

Testimony For Senate Education Committee Hearing of SB341,
Held On January 27, 1998

January 27, 1998

Senate Education Committee Members:

Honorable Calvin Potter
Honorable Robert Jauch
Honorable Grobschmidt
Honorable Kevin Shibilski,
Honorable Alberta Darling,
Honorable Joanne B. Huelsman,
Honorable Carol A. Roessler,

Dear Senators,

I am writing on behalf of Senate Bill 341. SB341 states that it will eliminate the use of American Indian Mascots and Slogans in all Wisconsin public schools. I believe that it would be in the best interest of the State of Wisconsin to enact SB341 as a State Law because it would stop the promotion of negative stereotyping towards the Native-American community.

Indian Mascots is blatant institutionalized racism. Indian mascots are institutionalized racism because our public schools promotes the use of stereotypes. When people are stereotyped, people are degraded.

What if a school had a mascot of the "Appleton Asians?" What if high school students ran around on the football fields and basketball courts waving fake Samurai swords around in the air, pretending to do a Karate chop with fake buck teeth placed in their mouth, pretending to be an Asian? How do think that would affect the Asian community, especially to that younger generation's self-image? Do you think that would send a positive image to that community as well as other Asian communities outside that school district? Being Filipino, I would not be honored and I would be deeply offended if I went to a school that was known as the "Appleton Asians." If I were Native-American I would be deeply offended if my school had an Indian mascot.

Growing up in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, I did not know and understand why Indian mascots were degrading. We were known as the Fort Atkinson Blackhawks. I remember times when fans would be sitting in the stands and would chant our "Indian War Songs." The students were told not to sing those songs, but nobody understood the reason why we had to stop. We were never explained in our classes why we were not supposed to sing our "Indian songs."

I never knew why Indian mascots and slogans were degrading until I went to college at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. I learn that Indian mascots were degrading by working with Native-Americans at the Native-American Center. I learned that Native-American students felt and thought Indian mascots and slogans were degrading because of the stereotyping images. In fact, I learned that the Great Lakes

Pt. 5

Tribal council condemns the use of Indian mascots. The Great Lakes Tribal council represents all the Tribes in the State of Wisconsin.

If the Great Lakes Tribal council, which represents the all the tribes in Wisconsin, condemns the use of Indian mascots because they think it is degrading, then why are we using Indian Mascots in are Public Schools. If we have been told that our behavior had offended someone, then would it not make sense to stop the offensive behavior? If a Senator said to another Senator that a certain word or phrase offended him/her, then would it not make sense for that Senator to stop using that certain word or phrase?

I think it is imperative that the State of Wisconsin respects the Native-American community and that the State of Wisconsin has respect for itself by not teaching racism in its public schools. I support SB341, the elimination of Indian Mascots and Slogans from our public schools along with **one hundred and seventy-eight signatures** from students and faculty at the University of Stevens Point in which you will find enclosed in this testimony.

Please teach our children respect and not Racism. Please support Senate Bill 341.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeff Puerner". The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with a large loop at the beginning.

Jeff Agaton Puerner
UW-Stevens Point
Progressive Action Organization
American Indians Reaching for Opportunity

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR PRESENTATION TO THE SENATE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING ON SB-341,
HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998**

My name is Phillip M. Steans. I am an attorney licensed to practice law in the State of Wisconsin and was first admitted to practice in June 1968.

I live in the Menomonie School District and practice law in Menomonie.

I was elected to the Menomonie School Board in April 1995. I served in that capacity until I was defeated in a recall election in the Spring of 1997.

I was recalled because I voted at an open meeting of the Menomonie Area School Board to discontinue the use of the "Indian logo" and nickname for the Menomonie Area Public Schools, and because I refused to change my vote when some people in the community objected to the decision.

I do not believe that an elected official should be subject to recall for casting a vote either for or against an issue of conscience or personal philosophy, particularly where that vote has no impact on the substantive rights of any individual or group.

I support the Legislation being considered by this committee because I believe that it will have a positive impact on Wisconsin citizens who are willing to devote their time, energy, intelligence, education and commitment to their communities. In Menomonie we will be having another school board election in April of this year. The three candidates who ran against my colleagues Lynn Klatt, David Thomas and myself, are opposed by only one candidate this year. I have personally spoken with several well-qualified individuals who indicated that they would have been interested in running for school board, but for the fact that Klatt, Thomas and Steans were recalled and subjected to significant community pressure, and open disrespect, for having voted on this issue of conscience.

The passage of this Legislation will free individual school board members from the threat of public vilification and removal from office for acting on a matter of moral principle.

I also applaud this legislation, support it, and urge its adoption because the denigration of people by the acquisition and use of their name and image or caricature should not be tolerated in an enlightened society. I venture that every person in this room or who reads this testimony would be appalled by nicknames and congruent caricature logos such as the following: Menomonie Chinks/Menomonie Wetbacks, Menomonie Blacks/Negroes/Niggers/Honkies/Arabs, etc. etc.

Why then do people become emotionally attached to a previously claimed nickname when presented with evidence that it is demeaning or degrading.

It is simply not acceptable to say that such names should continue because "the other guy does it -- e.g., the Atlanta Braves, Cleveland Indians, Washington Redskins, etc. It is simply not acceptable to continue with the use of such names because "we have always used that name". Our society no longer tolerates, nor should it tolerate, the use of the term "Nigger"; no longer prohibits Non-caucasians from voting; no longer discriminates against women or the handicapped -- all of which were considered tolerable "for a long time".

It is simply not acceptable to continue the use of demeaning or degrading names because a scant majority, or even a significant majority, of the people in a particular voting jurisdiction support it. Our society blessedly is based on a balancing of the rights of society in general against the rights of individuals. Our history is replete with examples, many of them constitutionally protected, where individual rights are protected in the face of the objection of a "majority". Examples of freedom of speech come to mind.

It is simply not acceptable to institutionalize intolerance or insensitivity by allowing publicly owned, operated and financed school districts to utilize a name, nickname or logo which is found to be demeaning or degrading to a significant proportion of the people named.

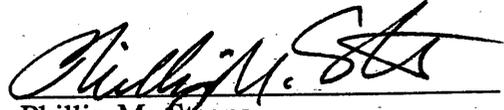
When I was going through the recall experience in Menomonie I had occasion to meet with a Native American attorney colleague of mine. He, of course, was aware of the recall efforts and the underlying dispute over the use of the nickname and logo "Menomonie Indians". I asked him how he felt about the name and logo. He told me that he, personally, was not offended. He went on to point out that he had been able to complete his education and to establish himself as a respected, highly-educated professional in his community. He also pointed out that many of his people had not been able to achieve as he had and that **THEY** were deeply harmed and disgraced by the usurpation of their dignity and identity by some of the very people who belittled them as human beings. He pointed out how troubling it was for him as a youngster to be told that he could not date certain girls in high school because he was "an Indian", and how degrading and demeaning it was to watch store security guards shadow his mother and father as though they were certain to shoplift -- simply because they were "Indians".

When our students came to the School Board with the proposal to discontinue the Indian nickname and logo one of their more compelling arguments was the following: "Give our School District an opportunity to be a leader in taking positive steps to eliminate racism or the appearance of racism in our community". The bill which is being considered today is an opportunity for the State of Wisconsin to lead the nation. Our student leaders were mocked and vilified, and their efforts belittled, by the recall election last Spring. They, and the Native Americans who they were trying to protect, were the ones harmed, not Dave Thomas, Lynn Klatt and I.

Wisconsin has long prided itself on its progressivism.

Take this opportunity to lead. Adopt SB-341. Do it not because it is "politically correct", but because it is the right thing to do.

Respectfully submitted this 28th day of January, 1998.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phillip M. Steans", written over a horizontal line.

Phillip M. Steans
393 Red Cedar Street, Suite 6
P.O. Box 384
Menomonie, WI 54751
(715) 235-5550

January 27, 1998

Wisconsin Senate Education Committee

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING OF SB341, HELD
ON JANUARY 28, 1998.

To Whom It May Concern:

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." As I believe this statement to be undeniably true I find that I am strongly compelled to voice my support for SB341, regardless of the fact that I reside in a school district void of Indian mascots and logos. Such mascots and logos, whether appealing depictions or unappealing, constitute an injustice that I cannot tolerate: racism. With all due respect, you should not be tolerant of it, either.

Without going into great detail, I feel it is necessary to tell you a little about my life experiences. Born and raised in the vicinity of Wausau, Wisconsin, I had the typical sheltered childhood that any German/Polish American raised in the area throughout the 1960's and 1970's had. It was very 'white.' Basically, not a bad thing, but my youth had never prepared me to live in a world as multicultural and complex as the one we now live in. For the vast majority of you, I imagine your childhood was very similar to mine. But here is where we probably differ, for I have been privileged throughout my adulthood to experience something that most white Americans can only imagine: racism.

You may be shocked to hear someone say that experiencing racism has been a privilege, and I fully understand that what I have experienced has been minuscule compared to the assaults upon people of color, but I have to admit that being on the receiving end of racism has taught me more in my adult life than any amount of formal education ever has or ever will. Over eighteen years ago I married an African American male and we were blessed with two children. After my husband retired from the military, we moved our small family from Virginia to my hometown in Wisconsin. My racial education was to start not long there after.

Regardless of excellent credit and a permanent source of income, we had quite a bit of difficulty finding a rental unit. It seemed that every rental we were interested in had, surprisingly, been rented to someone else just prior to our expressed interest in it. Finally, we were able to find an available rental unit -- after I went out apartment hunting alone. Not wanting to be at the mercy of such a high-demand rental market, we quickly bought our own home not far from where I had grown up. Surely, we could find some peace in my old neighborhood! Surely, I jest. We were welcomed by various items thrown at our cars as they sat parked in our driveway, fireworks lit and thrown at our home, real estate company 'for sale' signs that mysteriously appeared on our lawn overnight (we started a collection), and vehicles intentionally driven through our lawn. And those were the easy things to deal with.

The hardest racism to accept, or understand, was the kind we found within the public school system. It was impossible to keep track of the number of times our children came home from school and told us, their parents, that they had been hit, spit on, or called a nigger by another student. Weeks turned into months, months into years, and the best that school personnel could (or would) do to respond to our complaints was to remind us that they did not condone such activity. Oh, yes, and rarely did they fail to mention that maybe we were being too sensitive! I'll admit to being sensitive to the damage being done to my children within the public school system; it's appalling to realize that those in

charge of the school system were not.

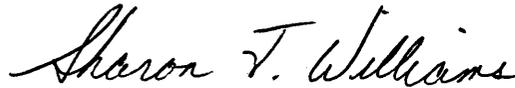
The charge of being overly sensitive has likewise been levied against any Native American person who complains that mascots and logos are offensive and do not belong in our public schools. There are undoubtedly many Native Americans at this hearing who can and will explain their position more effectively than I can, so I will not try. My sole remaining purpose is to create a tension within the mind of the reader. A tension so obvious as to make the reader question whether the Native American complainant is being overly sensitive or if the educational system is being overly insensitive. "Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood."

The debate regarding Indian mascots and logos was relatively new to me when my family moved to Wisconsin and I must admit that I did not completely understand it. I understood that the cartoon-like logos were offensive, as most of you probably will agree, but even I found myself thinking that Native Americans must be overly sensitive if they are offended by the attractive logos. I admit now that I was ignorant, but I was open to dialog and investigation regarding the subject. It wasn't long before I found myself sitting in on a discussion held in the Mosinee school district regarding their logo debate. To say that the experience changed my ideas forever would be an understatement; I came face-to-face with the racism that tormented my own children.

The racist attacks were the same, only the slurs had changed. While my children were called niggers, Indian children were called timber niggers. While my children heard that the only good nigger was a dead nigger, Indian children heard the same said about Indians or that spearing a squaw, saves a walleye. I could go on, almost endlessly, but I'm sure you understand my point. After I had listened to several personal accounts, one teenager's had particularly touched me, I walked into a ladies room to regain my composure and ran into two women discussing the testimonials we had just heard. While I had come in to stave off tears, they had come in to laugh. Unfortunately for every Native American student, possibly every minority student, within the Mosinee School District one of those women was on the school board. Surely, when a Native American student complains about racial harassment at school they are given more than pontificating platitudes, especially at a school that is honoring them by using an Indian logo! Surely, I jest.

My adult experiences with racism taught me the one thing that my childhood couldn't, that the color of my skin allowed me privileges that I could not even comprehend. Therein lies my thankfulness at having been victimized by racism. I no longer have to imagine the pain and damage it entails; I have experienced it. If only the remaining privileged people could personally experience the damaging effects of racism, maybe we would find it easier to reject those privileges to which we are not morally deserving. "Lamentably, it is an historical fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but, as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups tend to be more immoral than individuals." Now is the time for moral accountability within the Wisconsin public school system. Indian logos and mascots are just as damaging and demeaning to Native Americans as is 'black face' to African Americans, and the teaching of such stereotypes is not an acceptable activity within the public school system. Teach respect in our schools, not racism.

"Let us hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty." This and all of the previous quotations were taken from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail, written while he was jailed for peacefully demonstrating against segregation. Before you cast your vote on SB341, please take a moment and consider the location where this hearing is being held, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. Was this street named in good faith and, if so, do the activities herein honor the memory of the man? Or, was this street dedication merely another pontificating platitude tossed out as a red herring to appease a people in search of justice for all? Justice and honor can never be nurtured in an organization that perpetuates racism. End racism in our public schools! You can start by voting for SB341.



Sharon J. Williams
4906 Chadwick Street
Schofield, Wisconsin 54476

**Seymour Community School District
10 Circle Drive
Seymour WI 54165**

January 19, 1998

Barbara E. Munson
231 Steeple Road
Mosinee, WI 54455

Dear Barbara:

I received your invitation to appear in Madison and can relate to your concerns. However, since I miss school periodically throughout the year for speeches and conferences I will not be able to attend. I do not like to be gone too often and late January and early February is a very busy time for me. I am available during the summer months.

