

Why Kew a u n e e N e e d e d  
t o D r o p I t s ' I n d i a n '  
N i c k n a m e a n d  
L o g o :  
A B r i e f S u m m a r y o f t h e  
A r g u m e n t s



Compiled by the Wisconsin Indian Education Association

Mascot and Logo Task Force

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[www.indianmascots.com](http://www.indianmascots.com)



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## I. INTRODUCTION

On August 4, 2010, Case No. 10-LC-02 was due to be held at the Department of Public Instruction building in Madison. On August 3 the hearing preparation came to a halt. The brief for the complainant, her 18 witnesses, and over 600 pages of evidence and reference materials was put aside as the Kewaunee School District decided to change its race-based nickname and logo.

It was clear that there would be no way to prove by clear and convincing evidence that the Kewaunee School District did not promote stereotyping, harassment and/or discrimination. This document will give a brief summary of why that is true.

## II. HISTORICAL MISINFORMATION FED MISPERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE NICKNAME AND LOGO ISSUE

### Important Historical Background Information

From the moment that the School District of Kewaunee submitted its written response to the complaint filed with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction it was clear that there was little understanding of the very history Kewaunee said it was honoring. This is how the letter described the origin of the name Kewaunee:

“The name Kewaunee is a Potawatomi based word. Native Americans were lost on Lake Michigan and called out Kee-wa-nee looking for help to guide them ashore.”

Presented as *fact*, this local *myth* is indicative of the misinformation that is clouding peoples’ judgments on the issue of nicknames and logos. Academic sources are nearly unanimous in translating “Kewaunee” to mean “prairie hen” or “prairie chicken.” The book Indian Names on Wisconsin’s Map, by Virgil Vogel states, “Almost all writers agree that the name Kewaunee means ‘prairie chicken,’ given only slight differences in Ojibwa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi.” The Dictionary of Wisconsin History says, “Kee-wan-nee = prairie hen, the name for a kind of duck (quite likely an abundant food source in the area for generations).” We also checked with Michael Alloway, Sr., Director of the Forest County Potawatomi Cultural Center, Library, and Museum and one of the foremost experts on the Potawatomi language. Without hesitation he translated “Kewaunee” to mean “prairie chicken” or “prairie hen.”

The Menominee language is closely related to Potawatomi, Odawa (Ottawa) and Ojibwa, which are all Anishinabe(g) cultural groups that share similar languages. Richie Plass (Menominee),

Director of the Changing Winds Advocacy Center (which sponsors the traveling exhibit, "Bittersweet Winds," about American Indian Imagery) also tracked down a Menominee translation that said "duck." It's clear that local interpretations, when kept locally, can stray from accurate and authentic history. This is a big part of the problem when we look at the actual origins of the nickname and logo in Kewaunee.

To understand that local historical background we must travel back in time hundreds and hundreds of years and understand that Northeast Wisconsin was the homeland of several First Nations.

In the area of Kewaunee the Potawatomi mixed freely with the Anishinabe (Ojibwe/Chippewa), Odawa (Ottawa) and Menominee. The Anishinabe, Odawa and Potawatomi were part of the Three Fires Confederacy and so their languages were very closely related. The Menominee and the Ho Chunk Nation have the longest history in the area as the Three Fires Confederacy migrated from the east and north.

As more recent times approached, the Ho Chunk moved and settled largely to the southwest of the area of Northeast Wisconsin while the Oneida settled on an area on the west side of Green Bay in a purchase arrangement for land there after many were forced from the state of New York.

By the early 1800's, there was much turmoil thrust at the First Nations of Wisconsin as relationships with the French, British and later, the Americans complicated the traditional life along the western shores of Lake Michigan and its many clear, shallow rivers that supported abundant wildlife for thousands of years. The trauma of invading European cultures and strange diseases to which they had little immunity created an uneasy situation around Kewaunee. In May of 1830 President Andrew Jackson signed into law the Indian Removal Act which meant to push all 'Indians' west of the Mississippi River.

This provided a grim backdrop to the series of treaties Wisconsin's First Nations were subject to, starting in 1833. What were the choices? They could submit to removal and trade lush woodlands for near desert conditions far out west. They could flee to Canada and try to find remote lands that Europeans largely left alone to that point in time. Or they could try to assimilate and live near increasingly hostile white settlements in the area.

Historian George Wing wrote that in 1847 Andrew Vieux, son of the trader Jacques Vieux who had a good relationship with the Potawatomi, bought land that he put in trust for the Potawatomi. This was a very fertile area known as Black Earth. Vieux tried to keep up with the tax situation but soon white men who wanted the fertile land took out tax deeds to gain ownership and did not inform the Potawatomi of the whole property tax situation. By 1858 the county gave the deed to white land speculators. Soon the County sheriff led a posse who forced

the Potawatomi off the land at gunpoint, then burned their homes and what remained of their possessions. This was the beginning of Kewaunee. It was not honorable.

