicalized. Ironically, one-time president of NCAI, Walter "Blackie" Wetzel was the driving force behind the current Washington Redskins logo which NCAI now calls racist. NCAI is primarily a lobbying organization that represents the legitimate interests of the very many tribes which comprise their membership.

However, tribal membership in NCAI does not automatically translate to support of their position on Native sports identity. For example, the Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma is a member of NCAI but also officially supports the Chicago Blackhawks and other Native-themed sports teams. Concerning the Chicago Blackhawks, the American Indian Center of Chicago had a relationship with the team until very recently with a change in the membership of their board. The new board ended their relationship with the team calling the name and logo they had just previously supported as now a racist stereotype.

If this does not illustrate the dirty politics behind this issue, nothing will. If your school board truly wants a pure, unvarnished rendering of Native opinion concerning your school's name and logo devoid of politics and other corrupting agendas, you will listen to the voice of Indian people over the voice of the powerful. The plan of the name change activists is to divide your community, destroy your traditions, create upheaval where none previously existed and leave you with a whopping bill to pay for rebranding while they move onto their next victim to bully into submission. They will seek to remove any sense of community pride through intimidation, false arguments, protests, and accusations of racism. After leaving communities in ruin, they offer no positive alternatives for Native American education or remembrance.

The NAGA alternative is to modify your logo, only if it makes sense to do so, but mainly to use your platform to truly remember and educate about Native Americans. We have exciting educational initiatives we encourage your school to embrace. Just last year, a truly independent government agency, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, after 3 years of testimony from both change advocates and NAGA representatives, ruled that the Neshaminy Redskins can keep their Redskins name, modify their logo to something more regionally accurate per the recommendation of NAGA, and implement Native American educational programs. In their landmark ruling, the Commission even cited the NAGA motto: "Educate, not Eradicate."

As a general rule, NAGA opposes Native American mascots but supports the respectful use of Indian names and imagery in sports and the mainstream. Further, we take the majority opinion among Native Americans that the respectful use of American Indian names and logos by sports teams is at the least not problematic, and at best a tremendous show of respect and honor to our people.

NAGA has reviewed the various versions of the Indian head logo for the South Point Red Raiders. Based on these versions of the logo, we find the logo and its symbolism to be respectful and historically accurate for the Native American tribes which settled in the Piedmont and Gaston County areas of North Carolina. Further, NAGA does not find the logo or nickname, South Point Red Raiders, to be of an offensive nature.

Educational institutions and sports teams play an important role in the preservation and promotion of American Indian legacy. Of course, having a Native theme to represent a school's athletic teams comes with a heavy responsibility to do so accurately and respectfully, with a heavy emphasis on educating about Native American history, culture, and heritage.

We strongly encourage your school board to stand with the vast majority of individual American Indian people across our nation along with the vast majority of your school's stakeholders who embrace respectful Native American remembrance and education.

NAGA's motto is to educate, not eradicate. Thank you for your consideration and please visit our website at www.nagaeducation.org.

Respectfully,

NAGA Leadership Team

Chief Redhawk Brown/Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Nation

Dee and Annette Ketchum/Delaware

Tony Henson/Cherokee

John Chaske/Dakota Sioux

Eunice Davidson/Dakota Sioux

Mark Yellowhorse Beasley/Navajo

Crystal Tso/Navajo

Jonathan Tso/Assiniboine Sioux

Mark Onewolf Yancey/Apache

Pretty Deer Eagleman/Sioux

Bill Dieckman/Kiowa



[SECONDARY SCHOOLS WITH NATIVE AMERICAN TEAM NAMES & LOGOS THAT HAVE BEEN UPHELD WITH SUPPORT FROM NAGA]

NATIVE AMERICAN GUARDIAN'S ASSOCIATION

Home History Education Preservation Endorsements Membership Donations Leadership Blog Contact