Feel free to use my name and refer to Seymour High School at will. I feel we made the change with little controversy and quite inexpensively. We knew it was coming and gradually phased out the "Indian" logo and name. Reflecting back on the change; it was accepted quite well. We are now proud to be the Seymour "Thunder."

Sincerely,



Bill Collar
Seymour High School

Administrative Office, 10 Circle Dr. Seymour WI 54165 * (920) 833-2304
Fax Number (920) 833-7118

Seymour High School, 10 Circle Dr. Seymour WI 54165 * (920) 833-2306
Seymour Middle School, 10 Circle Dr. Seymour WI 54165 * (920) 833-7199

Black Creek Elem. School 308 E Burdick St. Black Creek WI 54106 * (920) 984-3396
Rock Ledge Elem. School 330 W Hickory St. Seymour WI 54165 * (920) 833-7380

To: Senate Education Committee Memebers
From: Veronica Tillema, 606 17th St., Mosinee, WI 54455
Re: Hearing of SB341, January 28, 1998.

As a christian parent with children attending schools in the Mosinee School District I am asking you to **support SB341**, drafted by Gwendolynne Moore, prohibiting the use of any Indian mascot or logo in Wisconsin public schools.

It is my task, as a christian parent, to raise my children to respect the honor and dignity of all human beings, and also to try to keep them from harm. I also desire to support these goals for all children.

Native American children have been brave to come forward and raise our awareness that the use of Indian logos and mascots in our schools have been a painful affront to their dignity and self-respect. When we listen with open minds and hearts to the voices of these children, we cannot deny their reality. To continue to use these mascots and logos is to treat them with disrespect and intimidation.

As I encourage my children to respect and uphold the dignity of all people, I also hope they will not be desensitized to this by the repeated use of stereotypes and caricatures of a race of people. Using these mascots and logos in any educational environment places children in position to both witness and participate (peer-pressure) in sanctioned, organized disregard for individuals. This callous disrespect and dishonoring of people should not be encouraged or endorsed by any school, or sanctioned by the State of Wisconsin.

Please support an end to the use of Indian mascots and logos in the school districts of Wisconsin.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Veronica Tillema*

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING OF SB341, HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Tracey Tennyson and I am a sophomore Student Council member at Menomonie High School. It is a pleasure to speak before you today and I would like to thank you for this wonderful experience.

The Menomonie School district's mission statement says "preparing young people to be lifelong learners, caring individuals, and responsible citizens." According to this statement, the use of the Indian logo infringes on the moral and ethical values relating to issues surrounding racism in our school district and community. The children in the Menomonie community and in our state deserve an education free of racism and discriminatory symbols. These symbols portray very negative thoughts and feelings to young children about Native Americans. They are used as names for teams and as mascots in the same way as badgers, gophers, and eagles. Does this mean Indian people can be equated with animals or be even less than human?

Within a public school setting, each student deserves a bias-free learning environment, providing equal opportunity regardless of gender, class, or ethnicity. If this bill is passed, the students in our community and in our state will all be given this opportunity.

Many people in our community have termed the Indian logo "tradition" for Menomonie. This idea goes against the ideas of teaching diversity, respect, and the need for change in a modern society. The continued use of this logo makes us knowingly allow for negative images of the Native American culture to continue. Do we really want this for our children? The children growing up in the state of Wisconsin and in our community are the future for our world. If we continue to use discriminatory symbols and display racist beliefs, these children will grow up with these negative feelings and lack of respect for others. Teams and mascots are not named the Jew Boys or the Black Savages. These names would be considered discriminatory to most. The Indian mascots are no different than the previous examples. They are offensive to the Native American people and to many others.

If this law is passed, the children of our state will be more likely to grow up believing that everyone was created equal and that racism and discrimination are destructive and morally wrong. By tolerating the use of demeaning stereotypes in our public schools systems, we desensitize entire generations of children.

Our world's future depends on these kids. You hold in your hands the power to help these children become the best they can possibly be. Education is the key. I am one of the lucky ones. I have been educated and taught that it is morally wrong to discriminate against anyone. Without this education, I would not be the person I am today. I hope that the children of tomorrow will be given this same education. That may happen more easily if this bill is passed, and Indian logos throughout the state are eliminated forever.

Tracey Tennyson

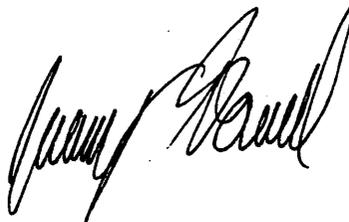


**TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
HEARING OF SB341, HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998**

Living in Menomonie, opposing the Native American logo, and being a high school student is a bad combination. People don't think that kids should be able to have a voice in our community. Most adults think that it's great when kids get involved, but when we start showing some intelligence, adults get scared. Right now , Menomonie is not where I would want to raise my family. We live in a community where at the mention of the word change, many people panic. Having talked to many new residents of Menomonie, the majority of them say that this is a bad place to raise a family. Sending a child to school, and having that child return home crying from the harassment, and torment from other children over a school logo is not what parents want for their children.

"They're taking away something that is apart of me," they say.

The truth is, they may be taking something away, but that mascot/logo will always be a part of you. The memories you cherish from your school days will not vanish, they stay where they will remain, in your heart. I ask you ladies and gentleman, do we want to continue a fight which will never get resolved, or do we want to provide what was intended for persons in America, equality?



TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
HEARING OF SB341, HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1997

"Times are changing" and we all must admit we have seen much change in the field of human rights. Since the 1950's we have seen the roles of women and all minorities change and we anticipate the day we may have a minority President. For some reason some schools in Wisconsin cling to their Native American logos and mascots by continuing to call their teams names related to a race of people who have changed considerably. I believe our school of Menomonie, should drop the team name of "Indians," with many positive outcomes as a result.

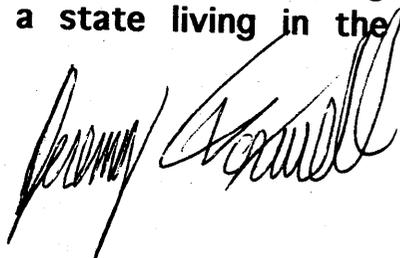
The first positive outcome would be the decreased stereotyping of Native Americans. This year a local paper used the term "scalping" as it wrote a sports article about the success of our football team. This is an example of what happens when a school team is named the "Indians." When stereotypes like this are in the newspaper for everyone to read, I can only guess what other negative stereotypes must appear on the lockers and in the hallways of schools we compete with. We have Native American students and I cringe whenever I hear our radio announcers use our team name over the air or hear our cheerleaders use the school name in their cheers. I can only feel empathy for our Native American students and wonder how we would all feel if the cheerleaders shouted "Go whiteboys," as our team took the field.

We need to treat Native Americans as a people and not as a symbol. In Minnesota over ten years ago, a law called upon schools to drop the team names related to Native Americans. In order to teach in Minnesota and in Wisconsin, educators must take a course in Human Relations which is aimed at giving the educators a firm foundation in human rights. Such a course helps people realize that Native Americans are people too and that symbols such as bows and arrows, and tomahawks are as outdated as the idea of selling live people at public auction. Our school's logo is a Native American in complete feather headdress surrounded with the words of "Dignity, strength, honor, and pride." These may seem proud words to compensate

for an ill chosen school logo, but to me it looks like we are saying that it is unusual for Native Americans to have these traits. As a young person I have always been exposed to lots of people of different nationalities and have never been one to stereotype any group due to their race or sex. If we are to be proud of our school, we must treat all races equally and not perpetuate stereotypes, which for the most part were never accurate anyway.

A final positive outcome of changing our school team's name would be our community coming together with a united front. It seems obvious that we would have so much more strength to put into all our programs if we were united as one rather than split. Our community has been torn apart by our local newspaper which loves to keep this conflict alive just to sell papers. The recall of Board members and this logo conflict have earned us mention in THE USA TODAY twice in the last year and even satirical humor from SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE. This is the sort of recognition I am embarrassed to be associated with. Our school board directed the staff to use the logo often because the majority of the Board is now in favor of "Indians" and even suggested the logo be used on diplomas and I for one will not accept a diploma with our present logo on it. A year ago the students voted in favor of a new logo and team name called the "Mustangs" but the public could not accept it. Our student body showed minimal opposition to this change, but many adults couldn't let go of it. The adult community members who went through our school being called the "Indians," are the ones who need to have this change forced on them or they will continue to live in the past and perpetuate the stereotypes that youth are not even aware of. A non-binding public referendum is proposed for this spring but I would like to see this addressed before that so our community can see that all races are equal people with equal rights.

As a senior student, I would like to see the state legislative committees, Senate and Assembly pass this bill. Let's remove the Indian mascots, logos, and nicknames from our Wisconsin schools. Let's be a progressive state at the forefront of change, not a state living in the past.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeremy Samuel", is written over the bottom of the text.

**TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARINGS
OF SB-341 HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998**

As a teacher at the Menomonie High School, I work with many of the students who are concerned with the issue of whether or not to keep the Indian mascot and logo. Like many in the school, I feel that the issue has gone on far too long with each side unwilling to compromise. My personal feelings are that to use a group of people as a mascot or logo, if there is even one in that group that is offended, is bigotry and racism. Because the issue has become so volatile in the community, many adults in the school setting refrain from being too vocal, in an attempt to be tolerant of all student opinions. As I observe student behavior, since the inception of this controversy, however, I believe that there has been an erosion of tolerance. It seems that as students witness adults in the community fighting over this issue, they have been given the message that bigotry is justified if you have a "good reason." Protecting the time-honored tradition of the school mascot has become the "good reason." But this attitude, that there are "good reasons" to be intolerant, seems to have gone beyond the logo issue. Less and less tolerance of differences is displayed as some students create their own "good reasons" to justify harassment. In effect we have taken giant steps backward in our community, giving our children the message that people who are perhaps less powerful, less vocal, less educated or maybe just different, are less important. It is very difficult to be a teacher in a district that seems to devalue tolerance of differences. It is very difficult to be a teacher in a district where I have to be cautious about teaching tolerance in the classroom for fear of reprimand from a school board that doesn't define bigotry as I do. It is very difficult to teach in a school district where the school board encourages me as an employee to actively support a situation that I find morally reprehensible. I look to the legislature to take a stand on this important moral issue and lead the people of this state towards tolerance and acceptance of all peoples.

Margaret Kitz
Teacher - Menomonie
High School

Jan 26, 1998

Testimony For State Senate Education Committee
Hearing SB341, Held on January 28, 1998

314 11th Street
Menomonie, Wisconsin 54751

January 28, 1998

Dear Senate Education Committee Members:

Attached are copies of letters related to my concern about the naming of "Wakanda Elementary School" in Menomonie. The naming of this new school occurred in 1997, in the midst of the community controversy about the Indian mascot.

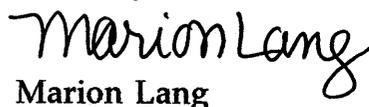
As the principal explained in his reply to my concerns, the naming process was taken seriously. However their decision does raise serious issues of sensitivity and respect for others.

No Dakota people were part of the debate in the naming process. And having chosen an Indian name, it does seem that the students and staff will be in a position to use Indian symbols as part of school decorations and tradition.

Also, the question of separation of church and state did not seem to apply when the spirituality was related to Dakota tradition. I can not imagine that the panel would have named a public school "Holy Spirit Elementary," understanding the Christian meaning of this name and the imagery that would result in the public schools from such a choice.

Our schools should observe the highest standards of respect for all cultures. I believe state law banning the use of Indian logos and mascots in Wisconsin's schools is necessary and urge you to bring Senate Bill 341 to the Senate for debate and vote.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Marion Lang in cursive script.

Marion Lang

314 11th Street
Menomonie, Wisconsin 54751

July 19, 1997

Marshall Quilling, President
School Board Members
Menomonie Area School Board

Dear Marshall Quilling and Members of the Board:

Recently the School Board voted to name the new school, Wakanda School.

While this name is appropriate because of the location of the school, and the history of the land, I wonder if board members know that Wakanda is a name with religious significance.

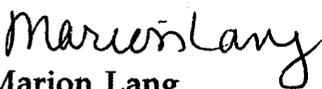
In the Dakotah language, wakan means spirit and wakanda means large or great spirit. I verified this information with local historian, John Russell.

I am concerned that the newly chosen name will become part of the on-going debate about the Indian logo and Indian culture that now divides our community.

I am concerned that if the name, which has religious significance, is used in cheers or schools songs, students might in all innocence show a lack of respect for the religious beliefs of the Dakotahs.

I hope my thoughts will be useful to you as you continue to wrestle with these sensitive and complex issues.

Sincerely,


Marion Lang

cc/ Dave Smette



WAKANDA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

School District of the Menomonie Area
1801 Wakanda Street NE • Menomonie, Wisconsin 54751 • (715) 232-3898

NICHOLAS J. KAISER
Principal

August 15, 1997

Marian Lang
314 11th Street
Menomonie, WI 54751

Dear Marian:

Dr. Smette showed me a copy of the letter you sent July 19, 1997, and asked if I would respond. Here are my thoughts about your concerns.

The process for naming the new school involved students, staff, PTO, and Site-Team members. We spent a considerable amount of time through discussion and researching ideas. We also had contacted John Russell about the meaning and origin of Wakanda. Our group saw no reason not to consider the name as it would be the name of a building, not unlike Menomonie is the name of our city. A list of eight names were selected, five of which contained Wakanda. The list was further narrowed to three and the final school vote was Wakanda Elementary School.

You noted that you were concerned about the school using the name in cheers and songs that may some how show disrespect for the religious beliefs of the Dakotas. At our level the only organized sports is basketball. We do not use cheers or songs in such events. As time passes, if we do look at some mascot to represent our school I can assure you we will research it carefully and do what is in the best interest of all concerned.

I appreciate you interest in this matter. If I can be of further assistance, please call, better yet, stop by for a tour of our building and a cup of coffee.