The district's letter to the DPI makes it worse when it stated, "The District of Kewaunee is located within sacred burial grounds of the Potawatomi, Oneida and other tribes."

In the first place, it was not a burial grounds for the Oneida as they had settled on the west side of Green Bay in more recent times than the Potawatomi whose settlements were around Kewaunee. Secondly, the notion of building a community on a people's burial grounds and then honoring them by naming their high school sports teams after the broad stereotype for all Native people is not compatible with basic human respect.

Historian George Wing noted that the old Kewaunee Opera House and Seyk Mill were both built right on top of Potawatomi burial grounds. Let's say there was a large German cemetery next to a Lutheran church in town. Without any say in the matter, imagine there was a large influx of Irish who forced the Germans out of town, burned the church down and built a dance hall right on top of the cemetery. How honored would the next generations of Germans feel if the Irish decided to "honor" German heritage with a nickname and logo for their sports teams.

We can begin to see a fundamental problem, then, between this history as understood by the Potawatomi, Menominee, Odawa and Anishinabeg peoples and the myth of "Native Americans (being) lost and calling out Kee-wa-nee." It is not a strong foundation upon which to assert that you are honoring people by calling your sports teams 'Indians.' This is made far worse when we look at actual accounts of the beginning of the nickname in Kewaunee.

### **How Kewaunee Went from being the Hilltoppers to the 'Indians'**

Through 1936 Kewaunee was known as the Hilltoppers, a nickname that arose from the geography of the community. In December of 1936 the Kewaunee Enterprise Newspaper printed an article reporting on the name change (full text on Page 6). The motivation for the name change wasn't apparent early in the article, saying only that Kewaunee was located "on the site of a historic Indian village." The real motivation appeared a couple of paragraphs later:

"So, hereafter, the Kewaunee teams will be really out for scalps. Coach Shaffer said there was no truth to the rumor that he intended to designate his substitutes as papoosers until they succeeded in attaining regular positions, when they would be known as braves."

And then the final paragraph:

"Anyway, Kewaunee fans are plugging for the Indians to get going when they hold their first conference pow wow at the Washington high court in Two Rivers tonight."

From the very beginning Kewaunee was only interested in promoting the stereotypes they wanted for their sports teams. Yearbook evidence from 1941 makes that quite clear (See Page 7).

It is no small coincidence that this was the era of the first John Wayne westerns where warlike 'Indians' were splashed all over the big screen. People may have been rooting for the stereotypical cowboy in the white hat to rescue settlers but, in addition, they romanticized the lives of stereotypical 'Indians.' The irony, of course, is that the actual historical record of who did the job of "cowboys" shows that the vast majority were American Indians and immigrants from Mexico. The recent good intentions on the part of some community members can't fix the problem of ingrained stereotypes, only putting the most accurate and authentic information in the classroom will accomplish that.

### **The Problem of Dehumanization of 'Indians' in Kewaunee**

An August 3, 2010, quote from a former football coach of Kewaunee in the Green Bay Press Gazette sums up this problem, "At no time did we ridicule (Indians). We honored them ..." The efforts towards making that seem true have had a similar history to other expressed good intentions. When something is repeated enough times, people tend to internalize it as a truth. We can see how the evidence readily supports that.

In the first place, someone's personal experience may verify a perception like that above but the nature of race-based nickname and logo use is very public. At the same time the football coach was expressing his views someone commenting on Kewaunee's situation in the online version of the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel stated, "Somebody tell those red devils to shut the hell up, or we'll take their casinos away." Even though a former coach can't control demeaning, ridiculing and dehumanizing statements made far from Kewaunee, they still become a very real part of the problem. The mere fact that the age of digital media proliferates these kind of statements instantaneously is an additional reason for schools not to put themselves in the situation of using race-based nicknames and logos.

Next, however, Kewaunee needs to come to grips with the fact that their school's past is filled with the ridicule and dehumanization of 'Indians,' (See Page 9). When you have yearbook covers adorned with caricatures that are universally condemned by American Indians, shown even as recent as 2004, it is hard to believe they aren't noticed by Euro-American community members. Then, as soon as people say, "We don't do that anymore," and we realize that this same dehumanizing image showed up in the 2008 and 2009 yearbooks, the good intentions have been destroyed by the realities of dehumanization. Remember, every photo that goes in the yearbook is screened by a faculty advisor to determine if it is appropriate. The yearbook that

goes to press, then, represents an official endorsement by the school district. The statements about being respectful are meaningless words when the actions of the school contradict the words. It is not enough to have a good intent and to carry it out most of the time. The harm that it can cause is enormous, as can be seen in the personal testimony of a Menominee family that attended Kewaunee Schools for years.