Endorsements



• Thank you, NAGA, I've enjoyed going through your Facebook page. It is inspiring to have your support to maintain our Tewksbury Redmen name & logo. The Redmen name, for me, has many meanings. We are Tewksbury, we are the Redmen. What does it mean to be a Tewksbury Redmen? To be a Tewksbury Redmen, as a resident, local sports fan, teacher student, athlete or coach you never quit. You stare adversity in the face & never back down, you drive forward toward success. Redmen have pride, passion, honor, commitment & tradition. As Redmen we support each other. We will never forget our Wamesit Indian history or our history as the town of Tewksbury. I am a first generation Redmen class of 89. My two children are being raised as Tewksbury Redmen. I have always tried to educate my kids & make sure they understood how special Tewksbury is. It is tragic that we need to fight for our namesake; however, this challenge has reinforced & strengthened the Redmen community's faith in the Redmen name. With the help of Heidi Tomasi Desisto our community has done a great thing for the Tewksbury Food Pantry. We will continue to stand proud wearing our REDMEN HERE TO STAY shirts as often as possible! I am proud of my fellow REDMEN. Thank you, Native American Guardian's Association, for your help in educating our community and stood with our community members in preserving our Redmen name and logo.

Chris Pinardi & Bob Payne

Gill Montague Regional School district, Montague Ma 01351



Forest Hills Anderson High School Redskins

• For the fifth time in the last 30 years, our High School Team name, "The Anderson Redskins" came under attack by a few Native American Activists, including Guy Jones, who has been involved in all previous attacks. With the exception of one individual who is a Native American who lives in our area, and who is actively involved with the NCAI and employed by them, no other Native American living in this area spoke out against our Redskins name. We couldn't have won our "battle" this time without the advice and support of the individuals at NAGA, specifically Tony Henson and Eunice Davidson. They gave us what we lacked – insight into the true thoughts and feelings of "rank and file" Native Americans, not activists, who live throughout the United States. Their involvement with us on our very active Facebook page, and even Tony and Eunice taking the time to travel to our community – bolstered our belief that our fight was a good and honorable one.

Thanks to NAGA and to very engaged members of our community, we remain "The Anderson Redskins".

Sue Veldkamp

Forest River Hills, Cincinnati Ohio

Let's Chat!

We'll reply as soon as we can

• Why is N.A.G.A. important? As a member of N.A.G.A. (Native American Guardian's Association) I can tell you that the many schools and communities that we have worked with and represented have benefited greatly from our presence. I personally have represented and worked with dozens of schools nationwide that were under attack from outside radical groups who were dead-set on seeing these peaceful communities become havens of division and anger. When you have these outside groups come into a small town and wreak havoc upon innocent people, there has to be someone that can stand for those who may not be able to stand for themselves.

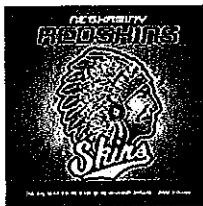
Many people in these towns are in positions that they stand to lose their jobs or worse if they publicly speak against the eradication and elimination of positive Native American imagery in schools and the such. I remember working with the town of McCloud, Oklahoma where I helped the town keep their name, the Redskins. Many people I met with were so overwhelmed by the possible loss of their name and identity to outside groups of people who didn't live in McCloud or were even from there. I was able to gain their confidence by coming to them with resources, support and the ability to take the hits where they could not. We fight for those who stand to lose the most. By doing so I was able to prevent many individuals from losing their jobs or being singled out for attacks. I watched as people cried and thanked me and our organization for being there for them and for being able to fight back. It's easy to look at a situation and make a decision without ever really considering that there is another side to the story, as many in the press tend to do. It's difficult to fight back sometimes, but we believe in what we stand for and will continue to stand behind these communities. We cannot allow the mob rule mentality to become the standard of today. Since sealing a win for this particular town, I have received countless thank you's and pourings of gratitude for being there in a very tense situation.

We need organizations like N.A.G.A. We need pushback against over the top, outlandish and downright despicable actions. This is where we find our strength and we show it proudly. I stand with N.A.G.A. and will continue to stand for communities who are unfairly attacked simply for voicing support for positive Native imagery.

Education not eradication.