Sincerely,

Nick Kaiser

Nick Kaiser
Principal

NK/mb

c: Marshall Quilling, Dave Smette

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING OF SP341, HELD
ON JANUARY 28, 1998

Good Morning! My name is Jim Worthley. I'm here from Menomonie.

I got up at 4:30 this morning to come to ask for your help. The citizens of Wisconsin, who care about and who are embroiled in this Indian name, mascot and logo issue, need the assistance of our government. Would you please help those of us who are trying to listen to a minority segment of our population tell us that it is no longer appropriate to use Indian names as team and school names nor to use their often times sacred symbols for logos nor to use Indian caricatures as mascots?

To me it seems a simple issue. We have been asked in a quiet and respectful manner by our Native American neighbors NOT to use Indian names and logos. They have spoken simply and eloquently about the harm caused to native American children by the stereotypes that are perpetuated in doing so. Why should it be so difficult to acknowledge that this is a genuine and heartfelt request and to support this request with legislation that would ensure compliance?

I want to share some of my experience and it may explain why this issue has not been put to rest. I was a teacher in Menomonie for 24 years. During that time I had excellent evaluations from my administrators. I was thanked by hundreds of parents and students over the years for my dedication, hard work, and caring attitude. I had a very successful and satisfying career as a teacher.

However, and very interestingly, since I have become involved in supporting a change in our school's team name and mascot, I have been accused on the editorial page of our local tabloid of lying to my students, manipulating them, brainwashing them, of being ignorant of government and the democratic process and of being "laughable". Does this help to explain why more teachers don't speak up publicly about this issue?

Business people in our town are afraid that if they take a stand that they will lose business. Our top school administrators have been intimidated. Our local legislators won't touch it, as one of them said, "with a ten-foot pole." And students have been harassed and mistreated for trying to do the right and good thing.

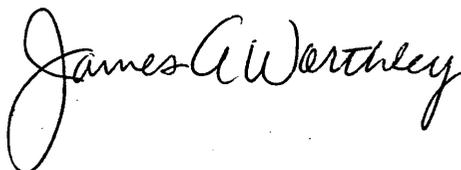
That's why we need your help. Our town is bleeding to death. We need our state government to step in to protect the rights of a minority group as both the federal and state governments have done countless times in the past. This is a responsibility and obligation of government.

I'm asking that you listen very carefully to the testimony of the students today. For this is an issue that most affects them. Listen not only with your ears and mind, but also with your heart.

Then, I'd suggest, that you send out for some large orders of those "powder-milk biscuits" that Garrison Keillor speaks of and pass them around the floor of the Senate and the Assembly too, so you can all have the "courage to do what needs to be done."

Please, put some other things aside for right now, educate your fellow senate colleagues and get this bill moving along. Have courage. Do the right thing.

Thank you.



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE MENOMONIE AREA

Administrative Service Center
718 North Broadway • Menomonie, Wisconsin 54751 • (715) 232-1642 • FAX (715) 232-1317

STEVEN ASHMORE
Assistant Superintendent
for Human Resources

DAVID SMETTE
District Administrator

SUSAN CHURCHILL-CHASTAN
Assistant Superintendent
for Student Services

October 14, 1997

TO: High School Administrative Staff

FROM: Dave Smette, Superintendent

RE: Use of the Indian Logo



The School Board of the Menomonie Area reinstated the Indian logo as the high school's official logo at the May 12, 1997, board meeting. It was and is the intent of the board that the Indian logo is to be used fully as our school logo.

I would request that you clearly communicate the intent of the board to all staff members, coaches and advisors once again. The Indian logo is our only official emblem, symbol or logo for the high school, and it should be used at every opportunity on school correspondence, documents, public announcements, etc. In other words, the high school and its staff should be proactive in seeking out opportunities for using the Indian logo.

For example, whenever there is a correspondence going out from the high school to students, parents or the general public, the Indian logo should appear. If there is a choice between using another symbol such as the "Flying M" or the Indian logo, then the official Indian logo should be used. The same would apply to diplomas, announcements, and any other documents or materials which the school officially promotes.

Another example would be referring to our teams as the "Indians" over the public address system at athletic events whenever possible.

The board has indicated that for this school year, all emblems painted on walls or uniforms would be able to remain and that the district should experience no overall costs to make such changes until a final determination has been made through the public referendum scheduled next April.

"...preparing young people to be lifelong learners, caring individuals and responsible citizens."

D - OPERATIONS

USE OF INDIAN LOGO

D-29

It shall be the policy of the Menomonie School District to use the Indian logo always and in all ways to preserve and foster the story of the Native American people who were here first, who lived in harmony with nature, and who continue to strive to preserve their cultural heritage.

More specifically, the use the the Indian logo shall portray positive ideas of a people who believe in the attributes of strength, honor, pride, and dignity.

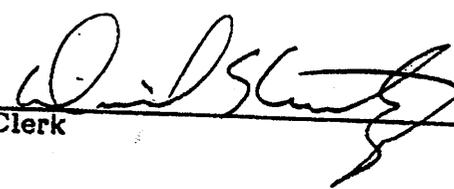
1. Do not use the Indian logo nor the school setting to stereotype negative ideas about Native Americans or any other cultures.
2. It shall be understood that no culture group shall be portrayed as a mascot in the School District of the Menomonie Area. A mascot is considered to be a person dressed to portray or symbolize a culture or race or to stereotype an individual.
3. Respect the religious practices and symbols of all students. Note: The word religion means a system of beliefs and conduct involving a code of ethics and a philosophy of kindness and goodness.

Finally, we believe that the enforcement of this policy is best left with the students and staff in the context of the specific activity in which they are involved, i.e., classroom, recess, homecoming assembly, parades, games, plays, musicals, cheering sections, etc. Talking together at the moment about the feelings of others will in time make all more sensitive and understanding.

However, if intentional and repeated disrespectfulness toward any minority group or person is substantiated, then such conduct will be dealt with under the existing discipline procedure. What constitutes disrespect is determined initially by the school principal and ultimately by the collective action of the school board, i.e., power of expulsion.

It is suggested that the words strength, honor, pride, and dignity be used to judge the appropriateness of cheers, songs, skits, floats, and other forms of expression used in the school setting.

Adopted 9/13/93


Clerk



**TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING OF
SB341, HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998**

I am Karin Worthley, the person fortunate to have been advisor to the fine young people of the Menomonie Student Council for the past six years. Thank you for the chance to talk with you. **I'd like to give you some examples of why Menomonie is an example of the worst that can happen to a community when it is forced to deal locally with the Indian mascot issue.**

In Menomonie for the past several years, we have had a chance to see what Robert Coles, physician and chronicler of the early civil rights movement, described as, "what happens to people in the midst of social changes, how they relinquish their old ways and take up new ones, how . . . they manage the various stresses and exertions of doing so."

He observed and talked with some of the first African American children in the South to walk through mobs to enter "white" schools to gain the chance for themselves and the many who followed them the opportunity for equal education. **He wondered what gave them "the courage and endurance to outface a mob."**

He observed and talked with adults who were so vehemently opposed to integration that one grown woman even repeatedly threatened the life of a six-year-old girl. He saw mobs of angry white assailants scream and spit on the children, trying to keep those children out of "white" schools, and wondered why.

But he saw other white people, too, people who refused to join the mobs, and some who even took the children's side. **And he concluded about the South in the early 60's that "perhaps nowhere in America is there so much that is good and bad about human beings so clearly in evidence." I think we could say the same about Menomonie in 1998.**

I have seen a group of young people (elected by their classmates to the Student Council) respond to a request from Native people in Menomonie, including one of their classmates, asking them to do what they could to **discontinue the use of the Indian mascot.** You have heard the history of their process. When the council's proposal to the School Board to change the team name, mascot and logo was accepted in August, 1996, **some adults who could not bear to lose the high school logo and team name they remembered and loved. Menomonie heated up fast, and the pot has been boiling ever since.**

Those angry adults formed a group committed to save the Indian logo. **One member of their own group wrote to six tribal groups in Wisconsin asking permission for Menomonie to use the Indian as a logo/mascot. None granted permission and many objected. So, that tactic didn't work.**

The leaders of the Indian logo group then changed the thrust of their argument. In essence, **they argued that only people who had lived in Menomonie all their lives and never left, or those who had left and still wanted the Indian mascot, should be allowed to make the decision.** They argued that tradition should not change. One person, now on our School Board, said that only people who had been born and raised in Menomonie really understood why the Indian should be kept. **Another alumnus, now a teacher at Menomonie High School, said he had been born and raised here and he didn't want to keep it. The answer was that he didn't count because he had moved away and come back.**

Their next tactic, when the School Board upheld the year-long study of the Student Council members, was to begin a witch hunt to discredit the Student Council and any who supported them, including three fine, hardworking, courageous board members who were recalled because they **wouldn't keep an Indian logo. That witch hunt continues til today. My**

husband and I have been amazed to read letters to the editor full of words we never said and actions we never did attributed to us. They make up facts and figures. They call us at home and write us letters chastising us.

Student Council members cared about Menomonie High School, and they had seen first hand some of the racial tension that walks the halls of Menomonie. They wanted to show that at MHS, people can be treated as individuals, not as stereotypes. Anyone who thinks these young people cannot think for themselves needs to know them. They are independently minded, genuinely thoughtful, and good hearted. .

It has also been very hard to watch as they have been harassed privately and publicly, been denigrated, accused of every selfish, bad intention, and characterized as being manipulated by adults who have supported them in their attempt to eliminate a small piece of disrespect for Native people. One girl burst into tears when she saw me because an adult she knew well had come up to her and shouted in her face that she shouldn't talk to me ever and that poor girl was so shaken, she didn't know what to do. Last year Student Council football players were harassed on the field during warmups before games by an assistant coach who was an alumnus of Menomonie High School and couldn't bear to see his high school logo change. A teacher scolded two Student Council members in class and told them they should be ashamed. Student Council members have received threatening phone calls. Parents have expressed their concern for their child's safety because of the rancor directed against them. Cheerleaders who don't want to shout Indians in their cheers wonder if they are going to get called on the carpet by the fans who watch them carefully to see that they shout Indians with enthusiasm. Some of them just mouth it. **Some Student Council members today did not come today because they did not want to take the risk and lose friends or be called to task in our local newspaper. You have heard today only the tip of an iceberg of insults, slurs and profanity, often from adults, that that these young people and many more like them who have graduated in the past two years have endured.**

Many people in our town, including some of our own school administrators, are afraid to confront such strongarm behavior. They are intimidated when it means speaking out will cost them their job or business or friend. In a small town, we buy our groceries from people we sing hymns with at church and sit near at ball games. We sell cars or hamburgers or insurance to people who teach our children. Small towns run more smoothly when people remember to remain civil and not to burn their bridges over conflicts because we all want to keep living in these places we love. But in Menomonie, we have learned that bridges will burn over an issue that for some means a great fear of change and for others means a moral necessity.

Change of this nature is hard, especially when the change involves a piece of someone's identity. That's why the students took so long to come to their position to recommend the mascot be changed. They knew change would be hard. They believed that the Indian mascot had been good for many years, but it no longer fit in a society or a school that is trying to come to grips with how people of many ethnic groups will get along peacefully and with respect.

In all their discussions, even their private ones, I have never, ever heard them stereotype all those who support keeping the Indian mascot into one group. They, my husband, and I know many of those individuals who are good hearted people. Those students and I have friends who have treated us with civility even though they disagree with us about this issue. They are not mean-spirited people, but they have been misled by misinformation. They are what the social worker for our school

district, Gary Johnson, calls innocently ignorant. We can understand that ignorance, but we cannot condone it.

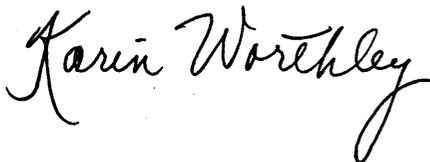
Confronting irrationality is always risky. I fully expect more letters, full of more misinformation and false accusations to be directed against me, my husband, the Student Council members who came here today. The students had planned this trip for quite a long time, talking even last year that if a bill were ever introduced into the legislature, they would want to testify. They have worked so hard to prepare this testimony. And then, yesterday I was summoned by both the principal of our high school and the activities director to call the superintendent who wanted me to come right up to his office to talk about this field trip which had been approved a week ago. All of a sudden, I was told that by him and our board president that we could not go because we were not representing both sides of this issue. Our principal told a number of these students that they (the only elected representatives of their classmates) should be sure to "make it clear in Madison" that they "were not representing their school." **I was told by my superintendent that I should not go to this hearing as the Student Council advisor because I would be "furthering my own personal political agenda." Our Student Council field trip was canceled.** We were told we could use no Student Council funds or school vehicles to get here. We found vans and cars and adults to drive, and parents have excused the students who are here today. I am taking a leave. Why did this happen? Because our superintendent got phone calls over the weekend from people who read in the paper that we were coming to testify and they were angry. Here's the irony. Those administrators have said in the past they think the logo should change. Now they know their jobs are on the line if they support the change and this group of courageous young people.

In speaking of his hometown, Hannibal, MO, Mark Twain said, "It is commonly believed that an infallible effect of slavery was to make such as lived in its midst hard-hearted. I think it had no such effect. . . . I think it stupefied everybody's humanity, as regarded the slave, but stopped there. There were no more hard-hearted people in our town . . . than would be found in any other town of the same size . . . , and in my experience hard-hearted people are very rare everywhere." Sounds like Menomonie to me. We don't have slavery, but we have had the idea that Native people can be used as we want, and we have been asked now by some of them to stop using them.

Menomonie High School and our community is fortunate to have many good-hearted young people who are looking to the future (and I am not speaking only of Student council members). After all, they will have to live in it a lot longer than most of us adults. Why should SB341 become a law? First of all, for them and others like them. For young Native Americans. And also because Wisconsin is a state of many small towns. A large number of them have Indian mascots and team names. We need your help. People of this state deserve better treatment than they are getting in Menomonie.