# Flight P BASKETBALL TO UNDERWAY S EVENING

## Kewaunee Hilltoppers Open At Two Rivers; Four Other Teams In Action

Tonight's Schedule  
Kewaunee at Two Rivers  
DePere at Oconto Falls  
Oconto at Sturgeon Bay  
There are three courts tonight will  
the 1936-37 basketball campaign  
of the Eastern division of  
the Wisconsin conference.

Kewaunee's Hilltoppers, with but  
a few veterans of its last year's cham-  
pion team back in the lineup, will  
appear at the Washington high gym in  
Two Rivers. The Purgolds placed  
last year.

Their stand-out match is the  
one between the Oconto Blue Devils  
and the Cherrypickers at Sturgeon  
Bay. Oconto Falls' Panthers will be  
opposed to the DePere Redbirds.

Coach Shaffer isn't expecting his  
Kewaunee team to repeat its cham-  
pionship campaign of last season, but  
a good lineup built around Matt  
Lietz and Bud Bruemmer the Hill-  
toppers won't be a pushover for any

opponent. Hruska, forward, Bob Clas-  
son, forward, Joe Novak, guard, Wil-  
son, guard, and Russel Rank,  
center, are among the most prom-  
ising candidates for the first string.  
Coach Shaffer has several other young-  
sters who are catching his eye and  
see plenty of action before the  
season is over. Outstanding are  
Lietz, Wochos, and San-

## "INDIANS" IS NEW NAME FOR HIGHS

### Kewaunee High School Has New Name For Athletes; New Suits Ordered

It'll be the "Indians" from now on  
when Kewaunee high school athletic  
teams are referred to, that monicker  
having been chosen by Kewaunee  
high school students by a vote of 212  
to 18.

The choice of an athletic cognomen  
had been narrowed down to two  
names: Bulldogs and Indians. Be-  
cause Kewaunee was originally the  
site of an historic Indian village, the  
student body felt that "Indians"  
would be appropriate.

The school has accordingly ordered  
some flashy new basketball suits, with  
a large Indian head, in vivid hues, to  
appear on the back of the sweat coats.  
The new uniforms were expected to  
be here in time for use at Two Rivers  
tonight.

The new suits are to be a splash of  
color, with pants of purple jockey  
satin outlined with gold braid. The  
playing jerseys will be plain, but the  
sweat coats are also to be of jockey  
satin.

So, hereafter, the Kewaunee teams  
will be really out for scalps. Coach  
Shaffer said there was no truth to  
the rumor that he intended to desig-  
nate his substitutes as papoosers until  
they succeeded in attaining regular  
positions, when they would be known  
as braves. That rumor was probably  
started by some disgruntled student  
who had held out for the Bulldog  
appellation.

Anyway, Kewaunee fans are plug-  
ging for the Indians to get going  
when they hold their first conference  
pow-wow at the Washington high  
court in Two Rivers tonight.

## Joe Ferris, Old Ball Player, Is Dead

## Indians Lose Opener At Sevastopol 16-14

Five days of practice aren't enough  
to round any basketball team into  
shape, and the Indians of Kewaunee  
high school found that out up at

A return game with the Sevastopol  
quintet is to be played here next Tues-  
day evening, marking the first game  
in Kewaunee's new field house.

This article announcing  
the name change to  
'Indians' says it all:

**"So, hereafter, the  
Kewaunee teams will  
be really out for  
scalps.**

**... Anyway, Kewaunee  
fans are plugging for  
the Indians to get  
going when they hold  
their first conference  
pow-wow at the  
Washington High  
court in Two Rivers  
tonight."**

Stereotypes,  
violence, stereotypes,  
misunderstandings,  
and stereotypes!

BOX SCORE:				
	FG	FT	F	TP
Sevastopol	2	0	0	4
Beri, f	0	0	0	0
Weber, f	1	1	3	3
Dejardine, f	2	0	1	4
Felhofer, c	1	0	1	2
Stephenson, g	0	0	0	0
DeLair, g	1	1	3	3
B. Beri, g				

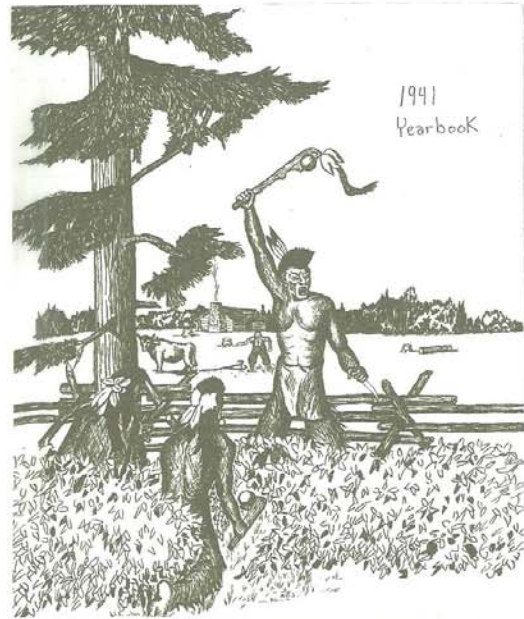


Consistent with the 1936 Kewaunee Enterprise article announcing the name change from the Hilltoppers to the 'Indians', these 1941 yearbook section dividers show clearly what was desired from Kewaunee's identity as 'Indians' — warlike, aggressive characteristics.