Steve Peters

N.A.G.A. Education Specialist and former co-host of *The Beating Drum* podcast show



Neshaminy High School Redskins

• As the mother and supporter of a Neshaminy High School REDSKINS student, I can say with emphasis that our peaceful community was devastated when the "Not Your Mascot" hate group sponsored a student who then made racial grievance claims against our long-held honorable Native American teaching and celebratory traditions.

We requested the assistance of the Native American Guardian's Association and they went to work immediately in conducting outreach to our local community and servicing media outlets as to our region's historic and important Lenape Redskin Warrior traditions. This fact rich output bolstered our community and gave us hope and a rejuvenated pride in having the honor of being a native themed school; so NAGA also gave us the support to fight back on behalf of our honorable native traditions and teachings.

Moreover, NAGA compiled our multi-grade-level Native American education curriculum and paired it with our region's Redskin history report which was used in tandem with an official investigation into the charge of the school being "racist".

Armed with NAGA's report support, the school district did not capitulate but instead invested in an investigation. The school discovered that the claims made against the aggrieved student were actually contrived and marketed on social media by the "victim" himself, so the that case was dropped.

However, the state's office of Civil Rights (is that the office?) has continued to pursue the school district to change several of their native themed schools. To this end, NAGA has fended off the state for years now and is sending representatives to assist our schools in January 2019 during a state hearing on the topic.

Molly Brandon-Krywopusk

Neshaminy Redskins, PA

Let's Chat!

We'll reply as soon as we can



Lancaster/Conrad Redskins

- When I look back at this three years ago we are left without the Conrad Redskins, but we will ALWAYS be Conrad Redskins and never be the Red Wolves., Thank the Lord! We have made so many good friends across the United States! We must remember all that, Eunice Davidson, Andre Billeaudeaux and Brenda Piskun Christopher did for us and how hard they tried! NAGA will always be our friend and we need to support them.

NAGA gave us a new outlook at how the world is not filled with hate instead there are good people especially in Indian country that have an understanding that non-Indian communities only want to honor their people by using their names and images as strength, honor, and respect. Whomever is reading this testimony please support and help Native American Guardian's Association to educate not eradicate as their motto simply states.

Theresa Giuliani Satterfield Administrator

Community of Conrad Alumni Redskins Forever!

Wilmington, Delaware



Paw Paw Redskins High School

- As the Paw Paw Redskins High School name and image and the community came under assault by outsiders, we became desperate as we stood alone till NAGA came to our aid with letters of support for our community. Immediately NAGA and its members came under attack by this outside group and school board members who were on the verge of jettisoning over 80 years of tradition and thumbing their nose at the citizens of Paw Paw. It wasn't till Eunice Davidson and Andre Billeaudeaux spoke to the School Board personally countering the accusation Eunice was not Native American and Andre gave a historical presentation with facts that even the surrounding American Indians did not know that the tide turned, and the School Board voted to keep the Paw Paw Redskins in place. Without their personal appearance we in Paw Paw know it would have been changed. Our community still comes under attack today, with NAGA's support we are grateful to have them still write letters to the ACLU, & Walmart who was told to pull our Redskin's wearables off their store shelves, only to have NAGA send them letters in return supporting our community and Walmart putting them back on the shelves.

Kim Vargas Jones



NAPA Valley Indians

- In 2015 outsiders come into our Napa High School wanting to eliminate our Napa High Indian Symbol referring to it as racist and insulting to Native American Indians. It was tabled by the NVUSD Board of Trustees at that time as they wanted to pass a bond knowing it would not set well with the community. The bond barely passed. Again in 2017 it was brought up to be eliminated altogether. The community came together and fought to save it and got over 4600 signatures from fellow alumni young and old. The Indian Symbol has been the pride of Napa High for at least 100 years. It wasn't till Eunice Davidson and Andre Billeaudeaux from Naga came to help us, that the NVUSD Board of Trustees began to pay attention. Eunice wrote letters to the Napa Register and board members and superintendent of the school. Andre provided ongoing information to the schools, paper, and community. The knowledge and information presented was helpful and the support was welcomed. Despite all the information, letters and signatures received, the support and vote to save it was not the welcomed agenda the board had in mind. With all those votes to retain the Napa High Indian Symbol the Board took it upon themselves, to tell the community it was NO LONGER a democracy vote. They told the tax paying community it was their NVUSD Board of trustee's decision to make. Six out of Seven of the Board of Trustees did not ever attend the school. They decided it was their vote to