I loved my grandmothers very much. Nannie, the one who came here alone as an eighteen-year-old in 1899 from Sweden, had a saying for every occasion. She led a difficult life, but she taught us that "they can back you up against the wall, but they cannot push you through." The backs of some good-hearted young people and adults are up against the wall in this issue and they will be in other places in Wisconsin in the future. We need legislators who will do what is right. We need to show Wisconsin to be the forward thinking state it can be, not a joke on Saturday Night Live. Please support this bill.

Karin Worthley



Testimony for Senate Education Committee

Hearing of SB341 Held on January 28th, 1998

I am Nathan McNaughton and I am a non-voting member of the Menomonie High School Student Council and am in the class of 2000.

First of all I believe human logos should be changed because I find that we are offending and hurting people. I also believe it teaches people to stereotype.

Other schools that don't have an Indian logo do abuse the mascot themselves. When I go to a basketball game I walk around the school at half-time and see locker signs that have said the following:

-Boil the Indians

-Scalp the Indians

-Spear the Indians

-Massacre the Indians

Is this respectful? These are students that write this stuff. The schools that have the logo can control it only by changing their name. How would you feel if this was your national origin that is being abused on a locker sign by high school students who write only what they've been taught.

Schools that don't have a human logo get respectable locker signs like:

-Pound the Puppies

-Deck the Cards

-Tame the Wildcats

Once again if you have an Indian logo you are saying that Indians pound Puppies or deck Cards. So once again you are putting a stereotype into peoples minds and killing the Indian culture.

Another thing schools with Indian logos are limited to that other schools that don't have Indian logos is that they can't have a proper mascot to run around at

games. If you put someone in Indian dress and have them run around what are they going to do? If the person who is the mascot isn't educated about the culture all they do is create a stereotype. With an animal you can't have a stereotype. You act like the animal it's funny, but when you mock a human it will hurt someone. Even a group of people.

By having human logos and mascots you teach the wrong value and create confusion among people. Besides that you kill a culture that is existing.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike McNaughton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING
OF SB341, HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998**

Thank you for accepting this written testimony and thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue. This is not a Democratic or a Republican issue; it is not a Northern or a Southern Wisconsin issue - in fact, it is not only an issue here in Wisconsin. Let us be a beacon to the entire nation by taking the lead in eliminating "Indian" mascots and logos from Wisconsin Public Schools.

Here in Menomonie, this issue has torn our community apart. Those of us who oppose the use of the "Indian" logo and mascot do so because it offends many Native American people. Those who defend the use of the logo say that they are doing it to honor the Native Americans.

How can we honor people when many of them say that they are offended by this action? How can we honor these people when other schools use such slogans as "Scalp the Indians?" If people are offended and hurt, we must make changes. It would not be acceptable to refer to Japanese people as "Japs" or even worse. Therefore, even if a majority of people in a community feel that it is O.K. to use the "Indian" mascot, that doesn't make it right. When it comes to human rights issues, majority opinions are not as important as doing what is morally right.

Please make the morally correct decision. Eliminate this form of racism from our schools and our communities. Make Wisconsin a proud leader in this important and emotionally charged issue.

Thanks again for this opportunity to give my perspective as a social studies teacher and thanks for all of your hard work and dedication that you give to our great state.



David Maves
Social Studies Teacher
Menomonie Middle School
Menomonie, Wisconsin

Testimony for Senate Education Committee Hearing of SB-341 Held on January 28, 1998

Good morning, my name is See Vang and I'm a sophomore at Menomonie High School. I am a Student Council member as well as President of my class. I believe that prohibiting the use of Indian mascots should be done at the state level because leaving it for individual communities to deal with is just tearing them apart.

In eighth grade, I had the same attitude that many people have now, "Why should we change it? The Indians should be honored by it." I saw absolutely no reason to change the mascot. Then, one day, my middle school student council adviser and I were discussing the topic. She said to me, "How would you feel if we were the Menomonie Hmongs?" That's when I realized why Indian logos and mascots are offensive.

I remember seeing a play put together by a group from Minneapolis. I don't recall the name of the show, but I do remember that it was meant to promote diversity. I thought of it as a wonderful production until they told stories from the Hmong culture. Everything was accurate, except for the costume. A Hispanic woman was dressed to portray a Hmong woman. She wore the headpiece of the traditional Hmong outfit wrong. As a person who is 100% Hmong, growing up with a lot of the Hmong traditions, I was very offended. Even though it probably wasn't intended, I was offended because it just looked silly and it represented my culture wrong. The Indian logos and mascots are the same exact thing.

My active involvement in the Mascot Issue began in 1996 when I entered high school. As a freshman, I served on the Mascot Committee as a representative from both the freshman class and the yearbook staff. Those four months proved to be one of the most interesting times of my life. I can remember spending countless hours at school working on finding a new mascot for our school. We were often working until well after 9 or 10 o'clock on school nights. From suggestions for a possible new mascot to the final vote for the logo, we examined each step very carefully. Every one of these steps seemed to get harder and harder as the community became more and more divided by the issue. Many members of the community did not respect the hard work and the careful process of the Mascot Committee. This anger became very public. Not only did people voice their opinions in the local papers, the Discussion Board on the Internet homepage of Menomonie became a battleground for those who opted to fight. On there, people did everything from name calling to making racial remarks toward Native Americans.

The first time I visited the page, I was very upset to see how much of the discussion was centered on the mascot issue and the Student Council. Not only did people say negative things to the Student Council as a whole, a reference was made to me personally. The anonymous person said that I could not be a good representation of my class because I was the only person who ran for Class President, which automatically put me in the office. This comment was a result of someone trying to show that the Student Council was not representing the student body in the decisions we made regarding the

mascot issue. Seeing that comment bothered me because it came out because of the mascot issue. It also made me feel sad because it wasn't my fault that no one else ran for president.

Another example of personal attacks made to people is the idea that Mrs. Worthley, our Student Council adviser, brainwashed the Student Council. Apparently, many community members do not believe that Student Council members can't think for themselves and that everything we said was what Mrs. Worthley had put into our minds. That shows a real disrespect for us, the students.

One of the most appalling things that I saw on the Internet page was by someone who did not identify him or herself. The person said that all Indians should have been killed during the wars so that there wouldn't be any of this talk over mascots, casinos, and fishing.

All of the comments that were placed on the Web page were out there for anyone in the world to see, including people looking to settle in the Menomonie area. Because of the growing industry in Menomonie, people from all over the country are moving to Menomonie. In looking for information on the town, many go to the Internet. How is a town going to look to prospecting newcomers if we are arguing over an issue that is clearly a moral issue? There are many people who do already work in Menomonie, but have chosen to settle in Colfax or Eau Claire because of the controversy in Menomonie. If other cities have to go through the same thing that we are, pretty soon no one will want to live in Wisconsin.

The division in the community was apparent after the recall election last spring. No one said it, but everyone knew that the recall was over the mascot issue. The candidates that one supported obviously showed which side of the issue that person was on. You were either for keeping the mascot, for changing it, or you didn't care either way, therefore you didn't vote.

The taxpayers of Menomonie had to fork over \$6,000 to pay for the recall election. Another election is set for April of this year to let the community decide if we should keep the mascot or not. Perhaps another \$6,000 will be used. That money could go to something more important, such as buying a few new computers for the schools but, instead, it has to be spent for an election over an issue of ethics.

Many people have said that changing the mascots will end traditions and legacies of the respective schools. But, please remember, "A bend in the road, is not the end of the road, unless you fail to make the turn."

Thank You,


See Vang

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING
OF SB341, HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998

My name is Beth Heinzen. I am a ninth grader at Menomonie High School and a representative of the freshman class on the Student Council. I'm going to be addressing how the media has played a big role in the issue of changing our mascot. There have been over 50 letters written to our paper about the logo issue. In 1995 the whole process to change the logo began. The student council was asked by S.P.I.R.I.T.S/. a Native American group at Stout to consider changing the mascot. In the summer of 1996, the Student Council proposed to the School Board to change the logo, and the School Board accepted their proposal. Here is when the media became a battlefield. Both sides opened their mouths to show why this logo should or shouldn't be saved. Things like this were said:

"This is all Stout's fault."

and on the other side, "Could Menomonie halt the rudeness and consider some name with nobility and dignity."

As you can see, the war began and has continued until now. I do not want my community to be seen as one that is stuck in the past but one that instead is open to change.

Beth Heinzen

Beth Heinzen

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING OF SB-341,
HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998

Hello, my name is Erinn Horan. I am a Sophomore, and a member of the Class of 2000 Student Council at Menomonie High School.

At a first glance the MHS Indian logo issue may only appear to be a local issue, but at a second glance it questions logos across the nation. It also questions ourselves and how deep-set our stereotypes actually are.

In Mid February of '97 a small blurb appeared in *USA Today* concerning the MHS logo controversy. I personally heard only a little bit about it, and figured it was no big deal. A week or so later I had been out with some friends. Right after returning home my friend See called. She was all excited and told me to turn on Saturday Night Live because they talked about us. I put a tape in the VCR, after all we weren't on Saturday Night Live every week, then sat down to watch. Sure enough Norm McDonald came on and gave the 'Weekend Update' and mentioned Menomonie. This is what he said,

"In Wisconsin students at Menomonie HS are desperately fighting the efforts by the politically correct to change their team nickname the 'Indians'. Already opponents of the name have rejected the students first compromise 'The Drunken Indians'. They feel that's almost worse in a way."

I was pretty impressed at the time. But as time went on I started to think that we were being made fun of on the national level now. Almost a year later looking back at it I realize that while the entire issue was being made fun of. While the people for keeping the mascot got a real slam. No one seemed to realize that those who opposed change the most were the adults in the community, and it was student initiative that brought up the issue.

The topic of being mentioned on Saturday Night Live was hot for a while, but it wore off and life continued. The recall election came and went and the mascot issue died down as summer vacation came.

As the '97 Fall Sports Season came, local papers had to decide whether or not to use the 'Indian' nickname. Most of the articles that appeared used the term 'Indian' when describing a certain team, i.e. Indian Football. I thought that it wasn't really respectful, but yet it could be a lot worse. The '97 Football season started out pretty good so when Homecoming came around it was pretty sure that we were gonna win. The game went well. We beat the Memorial Old Abes 50-0. The next day the *Eau Claire Leader-Telegram* ran an article covering the game. The reporter talked along the lines of the "Memorial Old Abes being victims of another Indian massacre" and that they were "scalped by the Indian tribe." (Full quote not available.) The fact that someone could print that and not even feel that it was the least bit derogatory amazed me. After that opening paragraph I found it extremely hard to finish the article. I fully respect and enjoy the Freedom of the Press but there is a point where the press has a job to not make such discriminatory remarks.

The logo issue has died down considerably. It often comes up and can become a quickly heated issue. The issue hasn't been in the local media quite as much as it was last year. It

seems as though the issue has become a common disagreement and won't be solved soon. Many people seem to be dead set that it won't change. I have began to feel that this is an issue that can not be peacefully solved in our community.

Through out this entire process I have learned that what we are experiencing is the Democratic process. This Christmas I was telling my cousin, Quinn a freshman in Evanston Illinois, about what has been going on. I told him the whole story and he said he remembered the story from his Freshman Civics class. He said that one day before school he happened to turn on the TV and there was a local program on talking about the Menomonie High School Indian logo. He listened to it for a while, but didn't think much of it. Later that day during his Civics class his teacher showed them a video clip of the very show about the MHS Indian logo. Then his class discussed it. He remembered that there were a few derogatory remarks but for the most part his classmate were in support of a change. They took the entire hour to discuss the process the logo was going through. The teacher told the class that the controversy was a prime example of democracy in action.

I listened to what he had to say about the discussion in class. I really began to realize that we have shown many people that something that is considered to be normal to be wrong. Many people still picture Indians as people wearing headdresses and doing war chants. I thought that I was above it, until I actually tried closing my eyes and seeing what I first thought of. I scared myself. The first thing I saw was the picture on our Gymnasium wall. I knew right away that an Indian is nothing like the picture on the gym wall. They go to school with us. They are not like the picture on the gym wall.

How come many communities and individuals across the nation can look at the issue and say that it is simple and should just be changed? Yet we, who are living through the issue cannot even come to any sort of agreement? Our community has tried to peacefully deal with the issue for the past few years. The community has not been able to accomplish this without resorting to immature behavior. This is not students so much as adults who are afraid to lose the mascot they graduated with. Change is scary, for them and for us. Our goal of changing the mascot is not to take away their traditions, but to create our own traditions that we can be proud of.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Erinn Horan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Erinn Horan

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING OF SB341, HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998

Hello. My name is Anne Klimpke and I am a sophomore at Menomonie High School. This is my first year on Student Council, and I have had many experiences with this issue since about 1995.

In the beginning when I first heard about the issue, I really didn't see any reason for the change. I wasn't friends with any Native Americans and so I really never heard any reasons to change it. Then, in eighth grade, or 1996, I brought it up to my mom while we were driving in the car. At first, I was very closed minded and set in my ways, but then I listened to what she was saying. Bit by bit I opened my mind and I heard what she was saying. By that time, we had gotten home and I went up to my room and just thought about what my mom had just told me. I let it all sink in and realized that I had never really heard the other side to the issue. **I realized that to really hear what people say, you have to be open-minded and think about what they say.**

Since then, I've had many experiences. This year especially, I was in Cross Country and I was at a meet. **In the middle of a race, there was a coach from another school and he was cheering for me and he didn't know my name, so he yelled, "Go Menomonie!" and "Go Indians." I didn't really think that I should be called an Indian when I am 50% Norwegian and 50% German.** I do not know everything about the Native American culture or way of life. Afterward some other team members and I discussed it and we decided that it really bugged us. It was disrespectful. We did not say anything to the coach though.

Also, at many of our meets there have been many people that would ask us what was going on with this whole issue and wondering why we could not just change our logo and team name simply and quickly like other schools and communities had done.