## ACTIVITIES

Please notice that none of the images are authentic to the area around Kewaunee. They are all stereotypes, including the teepees. The Potawatomi that inhabited the area around Kewaunee used wigwams.



## ADMINISTRATION



## SENIORS

### **The Experiences of a Menominee Family in Kewaunee Schools**

The current DPI statistics concerning school enrollment by race show that zero American Indians attended Kewaunee schools this past school year. One of the reasons for that is the reputation Kewaunee has related to the treatment of American Indian students. There is a sizable gap between the district saying that they honor 'Indians' and American Indians not feeling welcome in the Kewaunee School District. Historically this is true. Today there would be only one slight variation.

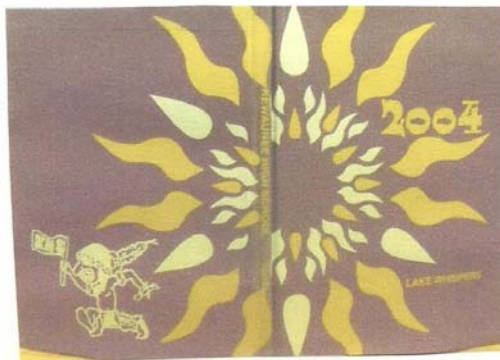
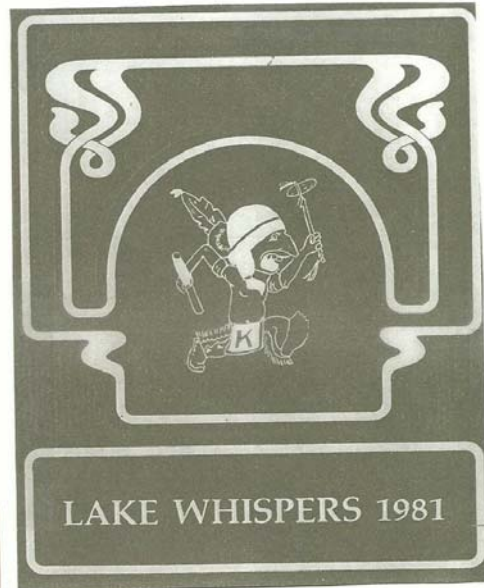
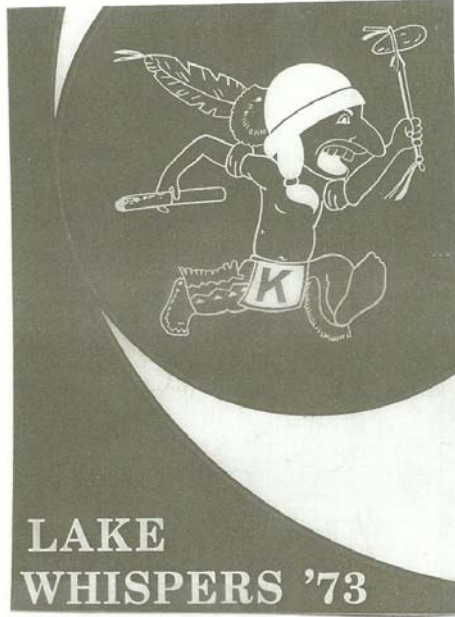
If there were any American Indian students in the school system right now and they said they liked the nickname and logo, they would be accepted. If an American Indian student were in the district and they thought a change should be made they would receive the same kinds of treatment that are described in the following testimony. We know this is true because as this is written the Mukwonago student who filed the complaint about their nickname, the 'Indians,' is currently experiencing the same kind of harassment and discrimination that surfaced years ago in Kewaunee.

We will keep her name anonymous because she still has relatives in the area; but, know that we have witnesses to these statements and notarized testimony from a former teacher (not the complainant in the Kewaunee case) who witnessed some of the harassment first hand. For all those who have been in denial that this kind of thing could ever happen in Kewaunee please read carefully. It took enormous courage for this former student to come forward and state the following:

"My family lived out in the country, where we had to stand out in the cold waiting for the bus. We could see the bus coming up our side of the road, instead of stopping to pick us up first, the bus driver would drive past us and go up several miles picking up other students. One particular morning on the bus, a group of students gathered a huge chunk of gum and stuck it into my long hair. I knew the bus driver could see this, but he did nothing to stop their behavior.

My sister was also harassed on the bus. This boy would sit next to her, press his hands on her head and ram her head into the window. I knew the bus driver could also see this in his large mirror, but he did nothing. He would just let my sister get hurt; she would arrive home with a severe headache and would have to go to bed.