community and students who wanted to retain the Indian Symbol. The symbol was in

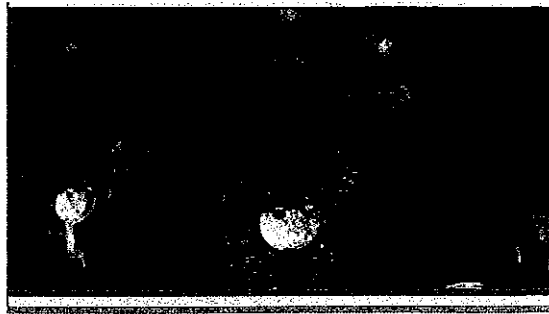
Let's Chat!

We'll reply as soon as we can

Additional Colleges, Universities and Professional Sports Teams with Approved Native American Themes (partial list)

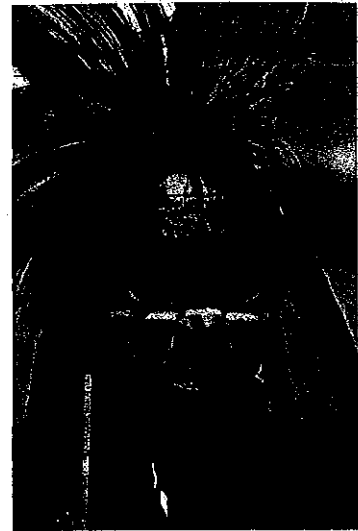
- **Catawba College Indians** (Salisbury, NC) - endorsed by the Catawba Indian Nation
- **Central Michigan University Chippewas** – endorsed by the Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Nation
- **Florida State University Seminoles** – officially sanctioned by the Seminole Tribe of Florida
- **Mississippi College Choctaws** – supported by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
- **University of Utah Utes** – endorsed by the Ute Tribe
- **Seattle Seahawks (NFL)** – endorsed by the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
- **Atlanta Braves (MLB)** – endorsed by multiple Tribal groups, including the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians
- **Chicago Blackhawks (NHL)** – symbolizes Black Hawk of Illinois' Sac and Fox Nation

Actual Pictures of Cherokee Indians with Faces Painted in Bright Red War Paint



Cherokee Tribal Council honors Warriors ...

... ..



Alexander Haskins www.alexanderhaskins.com



CHEROKEE CLOTHING

The earliest information on Cherokee clothing comes from archaeological resources; from drawings on gorgets and sculptures in clay and stone of the Mississippian period; and from many sources in the 18th century. These include drawings and paintings, and descriptions from travelers of European descent like William Bartram, Lt. Henry Timberlake, James Adair, and John Lawson, as well as archaeological research.

Before they were influenced by European clothing styles, Cherokee men and women wore clothing made of tanned hides and of woven cloth. Spinning and weaving have been dated to more than 11,500 years ago for the Cherokee. They also wore jewelry made of shells, silver or copper, capes made of feathers, and tattoos. They made tiny shell beads from shells traded from the Gulf of Mexico. Children went naked in warm weather or wore clothing which was a smaller replica of the adults. Weaving traditions continued into the twentieth century, where in North Carolina, shrouds were woven for the dead out of Indian hemp.

Both men and women wore moccasins with a distinctive "front seam" construction. A seam runs from the toes to the arch of the foot, with two side flaps around the ankles and a short seam up the back of the heel. These were decorated. Men and women both wore leggings in cold weather or whenever needed. These were made of deerskin and covered the leg from the ankle to above the knee. Feathers were worn by tying a single feather to a lock of hair at the crown of the head. Both men and women painted their faces for ceremonial occasions.