I think that it is about 5 to 10% of the people in our school who would like to change and 5 to 10% who would like to keep it, and all the rest really don't care. They just want this whole thing to be over.

At a regional Student council conference, some students from our Student Council gave a session. We told about our logo situation and why we wanted to change it. Some of the people from other schools did not agree with us and some did. Two or three from each "side" spoke out and everyone else just sat there amazed as these people were yelling at us.

So, it is up to you. Do you want to see more horror stories like ours? Our community has been broken apart because of a high school logo/mascot. Please make the right decision. Make SB341 a state law.

Anne Klimpke
Anne Klimpke

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
HEARING OF SB341, HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998

I am Alicia Gibb, a junior at Menomonie High School. I am a representative for the class of 1999. I am very grateful for this opportunity to speak.

I'm going to be speaking about what goes on in the high school regarding the Indian mascot. There has been tension everywhere. I can feel it in the halls, classrooms, but mainly in my heart. The malice comes off in waves. When this malice hits me it strikes out and sends me stumbling backwards.

I have had a few personal experiences I would like to share. My first experience was last year. My class was discussing the mascot issue, I was one of the only ones speaking out for change. I began to feel quite alone, as we got deeper into discussion, but I didn't give up. After class I was called an 'injin lover', a 'tree hugger' and other profane names. Students asked me why I wasn't going to go tell the professional sports teams to change their names. Then somebody told me the only reason I thought that way was because my parents didn't raise me to be an open-minded person. That hurt the most. I don't think my parents could have raised me to be a better person. As tears swelled in my eyes and a lump caught in my throat all I could do was walk away from that situation. My stomach was in a knot for the rest of that day. After I got home that night I cried, but not once did I question where I stood on this issue. The next day in class a few people refused to talk to me. I might add that this was the only class discussion I have ever had. Teachers are afraid to talk about this issue and most of the new teachers, that I have personally talked with, are afraid of losing their jobs if they voice an opinion.

Another experience was with a classmate, I had worn this shirt supporting my opinion, and a student told me I should be burned along with my shirt. The day after a different student wanted my first and last name, address and telephone number because I was going to be in 'big trouble' for wearing that. This person told me I was violating a law by wearing an anti-logo shirt.

I think the adults of this town have lit the match to keep the fire burning far too many times. I've been told to keep my nose in my own business because this is something for the adults of Menomonie to deal with. Which leads me to these questions for some adults in the community: Who is

going to Menomonie high school? Who is constantly being effected by this? Who has the knot in their stomach from being ridiculed for having an opinion in this issue? Adults have asked me why I keep trying to speak out in favor of change. They'll say, "you're just a student, you can't even vote yet - what do you think you can change?" People have told me I'm only going to make enemies by voicing my opinion against the Indian logo and mascot.

There are times when I feel like dirt knowing my town is displaying this stereotypical Indian for a logo and mascot. I am not always proud to be from Menomonie. I don't want citizens from other communities thinking that I too promote the stereotypes of Native Americans. With this logo and mascot I feel I am offending Native Americans. Therefore, I am offended by having the Indians for my school mascot. If one person is offended, that should be enough to change it. For example, if a student wears a shirt advertising drugs or alcohol and only one person is offended by it, that student must turn their shirt inside-out.

Now I ask you to remember that I'm a junior in high school - having the best times of my life. Presently my life is filled with pain and frustration provoked by the Indian mascot. Is this what I'm supposed to be feeling throughout my high school career? Is this the atmosphere our high school wants? This bill would terminate the division and suffering in Menomonie, and prevent the division of other community. I want to thank you for listening to me and although I am still a child at only seventeen I quote, "Children should be seen and heard and... believed." Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

Alicia Sibb

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARINGS OF SB-341 HELD ON
JANUARY 28, 1998

Hello. My name is Joy Link. I'm a 17 year old Junior and Student Council Member at Menomonie High School. I've been involved in the effort to change the Indian mascot/logo/team nickname at MHS since August of 1995, the beginning of my freshman year.

The first time I talked to anyone about the possibility of changing was before the beginning of the school year when I was being shown around the school by two Senior Student Council members. They said they didn't really care what the mascot was, as long as they would graduate as Indians. At that time, I told them that I felt the same way, knowing that they only had one year of high school left and I had four.

The next time the mascot was mentioned was at the Student Council Fall Planning Retreat later in August. The Student Council was learning Conflict Resolution by Consensus, and needed a difficult topic to discuss. The mascot was perfect, because there were so many differing opinions represented by Student Council Members. We all had the opportunity to say how we felt about the issue. When it was my turn, I remember saying something to the effect of "It doesn't need to be changed. It's honoring the Indians. Look at the words surrounding the logo - honor, pride, dignity, and strength. How could anyone be offended by that?" By the end of the day, we had decided that this was an issue we wanted to learn more about, and made it a project for the year.

I kept an open mind throughout the year and listened to all of the information presented. By the end of the year, I could not believe that I had ever wanted to keep the mascot that I now saw as racist and stereotypical. I realized that I would never graduate as an Indian because all of my relatives are of European Ancestry. I was convinced that retaining a mascot like "Indians" was not honoring anybody, except maybe some of the MHS alumni who feel a deep connection to this mascot.

The school board listened to our proposal and approved a change of the mascot. For the duration of my sophomore year, the focus of the Student Council was on what the new mascot would be. We took suggestions from students and community members, narrowed them down using a list of criteria determined beforehand, and had the students vote on which name they liked the best. After the students chose the name, a contest was held to pick a logo. During this time, a recall election for three school board members was held, and those members were replaced. Among the first acts of the new school board was to reinstate the Indian mascot and put off all action until a community referendum could be held in April 1998.

We had almost put the whole issue behind us, but community members keep dragging it out. There are probably other Wisconsin schools that would change their Indian logos but fear it would divide their community, their friendships, and their families like it has done in Menomonie.

I'm in favor of passing this bill because of this. Making a state law banning the use of Indian logos would be a huge step toward reuniting our community and putting the focus of the school board and faculty back on education. It would also help other schools replace their Indian logos without worrying about having an outcome like Menomonie has had.

Joy Link

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING OF
SB341, HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998

My name is Luke Katzmark, and I am a Menomonie High School Student Council representative for the sophomore class.

The mascot issue in Menomonie has affected the lives of almost every citizen in the entire town one way or another. It started to affect my life from when I was just beginning school as a freshman last year.

I was the freshman class president and had agreed with what earlier Student Council members had decided. They simply wanted to change an offensive logo and mascot in the Menomonie High School.

Since I had been the class president, my parents were quite proud of me and told many of their friends and co-workers. When my parents would invite these people over for just a casual dinner or get together, more times than not, they would bring up the mascot issue thinking that I would have something important to say according to my position. Usually it would turn into a debate between a 14-year-old and adults, or I would just clam up and walk away.

It was hardest to talk to people in the community or in school that were my friends and are now my enemies due to my personal judgment in Student Council.

I hope that this bill is passed so that no one else will be affected by a racist mascot or logo again. Thank you.



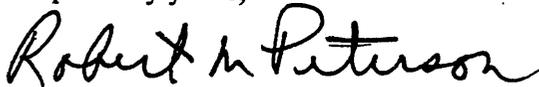
Luke Katzmark

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING OF SB341,
HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998.

THE FOLLOWING IS A DEPOSITION I MADE IN THE FALL OF 1997 TO THE
MENOMONIE AREA SCHOOL BOARD REGARDING THE INDIAN LOGO ISSUE:

I have a lot of good friends on both sides of this issue and I am not interested in having those friendships damaged or destroyed over a school nickname or logo. I have had a good deal of interaction with people on both sides of this issue (especially students) and have worked hard to keep discussion and differences on a high ground. In situations where the best we can do is to agree to disagree, it has always been my desire to maintain mutual respect and friendship. I truly believe this issue can be resolved over time without destroying friendships and harmony in the community if we would hold emotions in check and deal with each other in a rational manner. At the same time I feel this is an important issue. I have been a student and teacher of Native American history, anthropology and affairs for the past 30 years. In the way which I have come to understand the Native American situation there is very little in my own personal thinking or wisdom that feels the use of Native American symbols as mascots, nicknames, or logos is an honor or uplifting to at least the majority of the tribes in this country. This is a position I had taken many years before I moved to Menomonie. If Native Americans prefer us not to use the logo or name I would support and encourage compliance.

Respectfully yours,



Robert M. Peterson
Social Studies Teacher
Menomonie Area School



STATE OF WISCONSIN

Department of Employee Trust Funds

Eric O. Stanchfield

Secretary

801 West Badger Road

P.O. Box 7931

Madison, WI 53707-7931

January 28, 1998

In Reply Refer To:

Honorable Calvin Potter, Chair
Senate Committee on Education
407 Hamilton Building
Madison WI 53702

Subject: Senate Bill 383

Dear Senator Potter:

We do not take a position on the merits of Senate Bill 383 or charter schools in general. However, we do want to advise the committee of the relationship between charter school teachers and the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS).

Our department originally became involved in the issue when interested parties wanted to have all charter school teachers covered under the WRS. Since 1921 all public school teachers have been covered under a public pension plan. First, it was the State Teachers Retirement System. Since the merger of three major public plans in 1982, it has been the WRS. Because the WRS is a qualified governmental pension plan under Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules, we advised the Legislature that charter school teachers could only be covered under the WRS if they were employees of the public school district. Including employees of private employers, in this case charter schools, in the WRS would jeopardize the plan's governmental status under the federal tax code. For these reasons, s. 118.40 (7) (a), Stats., was enacted to make it clear that charter schools are instrumentalities of the public school district and that all charter school teachers are employees of the public school district and subsequently covered under the WRS.

Merely repealing s. 118.40 (7) (a), Stats., in the Department's opinion, will not automatically relieve public school districts of the employer/employee relationship with charter school teachers. This is because the federal FICA (social security) regulations contain several criteria defining when a person is an employee of a specific employer. Those criteria include such items as: who hires the person; who has control over the hours of employment; who sets the standards and provides supplies; who determines the content of the instruction; etc.

If s. 118.40 (7) (a), Stats., is repealed, we will follow our normal policy and apply the federal FICA regulations to determine who is the employer -- the public school district or the charter school. Depending upon the school district's contract with the charter school and how the charter school is established, the school district may or may not be the employer for FICA purposes. If the school district is the employer for social security purposes, the school district must continue to cover charter school teachers under the WRS. If the relationship between the public school

Honorable Calvin Potter
January 28, 1998
Page 2

district and the charter school teacher does not meet FICA's employer/employee test, the teacher may not be covered under the WRS.

Teachers who have been covered by the WRS and are found to be employed by the charter school will not lose any benefits that they have already accrued. They will, however, not accrue additional WRS benefits unless they again become employed by a public school district or other public employer.

Before the committee takes executive action on the bill, we suggest an amendment to s. 40.02(55), Stats., which defines "teacher" for WRS purposes. The definition includes all teachers in charter schools. Unless amended, it will be in conflict with Chapter 118.

We hope this discussion is helpful to you. We will be happy to work with you to draft an amendment or answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Sandy Drew, Director
Legislation and Planning

cc: Members of the Committee
Secretary Eric Stanchfield

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING OF SB341
HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998

January 28, 1998

Ms. Angela Wylie
3323 Walter Way
Green Bay, WI 54311

To whom it may concern:

I, Angela Wylie, would like to state for the record, that I am sincerely against the use of Native Americans, their symbols, whether being fictitious, being used as mascots here in Wisconsin. I find the use of Native American mascots morally demeaning, and irreprehensible.

As a proud native Wisconsinite, I am appalled at such insensitivity by my state. We are celebrating 150 years of statehood. It is about time we rid ourselves of such blatant ignorance.

Let Wisconsin have a notch of cultural pride by respecting all of its people. I would like to see an end to Native American mascots once and for all!!!!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ms. Angela Wylie". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Ms. Angela Wylie



**The American Jewish
Committee**

MILWAUKEE CHAPTER, 759 No. Milwaukee Street, Suite 600, Milwaukee WI 53202 (414) 291-2140 FAX (414) 291-2145

Good afternoon, my name is Harriet McKinney, and I am the Director of the Milwaukee Chapter of the American Jewish Committee. I am here in support of SB 341.

On November 24, 1997, the Milwaukee Chapter approved the following resolution:

(attached)

Throughout the history of the American Jewish Committee, we have believed that the greater the level of societal racism, the greater the danger to all of us. Native Americans have argued and continue to argue that sports team names such as those you are looking to eliminate with this legislation, are a legacy of racism that devalues them as a people, as well as their religion and their heritage. I submit that this truly American form of racism is the web page on which other forms of prejudice rest, and that it is the effects of the "normal and natural" use of Indian team mascots that numbs us out to other forms of discrimination. The inherent racism of these sports names would be self-evident if others were targeted with names such as the Racine "Blackskins" with a mascot of a Sambo or the Milwaukee "Jews" complete with a yarmulke wearing mascot. Or the Irish "Paddies" complete with a red-nosed, inebriated leprechaun.

We would certainly notice that those symbols would be mocking to those communities. That it is difficult for us to notice that the same is true, that the Warriors, Indians etc. are equally mocking, is precisely because they have become so "ordinary" that we have been blinded to their effect. How could a person of Native Heritage possibly learn at a school where his or her past is mocked? What is the effect upon any young learner when any one group is dehumanized? Do they wonder, could my group be next?

There is one cardinal rule when dealing with any form of bigotry... change the color of skin or religion in any situation and see if the same rules apply. I know of no more awful double-standard than those involving Indian mascots and Indian team names.

On behalf of the Milwaukee Chapter of the American Jewish Committee, I urge you to promote, support, move forward, approve and pass SB 341 with all deliberate speed.

I am also leaving for your perusal, a videotape about the effects of these names and mascots from the PBS Point of View series and printed materials about how the Los Angeles School District banned these images.

I trust that Wisconsin will continue to lead the nation in concern for the well-being of all of its citizens by passing this legislation.