In one of my classes in high school, the teacher would walk slowly up and down the aisle past each student. But when she got to my desk, she would stop. She would stand there for at least ten minutes. I was the only student in class where she would display this kind of behavior.



Yearbooks are official school publications. From covers to class pictures these demeaning caricatures all represent a generation of the promotion of stereotyping.

Another time, while I was drawing a pencil picture of an Indian, a student got up from his desk, looked at my picture and said very loudly to me, "You are a nigger." I know the teacher heard this, but she said nothing and did nothing. The incident was not unusual, a lot of racial slurs were said to me on a regular basis, but the teachers never put a stop to this behavior.

One day my mom sent me to school with a hair band stretched across my forehead and had placed a feather in the back. My classmates called me "Injun Joe" and they mocked me by doing a war cry in the classroom and in front of the school office.

Several students would walk up to me, fold their arms, raise one hand; and say to me, "How!"

With one of my teachers, I felt like she hated me. She would give me a deadly stare that was cold as ice. I felt like she wanted to kill me. I felt like she hated me because she never smiled at me. She always gave me that deadly stare.

My study hall in high school was held in the auditorium. The auditorium was dark until the bell rang and the teacher turned on the lights. Until then the only light was the hallway light from the two opened doors. I would be in my seat and this one particular student would loudly announce his entrance into the room. He would close the door and pounce down the dark aisle towards me. I quickly moved several seats over from the aisle. I could hear him say, "Pow!" as he hit the seats with his fist. He would then say, "Ouch, I missed her." I knew he was referring to me. He always wanted to hit and hurt me. I could not put up with this any longer, so I went to the school office and asked to speak with the principal. I told him, in front of the receptionist, what was happening to me. This principal told me (I was the source of the problem) and "I cannot and will not sign your diploma." I thought I would receive some sort of refuge, safety, and hope. Instead, I received none! Moreover, this student, instead of receiving some sort of punishment, was put on the student council. ...

This student who meant me harm had a girlfriend. During class time, when the teacher would let us have study time, the class would spend time talking. His girlfriend would say, pointing to me, "She's trying to take my boyfriend away from me." At this point, all the girls in the room would flock to her side and hatefully stare at me. I felt so alone; not even the teacher would support me. I was all by myself. I could not speak up for myself because I knew they would be waiting for me in the bathroom. In the bathroom, they would pull me by my long hair and throw me to the floor while hitting and kicking me. Not one of those students would be a friend to me. It made me feel ashamed to be what God made me to be – a living human being.

*At the time, my mom was working and taking care of nine children. We were poor. Even though the white students and teachers labeled us warlike and uneducated, I ask, who were the warlike and uneducated? Who said they wanted Indians to be educated, but refused to even safely transport us to school. ... We had to put up with harassment, insults, damage to personal property, contempt, intolerance and abusiveness. We were treated as though we were inferior second class citizens. Many times we heard the phrase, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian."*

This was our daily routine in the Kewaunee School District. How (you may ask) does this relate to the Indian mascot and sports logo? It relates because while the school claims to honor Indian people; real, live Indians were truly not welcome in Kewaunee. I saw it happen. I was there. I know it. I maintain that the Indian (nickname) and logo only perpetuates the negative stereotypes that many people in Kewaunee already have of Indians. ... Tell me how I should feel honored by this type of behavior.

### **III. CURRENT PRACTICES MAKE THE PROBLEM EVEN WORSE**

#### **Putting Things in Perspective**

As we stated, the Kewaunee School District currently has no American Indian students according to the demographic information for districts provided on the DPI website. Is it any wonder why?

If current residents maintain that something similar could not happen again then they need to look at the dehumanizing caricature that still shows up in official school publications (See Page 9). They also need to look carefully at the store shelves of area businesses. On July 23, 2010, a glass was finally removed from an area retailer's shelves. On the glass is a caricature quite similar to the one used so often in Kewaunee's history --- a dehumanized cartoon-like 'Indian' with huge nose and stoic expression in a running posture. Under the caricature is the phrase, "Lonesome Polecat." While many may pass this off as something of no major concern, we need to note that "polecat" is the typical word used for many generations in Europe to describe a "skunk." It's hard to imagine that anyone would not characterize this as dehumanizing. Equating an 'Indian' with a foul smelling animal is an act of harassment and discrimination. These are not difficult dots to connect.

And the distance is very small between that glass and how the school has used its race-based nickname and logo. What current school officials have not seen is clearly not lost on Wisconsin's

Native people. And that's before we get to the problems inherent in the most "honorable" images that have a history of use in the Kewaunee School District.

### **Even the Most "Honorable" Images Aren't Honorable**

While dehumanizing caricatures at least are recognizable as such to a significant number of people, the images that have been celebrated as "honorable" prove to be very problematic in their own right, simply because it is much harder for people to see them for what they are --- stereotypes.