Cherokee women wore a skirt about knee length, made of cloth woven from apocynum, nettle, milkweed, or mulberry bark. They sometimes wore a short cape or mantle made of deerskin and decorated. Their ears were pierced once or twice through each earlobe. Women wore feather capes for warmth and even feather dresses.

Cherokee men wore a breechcloth between their legs, folded over a cord around their waists. They also wore leggings and mantles when cold. Men pierced their ears all around the rim and wore ear pins, ear spools, and earrings depending on the time period. From at least the Woodland period through contact men inserted ear spools into large openings and then decorated the spools. Medicine men and chiefs wore special feather capes made of knotted twine and wild turkey feathers. They also wore special headbands decorated with quills and beads with feather plumes inserted. These were not at all like the feathered war bonnets of the Plains Indians.

Clothing materials and styles began changing with the availability of other materials and exposure to other styles beginning about 1700. After years of contact with European traders and after the initiation of the American government's civilization policy in 1789, Cherokee clothing styles changed. Even in the mid-seventeen hundreds, Cherokee men began wearing long linen shirts, which they obtained through the deerskin trade, and began decorating their leggings with tin cones and bells. After 1790, Cherokee women began wearing long calico skirts and aprons. Men wore cloth coats made like European frock coat. Cherokee men adopted the wearing of turbans sometime in the 18th century; oral tradition says this was a style that was adopted after

some Cherokees visited London and saw .

After 1800, Cherokee women began creating clothing from their own cotton and wool. They grew, dyed, spun, and wove cotton into clothing. They raised sheep, sheared them, carded, spun, dyed, and wove the wool for clothing. During this period, Cherokee women traded at local stores for prodigious amounts of woven cloth and ribbon, buying calico and stroud cloth thirty yards at a time.

By the time of Removal in 1838, some Cherokees were dressing much like their neighbors of European descent. Some of the educated and well-to-do Cherokees wore top hats and dress clothes; other, more traditional Cherokees living in the mountains still wore elements of older traditional dress.

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, who remained in the mountains of western North Carolina, continued to dress much like their white neighbors throughout the 19th century. Some of the older men continued to wear turbans until the turn of the twentieth century. In the 1930's women were wearing calico dresses, often with aprons over them, and they wore kerchiefs on their heads. Men in the 1930's had adopted the bib overalls, white dress shirt, and fedora common in the mountains.

Both ribbon shirts and tear dresses became popular in the 1970s as a symbol of American Indian identity. When Cherokee people wanted to dress in a traditional manner for a special event, the men wore "ribbon shirts" and the women wore "ribbon dresses" (also called "tear dresses.") These are made of brightly colored calico decorated with narrow silk ribbons, said to be patterned after a dress brought on the Trail of Tears. They might also wear necklaces made from corn beads (or Job's tears) which some of them grow in their gardens, and about which they tell a legend connected to the Trail of Tears.

Beginning in 2004, the Warriors of AniKituhwa led the way revitalizing Cherokee clothing inspired by styles of the 1700s. This traditional dance group (cultural ambassadors for the Eastern Band, sponsored by the Museum of the Cherokee Indian) began by bringing back a dance described in 1762 to welcome other nations. With the Museum of the Cherokee Indian they researched and began wearing Cherokee clothing of the 1700s. Miss Cherokees began wearing this clothing in their pageants. The Museum of the Cherokee Indian provided research, workshops, and support for this community revitalization project.

Today Cherokees wear "street clothes" just like other Americans: blue jeans, t-shirts, Nikes, cowboy boots, ball caps, and the current styles. They might include silver jewelry made by Native Americans, or beaded watchbands or barrettes. Younger people have begun wearing tattoos in Cherokee syllabary, or with designs inspired by tattoos of the 18th century.