PRESIDENTS: Dr. Robert Kliegman and Sharon Kliegman

DIRECTOR: Harriet Schachter McKinney

VICE PRESIDENTS: Shel Gendelman, Dr. Herb Giller, Dr. Milton Gutglass, Roberta Isaacson, Philip E. Lerman,

Sally R. Peltz, Karen Schudson, Richard Schwalb • **SECRETARY/TREASURER:** Lawrence Freschl

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EX-OFFICIO: Judy Bluestone, Robert Brill, Eric Butlein, Robert Corris, Steve Isaacson, Leon Schur, Jerry Wallace, Elmer Winter



STATEMENT ON TEAM NAMES

Whereas it is the mission of the American Jewish Committee to combat bigotry and promote intergroup relations, and;

Whereas the use of racial or ethnic stereotypes in the names, nicknames, or titles of business, professional, sport or other public entities is frequently demeaning, whether intended as such or not;

Whereas demeaning symbols create an environment in which degrading acts become more acceptable;

Whereas many teams still sport names such as "Indians," "Braves," "Redskins," "Chiefs," "Redmen," etc.;

Whereas such names are degrading and promote practices that trivialize and demean people and religious beliefs and symbols;

THEREFORE, the American Jewish Committee deplores and opposes the use of racial or ethnic stereotypes in the names or titles of business, professional, sport or her public entities when the affected group has not chosen the name itself. The AJC resolves to encourage such entities to end their use of offending stereotypes.

Adopted by The American Jewish Committee, November 24, 1997



**The American Jewish
Committee**

MILWAUKEE CHAPTER, 759 North Milwaukee Street, Suite 600, Milwaukee, WI 53202 (414) 291-2140

25TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1997 The Time Inc. Magazine Company
Sports Illustrated

July 14, 1997

SECTION: SCORECARD/SCOUTING REPORT; Pg. 19

LENGTH: 366 words

HEADLINE: RIGHTING A WRONG;
IN WHOSE HONOR? DIRECTED BY JAY ROSENSTEIN; JULY 15, 10 P.M., PBS

BYLINE: JEFF PEARLMAN

BODY:

Rosenstein's poignant, hour-long documentary makes clear the lunacy of sports teams' appropriating Native American names and symbols. In taking up the battle against nicknames like Braves and Chiefs, Rosenstein uses footage of mascots and white fans inanely dancing around dressed as Indians. He also exposes the arguments of people like Rich Winkel, an Illinois state representative who in 1995 sponsored a bill that would keep Chief Illiniwek as the University of Illinois's mascot. "We have a rich heritage in this country, especially over the past few decades, of protecting minority rights," Winkel says. "But minority rights aren't always right."

Not all defenders of the Fighting Illini are so diplomatic. "This school," says a tailgater, "shouldn't cave in to out-of-state foreigners."

The star of the film is Charlene Teters, a Spokane Indian who in 1989, while a student at Illinois, had the misfortune of taking her two children to an Illini basketball game. At halftime she first witnessed Illiniwek, a man costumed in a gaudy feather headdress, leather skins and a year's supply of facial paint. His dance--sort of M.C. Hammer meets Richard Simmons meets Biff the town idiot--was supposed to recall an Indian ritual. It failed miserably. "My kids just sank in their seats," Teters says in a tearful interview. "I saw my daughter trying to become invisible."

The rest of the documentary zooms in on Teters's stirring rise from neophyte protester to, as an ally puts it, "the Rosa Parks of Native Americans." That may be hyperbole, but there is powerful footage of Teters facing fellow Illinois students as they chant, "Pick another school!" Rosenstein, a novice filmmaker who began the project while studying at Illinois, deftly mixes such charged moments with evocative black-and-white photographs of Native Americans.

Since 1989, due in part to Teters's persistence, at least six colleges have changed their nicknames, and now even nonbelievers are hard-pressed to rebut Teters's point--though they try. "We don't do any kind of mascot antics," says Jeff Beckham, who wore the Illiniwek get-up in '94. "We keep everything very honorable and dignified."

--JEFF PEARLMAN

MOTIONS/RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED TO
THE LOS ANGELES CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR CONSIDERATION

SUBJECT: Elimination of American Indian Mascots

DATE NOTICED: September 2, 1997

PRESENTED FOR ACTION: September 8, 1997
(Waiver of Board Rule 72)

PRESENTED BY: Mr. Kiriyaama,
Mrs. Boudreaux, Ms. Castro, Mr. Horton

SECONDED BY: Ms. Fields

MOTION: x

RESOLUTION:

Whereas, The Los Angeles Unified School District has a policy, "The Respectful Treatment of All Persons;"

Whereas, The American Indian Education Commission, an arm of the Board of Education, unanimously supports the abolishment of the use of American Indian names and images as mascots in schools;

Whereas, It is District policy, as stated in "Educating for Diversity: A Framework for Multicultural and Human Relations Education," that institutional forms of racism be identified and challenged, that schools promote a positive image of the students' identity groups and incorporate accurate history, role, and achievements of traditionally omitted groups;

Whereas, The use of American Indian mascot names and images in schools evokes negative images that become deeply embedded in the minds of students, depicting American Indians in inaccurate, stereotypic, and often violent manners;

Whereas, The cause and effect in the inappropriate and insensitive use of American Indian names and images violates the culture and traditions of American Indians and may prevent American Indian children from developing a strong positive self-image; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the use of American Indian mascots and names such as Apaches, Mohicans, Warriors, and Braves will not be used by any Los Angeles Unified School District School.

Resolved, That the Superintendent direct the Office of Intergroup Relations to work with the affected school communities and the appropriate District offices to effect this change during the 1997-98 school year; and

- CONTINUED -

Resolved That the Superintendent identify resources to cover the expenses of change within reasonable limits.

AYES NOES ABSTAIN ABSENT

Mrs. Boudreaux	X			
Ms. Castro	X			
Ms. Fields	X			
Mr. Horton	X			
Mr. Kiriyaama	X			
Mr. Tokofsky	X			
Ms. Korenstein			X	
TOTAL	6		1	

ACTION: CARRIED

REFERRED TO:

Sept. 8, 1997

Schools to Drop Indian Symbols

goes back to 1980 when Lois Red Elk, a member of the district's American Indian Education Commission, complained to the school board.

John Orendorff Jr., the commission's director, said nothing came of the protest, and the issue slumbered for more than a decade.

But two years ago, the issue flared again. Parents brought Orendorff a videotape of Indian-costumed mascots at Birmingham and Gardena games mock-attacking spectators with tomahawks and shouting, "We're murderous."

"These people are putting on Indian heads and simulating murder," Orendorff said.

Native American children, who make up less than 1% of the district's 667,000 students, told him they were intimidated, Orendorff said.

He proposed a total prohibition on Indian depictions. In response, then-Supt. Sid Thompson set up a task force, asking governance councils at each of the three schools to consider the question.

The Gardena school community agreed to scrap the Indian mascot entirely, estimating the make-over would cost about \$35,000.

University High leaders weren't eager to give up the school's Indian identification, which in their minds had become linked with a Gabrieli-no archeological site on campus.

"There is no one on this campus, nor alumni, that felt in any way that any action was demeaning," said University Principal Ann Petty. "There is a great deal of pride from the alumni. We're 75 years old."

The University activities committee suggested remaking the Indian mascot into a high-tech robotic warrior, similar to the kind on television action adventure shows. Students submitted designs. But the school leaders decided to study the question further.

Birmingham also balked. Dissatisfied with the responses, Thompson last spring sent a directive to the three school principals to eliminate both the Indian images

and names by the start of the 1998-99 school year. Thompson retired shortly after that, and his successor, Ruben Zacarias, found himself pressured to rescind the order.

Reacting to the backlash from Birmingham alumni, Board of Education member Julie Korenstein complained to Zacarias that the board had not been consulted in Thompson's decision.

"I thought at minimum there should be some discussion on it," Korenstein said.

Sensing that their gains were dissipating, the Native American groups struck preemptively at last Tuesday's board meeting.

With a phalanx of red-shirted

showing that the stereotype is pervasive. Besides that, he said, there are too many images of violence and war.

"It's just absurd," he said. "It needs to go."

He was preaching to a receptive audience.

Board member George Kiriya proposed an immediate ban on all Native American depictions, an action that district general counsel cautioned could be taken no earlier than today. Three of the six other board members—Barbara Boudreaux, Victoria Castro and Jeff Horton—promised their votes.

Even with the vote apparently locked, the controversy may not end quietly.

Board member David Tokofsky, who was not present during Tuesday's discussion, said he fails to see the logic of a ban and would prefer a dignified portrayal of the American Indian at the schools than none at all.

"If you just erase the image, what does the school become?" Tokofsky asked. "Does it become just another white American figure?"

And some veteran warriors may only have begun to fight.

"My whole committee is up in arms about this thing, taking the Warriors away from school, said Lenard E. McDonald, a 1941 graduate of University High.

"To everybody I have spoken to so far, this is a small group with a chip on their shoulder and they are going to get their way."

McDonald said the story is being reported in an alumni newsletter that is mailed to about 700 alumni from the classes of '43, '44 and '45.

"If you just erase the image, what does the school become?"

DAVID TOKOFSKY
School board member

supporters, representative of the Committee for Native American Rights, the American Indian Movement and the National Coalition on Racism in Sports pressed for immediate action.

They assailed Korenstein's suggestion that schools might retain the names "warrior" and "brave" while scrapping any demeaning images.

Orendorff cited studies finding that when Los Angeles students were prompted with the word "warrior," they invariably drew pictures of Native Americans.

Looking for past articles?

1-800-788-8804

Times on Demand

A LOOK AHEAD

Tribes Win in Mascots' Last Stand

■ Schools will drop logos that Native Americans say are demeaning. Alumni argue that traditions should be preserved.

By DOUG SMITH
TIMES EDUCATION WRITER

This is the last of the Mohicans: a glaring, feathered, big-cheeked caricature of a proud Native American people.

Soon he will be banished from the field of play, as well as from notebooks, yearbooks, pencils and walls on the campus of Gardena High School.

Likewise the University High Warrior in West Los Angeles and the Birmingham Brave in Reseda.

In a twist on the legendary cowboy-and-Indian wars, several Native American groups have all but won a 17-year campaign to eliminate from the Los Angeles Unified School District all school mascots that depict their people.

Consequently, the three Indian logos, along with all regalia, will be replaced this year by new mascots—jungle creatures, say, or politicians—trading on the stereotypes of some other group that remains fair game.

The new policy, expected to be formalized in a Board of Education vote today, would require the three high schools and

Please see MASCOTS, B4

MASCOTS:

Continued from B1
Wilmington Junior High to drop both the name and the image of their mascots, including impersonations by students during competitive events.

The victory follows several weeks of rhetorical skirmishing between the Native American groups, which condemned the mascots as demeaning, and alumni who sought to preserve traditions they view as harmless expressions of school spirit.

"Nothing will be gained by painting over the 'Mighty Birmingham Brave,'" 1964 graduate Jim Pitillo wrote in an opinion piece published in The Times. "For those of us who have a history with that

**"These people are
putting on Indian heads
and simulating murder."**

JOHN ORENDORFF JR.
Indian commission director

school, we will always be Braves. Not once in my 38 years of being a Brave have I associated my mascot with anything other than the proud history and heritage of the school."

Native Americans, saying they have silently suffered indignity for years, see no honor or humor in the flippant mascot tradition when it focuses on them.

"Any time you have a school with a mascot like an Indian or warrior, there is always going to be corresponding behavior with people walking up and down with papier-mache masks and that stupid tomahawk thing," said Chumash tribal elder Joseph P. Talau-gon of the Committee for Native American Rights, alluding to the arm gesture popularized in the '90s by fans of the Atlanta Braves.

"They say, 'We're honoring you. It's good for you.' Stereotyping only perpetuates racism. It's a hate crime."

The school district controversy

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING OF SB341,
HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998

Hello, my name is Kelly Verdon and I am the secretary of the freshman class at Menomonie High School. I was not around when this "incident" started. As a Menomonie middle school student, all I heard were rumors and a few facts.

I had no idea what was really happening. The knowledge I had about the issue was very slim.

I heard that we were getting rid of our logo because one person was mad, and thought that we were being disrespectful to the Native American culture. How wrong I was. I didn't know the student council as well as other people were actually studying this issue, and talking to Native Americans themselves.

With my lack of knowledge on the issue, I signed petitions even though I didn't know what they were about. I was angry at high school student council members for being narrow minded, even though the narrow-minded one was me.

When I entered the school year, I was a representative for the freshman class. This brought me together with the issue.

Hearing more and more about the issue made me think. Never in my life had I thought I was being disrespectful to the Native American culture, but I was.

I changed my mind when I went to a meeting at an area residence home. Two women who were both Native American were speaking on this issue. Immediately, I knew that what I was thinking before was wrong.

I started checking up on this issue. Using my mom, teachers advisors and other students as sources, I started seeing other issues that were involved.

This has separated our community, in my view, in three different parts. People who wanted it changed, people who didn't want it changed, and people who didn't care.

Some people wrote inaccurate views and I quote, "There's never been an incident on record where it's caused any racial problems... It's never been derogatory in any way. The school's done everything possible to honor the Indian logo and name,"

**TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING OF SB341,
HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998**

I am Jeannette Peters, a junior class Student Council representative from Menomonie High School. Thank you for the chance to speak to you today.

This whole Indian logo issue hits home for me not only because of what is going on in my town, but also for very personal reasons. I am a quarter Native American. My mother is a half and my grandmother full. **I've been writing letters back and forth with my grandmother throughout our whole ordeal in Menomonie and she is incredibly proud of me and our Student Council for, in her words, "being mature enough to understand what is right."**

My grandmother grew up in a small town out west where her school also had an Indian logo/mascot. She remembers how much she hated it and how singled out she felt. My grandmother once told me how she wished that I and no one else had to go through anything like she did growing up with an Indian for a logo and a mascot. She would never go to any of her school's sporting events because she felt so excluded. She would come home crying whenever she did. That shouldn't happen. You would never even think of having a team name of the Negroes or Hispanics. that would make the African Americans and Hispanic people feel horrible and they wouldn't want to go to school functions just as my grandmother did.