Had the hearing taken place there would have been examples shown of authentic Oneida and Potawatomi headgear. Most of them are nothing like the stereotypical Great Plains chief in full headdress officially recognized as a "Kewaunee Indian." None of the seven variations used by Kewaunee fans is authentic to the area. When local "Kewaunee Indian" enthusiasts like Mark Hinesh write in the *Kewaunee County News* that the "DPI ban could end historical culture," Wisconsin's First Nations can only applaud because they understand the truth of Kewaunee's addiction to living under the influence of stereotypes.

And then there are the practices that go to an even deeper level of cultural insult. While Mr. Hinesh recognizes the official Kewaunee image as a "Shaman Medicine Man," American Indian nations are appalled that a non-Indian would make such a reference. It would be more accurate to say that someone dressed as the "official" Kewaunee 'Indian' is a political leader with some cultural responsibilities. To assume more is mere speculation. And besides, hasn't it dawned on anyone in Kewaunee that even **if** Mr. Hinesh were right, using the image of a holy person is wrong for public schools to do anyway? Would you use the image of the Pope in his sacred garments for a logo? Would you portray a Protestant minister as your school's symbol?

Even "traditions" involving the "Spirit Stick" are culturally insulting when put in the context of an 'Indian' identity. In fact, as soon as any practices involving First Nations cultures are exposed to scoreboards, cheerleading and school assemblies then they are demeaned and reduced in ways that are both insulting and anti-educational. It is important to remember what preserving culture is really all about.

In her article, *Common Themes* (available on the [www.indianmascots.com](http://www.indianmascots.com) website), Barbara Munson puts it this way:

"The responsibility for the continuance of our cultures falls to Native people. We accomplish this by surviving, living and thriving; and, in doing so, we pass on to our children our stories, traditions, religions, values, arts, and our languages. We sometimes do this important work with people from other cultural backgrounds, but they do not and cannot continue our culture for us. Our ancestors did this work for us,

and we continue to carry the culture for the generations to come. Our cultures are living cultures – they are passed on, not “preserved.”

#### **IV. WISCONSIN’S FIRST NATIONS HAVE BEEN CLEAR AND CONSISTENT IN THEIR OPPOSITION TO ‘INDIAN’ NICKNAMES AND LOGOS**

In preparation for the August 4 Kewaunee Hearing the elected representatives of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin met and unanimously passed a resolution reaffirming their opposition to ‘Indian’ nicknames and logos. Oneida witnesses for the complainant, Hugh Danforth and Brandon Stevens, led this initiative in order to impress upon Kewaunee that the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin is consistent and committed to seeing all ‘Indian’ nicknames and logos gone from public schools. One of the highlights of the 2010 resolution is the statement:

“... it is unfortunate in this day of enlightenment and advances in society and government that race-based mascots (nicknames and logos) continue to appear in educational, sports and other institutions in light of the knowledge that those race-based mascots are offensive and derogatory, and sends a negative image and demoralizes the self-awareness of children, adults, parents and communities with strong, positive and enduring cultures and histories;”

It is unfortunate, because from the 2010 resolution all the way back to Resolution #3-31-93-A (also passed unanimously) in 1993 the Oneida Nation has consistently “condemned the use of Indian mascots in any form for any purpose, especially athletic teams.” For there to be any question about where the Oneida Nation stands on this issue people have to ignore many official communications on this issue. And how sad is it when it is a school that ignores the communications?

Similarly, the elected representatives of all Wisconsin First Nations have repeatedly met and passed resolutions asking Kewaunee and all ‘Indian’ logo schools to change. The Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council is a consortium whose membership consists of the tribal chairpersons representing all the tribal governments of Wisconsin Their first resolution on the matter was passed (again by **unanimous** vote) in 1993. It “condemns the use of Indian mascots, symbols, nicknames and logos.” A new group of elected chairpersons passed an equally clear new resolution in 1999 and yet a third group passed another resolution in 2006 that added to the

previous resolutions by recognizing the importance of the new research on the issue done by Dr. Stephanie Fryberg (Tulalip) while at Stanford University and later at the University of Arizona.

It is important to note that every one of these resolutions was passed unanimously and used representative democratic procedures. It is also important to recognize that when people in Kewaunee talk about how popular their nickname and logo is locally and that the whole purpose is to “honor the local Native American heritage” then there is a disconnection between the purpose and the popularity. The “honor” becomes false at the point where there has been any official negative reaction from Wisconsin tribes. When Kewaunee has been shown repeated measures that have received **unanimous** support from ALL Wisconsin tribes asking schools to stop “playing Indian,” then, we have to question the local “popularity,” and recognize that the basis of the popularity is not to “honor Indian heritage.”

So, what is the real reason that Kewaunee has clung to the nickname and logo ‘Indian?’ An Examination of the scientifically conducted research will help explain.