[LETTER FROM THE FAMILY OF WALTER "BLACKIE" WETZEL, DESIGNER OF
THE WASHINGTON REDSKINS TEAM LOGO]

RECEIVED

MAR 24 2014

CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE

TRIBAL COUNCIL OFFICE

MAR 12 2014

cc: TC

Dear I in:

I write with a heavy heart. Amidst all the suffering that is ~~RECEIVED~~ happening in our Tribal Communities, certain organizations and persons who proclaim to represent our best interests are misleading us and others to follow non-Indian reform agendas that are not representative of what is happening in Indian Country. Instead of remaining focused on the agenda that must be performed to overcome our suffering, they choose to pursue an agenda to stigmatize the Native name and logo of a professional sports team which bears our likeness. The trickle down impact of which threatens the continued existence of the Native names and logos of the schools, universities and teams in our own local communities. And in the process, our own Native history is being misrepresented and the Tribal involvement in the creation of the very logo under attack is being overlooked.

My father Walter "Blackie" Wetzel was a former Chairman of the Blackfeet Nation and President of the National Congress of American Indians. My father was very involved with national leaders such as President John F. Kennedy in breaking down the color barrier. During my father's time on this earth, he approached the Washington Redskins' organization and proposed redesigning their logo.

At that time, the logo on the Washington Redskins' helmet was the letter "R," which my father did not like. Nor did my father like the Washington Redskins "spear" logo which predated their "R" logo. Instead, my father wanted the Washington Redskins' logo to change back to an Indian portrait representing a positive and strong image for our people.

Accordingly, my father walked into the office of the Washington Redskins and said, "I came here to see you guys about seeing a real Indian on the helmets." The Washington Redskins' organization was receptive to my father's proposal, and thereafter my father called upon Native American leaders and friends from all across Indian Country for their respective input into the logo.

After much time spent in sharing, reflecting and prayer, the vision for the logo came into being. That vision was that the Indian portrait for the Washington Redskins' organization should be derived from images of our historical Indian leaders. My father and the other Tribal leaders involved with the Washington Redskins' logo were proud to present the Washington Redskins' organization with their collective vision for the logo and with the images of our historical Indian leaders from which to create the logo.

The Washington Redskins' organization was receptive to this vision, and have ever since stood proudly behind their Indian portrait logo and name. And by doing so, have helped us to preserve a piece of our own history for our own youth.

More recently in 2002, when the Washington Redskins were again under attack for their name and logo, my father was one of many Native Americans who was proud that the Washington Redskins stood their ground to keep their name and logo. My father said, "I felt good about that, and they are proud to wear it."

So let us not forget that an American Indian from the State of Montana created that logo, and he did it the right way. It represents the Red Nation and it is something to be proud of. To those who urge us to think otherwise, we should ask them:

Why should we find offensive the very image in which Creator made us?

Why should we find offensive the red color of our skin that Creator gave us, a color that we all understand is our representative color within the medicine wheel and our spiritual Road?

And then why should we find offensive the logo of a team made in our own image and color, and that our own people created?

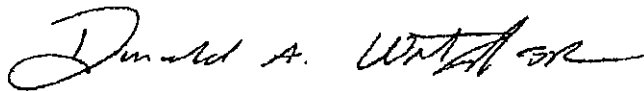
Let us not be misled! Like my father and other great Native leaders before him -- White Calf, Crazy Horse, Tecumseh and Red Cloud -- who all took great pride in the Red Nation as a particular mark of excellence!

To preserve our history and culture in the midst of a Modern Society all too quick to forget under the guise of political correctness, we must awaken and unite our voices in support of the Washington Redskins. By having a professional sports team in our likeness and who is willing to stand its ground to preserve its and our history, we have a national platform like no other ever before us. And we must stand with the Washington Redskins to preserve that platform for our youth.

For I believe that the Washington Redskins are under a great leader in Daniel Snyder who has been awakened to our issues and who wants to partner with Tribes to honor our history and culture, and to help us improve our Tribal Communities.

I now call upon you to stand up and say "NO" when presented with political propaganda from organizations and persons who have the time and money to pursue reform agendas such as removing our likeness and skin color from team names and logos, while many of our communities continue to suffer every day!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Donald A. Wetzel, Sr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Don Wetzel, Sr.
Blackfeet



Walter "Blackie" Wetzel
Former Chairman of Blackfeet Nation
President of the National Congress of American Indians – 1961 to 1964