That alone, I feel, is a wonderful reason why this bill should become a state law. No one should have what happened to my grandmother, happen to them. No one.

Jeannette Peters
Jeannette Peters

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING OF SB341,
HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998

TO: Senate Education Committee Members
FROM: Christina Dahlke, UW-Eau Claire Student, 1998,
Menomonie High School Student Council, Co-President, 1997.

Please eliminate "Indian" mascots and logos from Wisconsin Public Schools.

As a student leader, I can tell you too many hours have been spent by too many people on this issue for too long.

Our student council at Menomonie High School simply wanted to change to a mascot that would be more appropriate and more fun to boost school spirit.

But tradition, insensitivity, and ignorance stood against us.

What is right is not always what is popular. School boards need to do what is right. If school boards are pressured to do only what is popular especially concerning human rights and dignity, they will lose elections on issues they shouldn't have to deal with in the first place. Maybe we should have had a public referendum on the slavery issue. How would that have changed our country?

Please take this relatively small issue out of the popularity contest and let our school boards focus on more pressing problems. The students of Menomonie High school will be watching to see how politicians like you handle this human rights issue.

Christina Dahlke

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING OF
SB-341,
HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998

Hello, my name is Mary Vang and I am a junior at Menomonie High School. I am currently in my third year as an elected representative to the class of 1999.

I first became involved in the Indian-mascot-and-logo-change issue as a freshman at Menomonie High School in 1995. Up until that time, I did not know or hear anything about the changing of the Menomonie Indians mascot and logo. It also wasn't until that time that I realized how much an Indian mascot could offend a Native American person.

As time went on and the student body became involved in this very controversial issue, our school, as well as our community, became more and more divided. It became "Traditionalists vs. newcomers. Youths vs. their elders. Outsiders vs. us." Many questions came up from students at the school and in the community. "Why do we have to change it? We are honoring the Indians with strength, honor, dignity, and pride." "The Indians have always been tradition, so why are we changing it now?" "How far will this go? Are we going to end up changing the name of our lake and our town?"

As these questions came in, I began to realize that students and people in the community are thinking of only the worst possible outcomes, and holding back the fact that there are also the best possible outcomes. We could have a mascot running around at games and cheering on the team with the cheerleaders. Homecoming assemblies would be more fun, school spirit would rise tremendously, and we could even get more fans at games. We could get a mascot that we want and one that no other school in our conference already has. A new mascot could propel our school and our community toward greater unity, and we could concentrate on issues such as our education.

After the Indians were reinstated in the spring of 1997, the '97-'98 school year began differently than those of the passed few. The newly elected school board sent out a letter stating that the "Indian" name was to be used more often in the school and at school games, such as football. Newsletters were sent out with the Indian logo on it. All 16 of the football cheerleaders, with the exception of three or four, did not want to use the name "Indians" in their cheers. When they had to, they only mouthed it. Posters made by the cheerleaders that were put up around the hallways at school to promote school spirit began showing up with "Go, Indians!" When these kind of things happened, students who opposed the use of the Indian mascot had no choice but to stand back and cheer "Go, Menomonie!" because they had no mascot to cheer for. They could not cheer for the Menomonie Indians, because they didn't feel it was right to call themselves Indians.

Other issues came up when students were asked to use the Indian logo. Students did not want to order graduation announcements because they did not want the Indian on it. Jenny Walker, a former MHS student from the class of 1996, who was also Native

American, had to pay an extra fee to NOT have the Indian on her graduation announcements that were ordered through the school. She felt it wasn't right and it was uncomfortable for her to send out announcements with a Native American on it to her relatives.

As a minority in the school, in Menomonie, and in the state, I feel strongly that the use of mascot and logo names such as Braves, Chiefs, Indians, Raiders, and Warriors, should be banned from all schools in the state of Wisconsin. I find the use of the Indian mascot and logo at Menomonie High School is very offensive and doesn't show respect to Native American people. Although the logo appears with the words: strength, honor, dignity, and pride, the headdress is used in a manner that makes the Native Americans appear to be a warlike people.

I am 100% Hmong and would be VERY offended if my people were represented in a disrespectful way. I am very offended when I hear in the halls of MHS that all Hmong people in the school are in gangs. An incident that happened during my sophomore year really pushed me to get the Indian mascot and logo changed. A Hmong student was running after her three-year-old daughter down the hall one morning before classes began. I was walking the same direction she was running, and when she ran passed this certain group of boys, I "overheard" one of them yell, "Look, she's chasing after her dog!" And, of course, the others just laughed with him. I became very upset and angry after this and realized how unbelievable it is that in a small town like Menomonie, there could be so much racial tension and stereotyping.

I feel that eliminating these logos and mascots will be one big step in our efforts to reduce this racial tension and stereotyping in the communities of Wisconsin. We, as a society, have to work together in order to maintain the peace and unity we want.

Every choice has an end result. We have made our choice but have not seen our result. We have come this far in the past two and a half years and are now asking you to make our "results" a reality. As quoted from JFK, "Things don't happen. They are made to happen. And in the field of education, they are made to happen by you and your members."

Thank you,



Mary Vang
Class of 1999
Menomonie High School

Testimony for Senate Education Committee Hearing of SB341 Held on January 28, 1998

As a teacher of twenty-eight years, I think it is noteworthy that through these years of experience I have studied this issue often and completely changed my opinion. Change is not easy for many people. When the change involves traditions to which people assign themselves, or by which they even define themselves, the change becomes exceedingly difficult.

Change seems to be at the heart of the issue of using Indian-related terms for mascots or logos. There was a time when less sensitivity governed our thinking about this and many other issues. Now, many people recognize that names may imply insensitivity, and stereotyping may imply intolerance.

As educators we have often learned and taught of the strength of diversity in our country. Yet that very diversity and lack of tolerance has led to many black marks. Many of us would like to take those ugly lessons from history and make our present times less scarred.

It is imperative that we teach respect of all cultures and groups of people. Therefore if members of a group feel that certain use of stereotypic logos or mascots is offensive, then we must listen. This need not be from a certain percentage of Native Americans any more than we should expect a majority of largely non-Native Americans to decide whether this use is right or wrong. Informed legislators must support the rights of ALL AMERICANS.

Again, this is not an issue that referenda should support or deny. Certainly the abolishment of slavery or the Civil Rights Amendment were not brought to the vote of citizens by the legislators. This is a Civil Rights issue and we are supporting bigotry and being intolerant of diversity if we allow use of logos/mascots with reference to Indians to continue.

I can assure you that there are dangerous uses today, in the past, and they will continue in the future. My own recent observations include: Locker

decorations at opposing schools on the day of an athletic contest saying "Scalp the Indians". I have read in state newspapers remarks showing negative stereotypes about Indians like "the Indians massacred their opponents" (when referring to the victories of the MHS football team). The list is lengthy but I have not documented the many incidents. I am ashamed to be labeled as a staff member, teacher, and coach of a school which shows this intolerance. I constantly remind others that 90% of the staff and 100% of the head coaches of Menomonie Senior High oppose the use of the Indian logo.

This issue has split our community and an upcoming referendum will resplit and fester the wound. The students of the new generation know what's right--only the tradition clinged to by some members of the community prevent the change.

For this reason, the legislative bodies of our state must make the use of logos and mascots implying Indian stereotypes illegal. This is without a doubt the only answer to a problem that will not go away.

Respectfully,



Dale Dahlke, Teacher , Menomonie Senior High School

SARAH PAMPERIN

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING OF SB341 HELD ON JAN. 28, 1998

As I have gone through my high school career I have grown to know both good and evil, and to see the power of conflict. The Indian logo/mascot is a symbol of conflict in our nation and in Menomonie. Although I am only 18 years old, I believe that young people can often see things that are obscure to adults, a situation that is highlighted in Menomonie. I have made a choice to be respectful to the Indian logo, but others are not always as fortunate as I. The Indian logo stands as something that opens up already inflicted racial wounds between Native Americans and the white person.

For the past six months I have been the Student Representative to the School Board of the District of Menomonie. In my observations I have seen that adults and young people can inflict pain that is beyond their comprehension. Many adults see the Indian logo as a tradition. Often the most regarded people in an education system can be the ones to the most oblivious to right and wrong rights issues.

My family and I have endured harassment on both sides of the issues. My 14 year brother was told by a School Board members daughter, that their family wished that I was dead, and that their family felt hatred towards me. I have also had other adults tell me that I should just give up, that all my efforts were worthless, that "I had lost." This is an issue that had no winners or losers. All we can do is come to a peaceful end to this. I hope no one has to ever hear that their sister should be dead because of standing out on an Indian logo issue.

In October of 1997 I conducted a survey of the senior class provoked by a memo sent out by administrators, regarding the logo. The survey asked whether seniors would mind if the word Indian or Indianhead would appear on their diploma. Although the results were that more students didn't mind than did, an astounding 50 some said they did in fact mind. This didn't go without much media play and public concern, and I was told once more that I was not representing students, and what would I as a teenager know about conducting a survey. I found conducting it was just one more way I could try and prove to some people that both Native Americans and other ethnicities are bothered by the logo.

I urge you to ban Indian logos and mascots. If we are truly the "friend" we claim to be, we should be a friend to all, majority and minority. Wisconsin has been known to be a progressive state, and banning Indian logos and mascots would only result in a happier, culturally sensitive state.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Pamperin". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned at the bottom of the page.

January 28, 1998

To: ^{Senate} Assembly Education Committee
From: John-Carl Davis
411 North River Road
West Bend, WI 53090

Ref: Testimony on Use of Indian Logo

I am proud to say that the blood of my Delaware ancestors courses through these blood vessels. With this blood comes certain responsibilities. The responsibility of respect for all living things as well as all creations. It is the reverence for nature. That particular responsibility means that we must be especially respectful of our fellow inhabitants of this Earth. It means that all people must be treated with respect and dignity, because they too were made by the Creator.

Dignity and respect are two of those universal truths which all people should understand. This means that I must respect you as a person and give dignity to your roots. It is incumbent upon us to not degrade, demean, malign others.. It means we must avoid stereotyping others and devaluing others.

I grew up with the old adage, "Sticks and stones may hurt your bones, but names will never hurt you." This was rationalization to smooth out the hurt that names can do. The use of the Indian logo is offensive to Native American students. Stop and think about the pep signs which can be generated. If you were a Native American student would you like to see a sign that read: **kill the Indians; massacre the Indians, scalp the Indians.**

The slogans generated with the logos are distasteful enough, but the caricatures which may accompany them add their own form of degradation. What would you find? War paint, the Tumbleweed's cartoon of slow, dumb Indians, hatchets and knives. The range is from the not too bright to the ferocious savage.,

Although a logo itself may show the proud profile of an Indian warrior chief, the image quickly is transformed by the stereotypic perceptions of students. That transformation feeds on the self-esteem of students and serves to negate the contributions of Native Americans to the tapestry which is America.

Lastly, such use of the American Indian as a logo, singles out a distinct cultural-ethnic group. Whether the logo is the Warriors, the Chiefs, the RedMen, or the Indians,

we find ourselves with the ranks of the Orioles, the Martins, the Marshmen, the Panthers, the Badgers. Being in the company of animals and mythical creatures is without respectful and is without dignity. When is the last time you heard of a team called the Whitemen, the Caucasians, the Africans, the Fellowmen? I doubt that you have or ever will. The one of the important steps which you can take in your deliberations is to ban the use of the Indian logos. This step should not be taken as step for political correctness, but as step toward dignity and respect for all people.

We are tired of names; we are tired of funny caricatures; we are tired of stereotyping; we are tired of rationalization; we are tired of traditions which demean and malign our people.

Thank you for the careful consideration of these words.

John-Carl Davis
411 N. River Road
West Bend, WI 53090.

~~become prevarity views of
Americans ~~people of the past~~~~

FINISH W/ 2

To those who want to honor the American Indian, let me suggest that the best way to do so would be to respect our desire to decline the offer.

ARUNA MARTIN
HO-CHUNK STUDENT
MADISON WEST HIGH
SCHOOL

~~To those who want to honor the American Indian, let me suggest that the best way to do so, would be to respect our desire to decline the offer.~~

TEACH RESPECT



NOT RACISM

*IN SUPPORT
OF*

**THE ELIMINATION OF STEREOTYPES OF
INDIAN PEOPLE**

FROM ALL WISCONSIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Presented to:

THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Madison, Wisconsin

Wednesday January 28, 1998

Submitted by:

The University of Wisconsin System - Multicultural Information Center

161 West Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 6000

Milwaukee, WI 53203-2602

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TEACH RESPECT - NOT RACISM

"Well, it's great that ya'll encourage us to go to college, but I don't know if I'll go to any of the colleges here in Wisconsin, because I hear there's a lot of racism on those campuses....."

-Wisconsin 7th grader

The University of Wisconsin System - Multicultural Information Center (MIC), located in Southeastern Wisconsin, is designed to serve as a motivational resource unit where Wisconsin's youth; particularly youth of color are strongly encouraged to *"DO COLLEGE."* Our mission is to plant the seed early, while cultivating the vision that college is a viable option in which our youth should and must pursue.

Working directly with state wide K-12 educational institutions, and community based youth serving agencies, MIC aggressively focuses on *American Indian, African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Southeast Asian* communities. MIC utilizes customized learning modules designed exclusively by the center, to address different areas of concerns relating to the need for Wisconsin's youth to incorporate the path to college in their plan of success.

These workshop learning modules include such topics as *"Prep for Success," "People Packages," "Accepting Responsibility," "Organizing your Efforts,"* and *"Do College."* It is without a doubt that the opening quote found in this testimony is indeed a real one, one that is most often forwarded to those consultants who implement our many requested workshops throughout the state of Wisconsin.