## **V. THE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH CLEARLY SHOWS THE HARMS OF RACE-BASED NICKNAMES AND LOGOS**

### **About the Researcher**

Dr. Stephanie Fryberg (Tulalip) completed her doctoral dissertation on the ‘Indian’ mascot and logo issue at Stanford University about a decade ago. It was a series of five separate studies that tested the impact of ‘Indian’ nicknames, logos and mascots. She used the kind of research methodology that schools across the country have come to depend upon for making policy decisions. Her research was checked and rechecked by three of the most preeminent psychologists in the world. Their enthusiastic endorsement was only the beginning.

Dr. Fryberg accepted a position teaching at the University of Arizona and completed a sixth study. She then took her research to two national associations. The American Psychological Association and the American Sociological Association both gave Dr. Fryberg’s research the highest endorsement possible --- they both passed resolutions calling on schools to eliminate ‘Indian’ nicknames, logos and mascots.

### **What the Fryberg Research Says**

The relevance to Kewaunee’s situation is extraordinary. The disconnection between local opinion saying they are honoring ‘Indians and the realities of Wisconsin tribes and educational organizations unanimously calling for an end to race-based nicknames and logos can be partly



understood by the finding of Dr. Fryberg that non-Indians get a boost to their self-esteem from using an 'Indian' nickname, logo, or mascot. Why should they change when they are having such a good time "playing Indian?"

Well, the answer to that question is because Dr. Fryberg's research shows clearly how American Indian students are harmed by Kewaunee and other schools "playing Indian." American Indian students are harmed by the use of 'Indian' nicknames and logos because:

- 1) Their self-esteem is lowered.
- 2) It negatively affects their beliefs that their community has the power and resources to resolve problems (community efficacy).
- 3) It reduces the number of achievement-related future goals they see for themselves (self-efficacy).

These are powerful findings having impacts that go far beyond "offensiveness." First, the fact that non-Indian students who "play Indian" at school have a boost to their self-esteem while American Indian students have lowered self-esteem and self-efficacy fits the legal definition for proving that discrimination exists. What this means is that, without any other evidence, the research proves school districts will not be able to disprove discrimination. And there are no extenuating circumstances that will help districts out.

It didn't matter in Dr. Fryberg's research what kind of images were used. They could be very much like the officially recognized image of the Kewaunee School District or they could be similar to the unofficial caricature that keeps showing up in yearbooks and on shirts.

There is an additional surprising finding to be considered as well. Dr. Fryberg's research showed that **more** damage was done to American Indian students that **don't** oppose 'Indian' nicknames and logos than was done to those who actively oppose it.

Dr. Fryberg's research shows that the negative impact is less related to the perceived negativity of the image than it is to the fact that there are not enough alternative representations either in the school environment or in the community. Even if substantial units on American Indian Studies were included in the curriculum they couldn't begin to counterbalance the conscious and subconscious limitations on possible selves for American Indian students.

The National Science Foundation tells us that we have, on average, 60,000 thoughts per day. We are only aware of about 5% of those thoughts but all of them impact our perceptions. Imagine being an American Indian student at a Kewaunee football game. Going through the stands you pass by 50 people wearing the logo. Each visual contact enters the student's subconscious as a definition of who that fan thinks an 'Indian' is. Some fans yell, "Go Indians!" A subconscious

thought is planted about the aggressive competition and winning a game. An opposing fan yells, "Kill the Indians!" Dissonance accompanies that thought so it keeps being processed in the subconscious and transforms into some level of stress. Each representation is a reminder of a stereotype. Each one freezes 'Indians' in a past that was filled with trauma and constant sacrifices of their loved ones that go unrecognized by schools just wanting to expropriate certain characteristics for their sports teams. And each representation is a constant reinforcement of an imposed identity forced by the school.

It would be no different if Caucasian students were in an environment where very limited representations of what a "Caucasian" is were present at school activities --- no astronauts, presidents or business leaders --- only one dimensional representations of past war leaders who were obsessed with aggression. Their lives with loving families would not be found anywhere in the stands. Their involvement in the Lions Club and at their churches would never surface. What futures would these Caucasian kids see for themselves?

There is simply no bigger failure in schools than to limit the possibilities that students see for themselves while their self-esteem is also damaged in the school environment. The fact that there are **no studies that show any positive affect** should cause alarm in every 'Indian' logo school. Another alarm should go off when looking at other recently completed studies. Even the governing body for high school athletics, the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association, has become informed and now offers the following advice to members:

"The WIAA discourages schools with American Indian or ethnic mascots from bringing mascots, posters etc., to any and all competition. This includes displaying logos or participating in chants, yells, gestures or other activities that potentially influence incorrect and inappropriate attitudes about American Indians or any ethnic heritage."

This statement came even before the latest rounds of research.

### **The Importance of the Chu Kim Prieto Research**

Four scholars, all from different universities, just published in March of 2010 two more studies that show how race-based nicknames and logos promote harmful stereotyping and a school environment that invites harassment. *The Journal of Applied Social Psychology* published the article, "Effect of Exposure to an American Indian Mascot on the Tendency to Stereotype a Different Minority Group," by Chu Kim Prieto, Lizbeth Goldstein, Sumie Okazaki and Blake Kirschner. Quoting from the abstract:

“Two studies examined the effect of exposure to an American Indian sports mascot (used generically here to refer to logos and nicknames as well) on the stereotype endorsement of a different minority group. Study 1 used an unobtrusive prime (a frontal view of a Great Plains Indian chief recognized as Chief Illiniwek that was complimentary and respectful in tone). Study 2 also investigated the effect among those unfamiliar with the controversy regarding American Indian sports mascots. **Results from both studies show that participants primed with an American Indian sports mascot increased their stereotyping of a different ethnic minority group.**”

This confirms that schools who retain ‘Indian’ nicknames, logos and mascots are training grounds for students to increase their stereotyping of other groups by the simple exposure to an American Indian logo perceived to be honorable.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

This entire discussion could begin and end with the research that has been completed. Eight studies show how harmful ‘Indian’ nicknames and logos are. There is ZERO research that demonstrates any benefits. There is only opinion, and through much of this paper we have seen that the foundation for the opinions has been built on misinformation and incorrect assumption.

Kewaunee has an opportunity now to respectfully retire its nickname and logo and build a new identity that harms no one and can be fun for everyone. The Oshkosh West ‘Indians’ became the Oshkosh West Wildcats. The Shawano ‘Indians’ became the Shawano Hawks. The Seymour ‘Indians’ became the Seymour Thunder.

Are there people in those communities who still miss their former identity? Of course. To this day you will find those who can’t think past their good intentions in days gone by to understand the need for change. But each new group of kids that go through those schools are not exposed to the harms of stereotyping, harassment and discrimination that race-based school identities have.

There is an old expression that says “before you tear an old wall down you need to take a good look at why it was built in the first place.” It is clear from the evidence presented here that the wall in question was built to keep in stereotypes and has resulted in harmful practices. It is time to knock that wall down and think about opening up a better pathway towards success for all students.

A new nickname and logo can create pathways to a new world of opportunities for understanding others. The stereotype-free environment will reflect a new understanding of respect, a genuine respect, that will be the foundation for a far better world.

## VII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## VIII. OTHER RESOURCES TO HELP UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES INVOLVED WITH RACE-BASED NICKNAMES AND LOGOS

### **Wisconsineye.com**

#### **Wisconsin State Legislature 2009-2010 Session**

Coverage of hearings for AB35 and SB25 and Assembly Floor passage of AB35:  
 Assembly Committees 03.17.09 Assembly Committee on Education 12:50 on the clock  
 Senate Committees 01.13.10 Senate Committee on Education 12:04 on the clock  
 Assembly Floor Session 02.25.10 (Part 2) 3:29 on clock – AB35 debate before passage

### **www.indianmascots.com**

Common Themes essay  
 Position Statement of Wisconsin Indian Education Association  
 Interactive map and information about changes to date in Wisconsin

**AISTM** – American Indian Sports Team Mascots <http://www.aistm.org/fr.faqs.htm>

**STAR** - Students and Teachers Against Racism [www.racismagainstindians.org/](http://www.racismagainstindians.org/)

**National Indian Education Association** – Resolution 5, 2009 page 10 -  
<http://www.niea.org/sa/uploads/researchtopics/11.59.2009ALLRESOLUTIONS.pdf>

**Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 2010, 40,3, pp.534-553.**

**“Effect of Exposure to an American Indian Mascot on the Tendency to Stereotype a Different Minority Group,”** by Chu Kim-Prieto, Sumie Okazaki . Lizabeth Goldstein and Blake Kirschner.

**Ezra Zeitler, zeitleej@uwec.edu 715.836.5186, Assistant Professor of Geography at UWEC. Thesis on distribution of Indian mascot imagery nationwide. Recent presentation** - 2009. Imperialist Nostalgia and Indigenous Team Names in Secondary Schools. National Indian Education Association Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

**Stephanie A. Fryberg, Really? You don't look like an American Indian: Social Representations and Social Group Identities**  
 (Dec. 2002) (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University)

**Stephanie A. Fryberg & Sarah S. M. Townsend, The Psychology of Invisibility, in Commemorating Brown: The Social Psychology of Racism and Discrimination 173**  
 (Glenn Adams ed., 2008)

**Stephanie A. Fryberg & Alisha Watts, We're Honoring You Dude: Myths, Mascots and American Indians, in Doing Race: 21 Essays for the 21st Century 7** (Hazel Rose Markus ed., forthcoming 2010)

**Stephanie A. Fryberg et al., Of Warrior Chiefs and Indian Princesses: The Psychological Consequences of American Indian Mascots, 30 Basic & Applied Soc. Psychol. 208**  
 (2008)