Although the MIC consultants are well trained to handle these type of responses, it is apparently clear that children are well in tuned with regards to the affects transpired by any form of discrimination. Youth today are indeed making early preparations to avoid this type of adversity when possible.

We guide and aid our workshop participants on how to develop the necessary tenacity to overcome any barrier to higher education, even forms of discrimination--particularly those of racism and sexism.

When institutions use a perceived image of an ethnic group as its mascots/logo, not only does it invites the opportunity for the institution to be a target of verbal abuse, but it also presents an opportunity for representatives of this ilk in which the mascot protrays, to also endure the same negative abuse.

The University of Wisconsin System realized several years ago that using any ethnic group as school/sports mascots and/or logos is insulting, and degrading. This came after lengthy lobbying by UW System students, officials, and community residents. The UW System has since removed all Mascots utilizing "perceived" images of racial groups as mascots on all 26 of its campuses.

During the mid-late eighties the topic of this nature was probably at its greatest, when campuses such as UW-La Crosse, and even Marquette University were the focus of tremendous opposition to the use of native people as the institutions' mascots.

AMERICAN INDIAN MASCOTS ANOTHER FORM OF HATE SPEECH

Phil St. John from South Dakota attended a local high school basketball game with his son in 1987. During the game, a white student wearing his version of Indian dress and regalia with a painted face and headband, acted out his version of how American Indians behave. Phil's eight-year-old son sank down behind him in humiliation.¹ This type of ridicule and hate speech is called "school spirit."

Hate speech isn't only words, it also encompasses symbols used to wound, humiliate and degrade; promoting and fostering feelings of inferiority and unequal treatment based on ethnicity. "First-person accounts, social science research, and new legal theories all suggest that hate speech is harmful--it harms the individual who is the target of the hate speech and it perpetuates negative stereotypes, promotes discrimination, and maintains whole groups as second-class citizens, hampering their participation in our democracy."²

How can the United States of America proclaim that this is a country of freedom and equality when you name sports teams "redskins"? The origin of this word comes from the term used by the army troops of our first president, George Washington, when they were promoting the murdering of American Indians and placing bounties on their scalps.

What do I remember about the World Series this past year? The degrading mascots of the Cleveland Indians worn by thousands of fans during the series. Fans wearing baseball caps with a cartoon figure that expresses the Anglo's perception of what an American Indian looks like: an oversized red face, with buck teeth, wearing a feather. If that's not degrading, then why don't we see an oversized face of George Washington with buck teeth as a national mascot? Why is that we don't see any mascots of funny looking Anglo men?

American Indians have been oppressed since this country was founded, although we have a constitution that claims freedom and equality for all individuals.

Ana La Llave 
Community Outreach Specialist
UW System Multicultural Information Center

¹ Laura Lederer and Richard Delgado, eds., *The Price we Pay*, 1995, p. 45

² Laura Lederer and Richard Delgado, eds., *The Price we Pay*, 1995, p. 5

From a personal perspective, I can remember attending the UW-La Crosse during this historical time when the institution was moved to omit the use of native people, or any persons as its mascot. I remember going to the institution's sport games during my early years as a freshman and sophomore, and seeing the opposing fans routing their teams on the victory, by displaying vulgar signs which read things like "*scalp the Indians,*" or "*kill the squaws.*"

As an African American, I could identify with the American Indian father and mother who, during one game sitting next to me, had to struggle to answer a question by their young child, "*why do they hate our people so much Mommy and Daddy?*" It was at this moment, I decided to fully participate as a student to lobby against the institution to eliminate these types of mascots/logos.

Although we faced a great deal of opposition to retain the mascot; some feeling that it would be a financial burden to the institution to change the logo, and some feeling that the mascot was a tribute to native people, we were able to convince the institution, through education, that the detrimental effect of this form of racism outweighed any "perceived" logical reason to continue the use of its mascot.

UW-La Crosse officials soon agreed that this was a form of racism, and that an educational institution who is truly committed to the education of its pupils should not condone such outdated practices--regardless of its history of traditions.

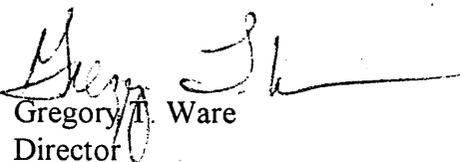
We had hoped that this would set the tone for other educational institutions, at least those within the La Crosse area, to follow suit--nevertheless there was not enough community support to also get a neighboring high school to commit to the elimination of using native peoples as its mascot/logo as well.

As citizens of this state, and administrators of an educational unit within an institutional system, we support the elimination of the use of American Indian people as mascots/logo from all Wisconsin public schools.

Let us be the sons and daughters who stand on the shoulders of success--the shoulders of our forefathers and mothers, those of the great founding fathers and leaders who participated in the shaping of this great nation. Let us look above and beyond the flaws of their limitations, and secure a more righteous, and respectful state for ourselves, our children, and ultimately our future. We shall be the next "generation of eagles" who will soar through the skies of justice and peace for all human kind!

"One of the many things we have in common are our differences,
let us celebrate, and respect those differences."

-gtw



Gregory T. Ware
Director

UW System Multicultural Information Center

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LENGTH: Medium: 70 lines

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MEMO: Martin, of Madison, is a Stockbridge-Munsee from Shawano who is a planning analyst the state Highway Patrol.

HEADLINE: TIMES HAVE CHANGED, SO SHOULD MASCOTS

COLUMN: GUEST COLUMN

BYLINE: By Buck Martin

TEXT:

''It would be nice if all the people involved could keep their sense of humor, but if you're the one who feels demeaned, there's nothing very funny about the issue.''

That recently published statement about the proposal to prohibit UW-Madison sports teams from playing against schools with American Indian names or mascots hit close to home for me, an American Indian and a father.

In the past, Indian names or mascots were not offensive to me. I even admit to having, particularly as a youngster, a certain sense of pride over many of the Indian symbols that were part of professional sports in America. I also remember, however, some embarrassment over a few of the images used as logos - and considerable embarrassment over a whole lot of fan behavior.

When team mascots were originally established by schools and professional sports teams, it was highly unlikely that the intent was to demean the American Indian. More likely, the decisions to use these symbols were meant to show respect and to incorporate the athletic prowess of the American Indian into the team's image. But after the original thoughtfulness put into the creation of a team logo wore thin, ignorance and the competitive world of sports rivalries spawned an environment that allowed outrageous, insensitive public behavior to become the norm.

Behavior at sporting events soon took on characteristics that were far from respectful. The tomahawk chop, painted faces, and the wearing of apparel (or, sometimes, the lack of it) ~~that did everything but reflect what American Indians actually wore,~~ are but a few examples. I am particularly appalled to seeing the sports fan with a turkey feather war bonnet, faced streaked with paint, and who obviously has consumed too much. This fan is often seen weaving about and with a cupped hand over his mouth, giving out plenty of victorious war whoops.

The social ill of alcoholism, which has devastated our communities, does not need to be put on display by excited sports fans. It is too painful to watch and perpetuates the image of the drunken Indian.

The picture I paint certainly isn't indicative of all the schools and the professional sports teams with American Indian names and mascots. The picture does occur often enough, however, to warrant the thorough discussion taking place this week ^{as} at the UW Athletic Board prepares to vote on the proposed policy.

I recently returned to Wisconsin after working in Washington, D.C., for a year and a half. My daughters, ages 13 and 10, are avid sports fans and have followed all Wisconsin teams with great enthusiasm. When we moved to the Washington area, I asked my older daughter if she was going to switch her allegiance from the Green Bay Packers to the Washington Redskins. Although I was confident her answer would be no because of her fierce loyalty to the Packers, I was surprised when she said, ''No, because I wouldn't support any team with a name like that.''

Mr Chairman & Senators

Senate Bill

Thank you for allowing me to speak regarding 341.

I'm Lloyd Hainsich from Menomonie.

As a former school board member, I am fully aware of all of the events that have taken place regarding our school nick-name logo issue. ^{use of the} The logo ~~was~~ ^{is} not the ~~sole~~ ^{recent recall} reason for the ~~issue~~ ^{in Menomonie}. The citizens rebelled at the ~~process~~ ^{process} used to eliminate it. ~~Native Americans~~ ^{Native Americans} have always been a big part of our communities history. Menomonie has been ~~using~~ ^{using} the Indian logo ~~nick name~~ ^{nick name} since 1934 and there is not one ~~documented~~ ^{documented} incident that has created a problem.

original
do right
do wrong
Legal but
is bad
trad.

State Superintendent John Benson has encouraged school districts to review their Indian mascot logo and nick names. Five years ago our district did an extensive restructuring of our logo. Our district took Pro-active measures to strengthen the use of our logo.

We did contact Tribal leaders from our area. They recommended several physical changes and ~~they~~ those changes were honored. The mascot was removed and a floor mat with an Indian emblem on it was also removed. The words Strength, Honor, Dignity, & Pride were added to our logo. ^{his logo has been held to the highest degree of} Board Policy dealing with ~~prospectator~~ ^{prospectator} control was enforced. We ^{have} ~~have~~ ^{implemented} ~~implemented~~ extensive ^{district} cultural awareness in our ^{N.A.}

I also have a letter from St. Croix chairman Lewis Taylor, read, quote,

I don't feel the State should abolish the use of Native American cultural logos and nick names.

What happens when a school's majority of students are of the Native American culture. They may choose to be called something relative to their heritage. This should not be taken away from them.

If some Native American are offended by the use of a logo, ~~how~~ what about those Native Americans that are offended by the discontinued use on.

State Supt. John Benson has stated this should be a local community decision. I believe our community will resolve this issue on its own when the entire community has a voice and the democratic process is used, everyone should be heard including minorities as well as families with four generations of using ~~and~~ the Indians logo/nicknames. These people have deep community and traditional roots and don't want to lose their logo ~~through~~ through injustice.

I ask, what educational benefits will result if this Bill 371 is approved.

Questions? Thank you.

The original vote on 7/10/96 supported the use of the logo. Another vote was taken on 8/10/96 to end it and have a new one.

Testimony For Senate Education Committee Hearing of SB341, Held On January 27, 1998

January 27, 1998

Senate Education Committee Members:

Honorable Calvin Potter
Honorable Robert Jauch
Honorable Grobschmidt
Honorable Kevin Shibilski,
Honorable Alberta Darling,
Honorable Joanne B. Huelsman,
Honorable Carol A. Roessler,

Dear Senators,

I am writing on behalf of Senate Bill 341. SB341 states that it will eliminate the use of American Indian Mascots and Slogans in all Wisconsin public schools. I believe that it would be in the best interest of the State of Wisconsin to enact SB341 as a State Law because it would stop the promotion of negative stereotyping towards the Native-American community.

Indian Mascots is blatant institutionalized racism. Indian mascots are institutionalized racism because our public schools promotes the use of stereotypes. When people are stereotyped, people are degraded.

What if a school had a mascot of the "Appleton Asians?" What if high school students ran around on the football fields and basketball courts waving fake Samurai swords around in the air, pretending to do a Karate chop with fake buck teeth placed in their mouth, pretending to be an Asian? How do think that would affect the Asian community, especially to that younger generation's self-image? Do you think that would send a positive image to that community as well as other Asian communities outside that school district? Being Filipino, I would not be honored and I would be deeply offended if I went to a school that was known as the "Appleton Asians." If I were Native-American I would be deeply offended if my school had an Indian mascot.

Growing up in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, I did not know and understand why Indian mascots were degrading. We were known as the Fort Atkinson Blackhawks. I remember times when fans would be sitting in the stands and would chant our "Indian War Songs." The students were told not to sing those songs, but nobody understood the reason why we had to stop. We were never explained in our classes why we were not supposed to sing our "Indian songs."

I never knew why Indian mascots and slogans were degrading until I went to college at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. I learn that Indian mascots were degrading by working with Native-Americans at the Native-American Center. I learned that Native-American students felt and thought Indian mascots and slogans were degrading because of the stereotyping images. In fact, I learned that the Great Lakes

Tribal council condemns the use of Indian mascots. The Great Lakes Tribal council represents all the Tribes in the State of Wisconsin.

If the Great Lakes Tribal council, which represents the all the tribes in Wisconsin, condemns the use of Indian mascots because they think it is degrading, then why are we using Indian Mascots in are Public Schools. If we have been told that our behavior had offended someone, then would it not make sense to stop the offensive behavior? If a Senator said to another Senator that a certain word or phrase offended him/her, then would it not make sense for that Senator to stop using that certain word or phrase?

I think it is imperative that the State of Wisconsin respects the Native-American community and that the State of Wisconsin has respect for itself by not teaching racism in its public schools. I support SB341, the elimination of Indian Mascots and Slogans from our public schools along with **one hundred and seventy-eight signatures** from students and faculty at the University of Stevens Point in which you will find enclosed in this testimony.

Please teach our children respect and not Racism. Please support Senate Bill 341.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Puerner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeff Agaton Puerner
UW-Stevens Point
Progressive Action Organization
American Indians Reaching for Opportunity

**TESTIMONY FOR SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING OF SB341,
HELD ON JANUARY 28, 1998**

Senators:

Calvin Potter, Robert Jauch, Grobschmidt, Kevin Shibilski, Alberta Darling, Joanne B. Huelsman, Carol A. Roessler, & Staff Coordinator Paul Rusk

I would like to testify today in favor of SB341, which prohibits the use of Indian names as mascots in Wisconsin public schools. I am a person of European decent, yet I have had the fortunate opportunity to have a stepfather who is Native American. Thus, I've been submersed in two cultures for most of my life, and I base my decision for SB341 on personal experiences.

The usage of Indian mascots is racial, although many would disagree. Most non-Indians say, "It is an honor, to display such fine qualities of character, such as the heroic brave or the majestic chief". They ask, "How can Native Americans be offended at this? We are honoring you people." Some people ask this in anger, and some even in sincerity. However, my experiences innately lead me to know it is not an honor.

Exactly who is being honored? It seems only a picture of a human. The past. The use of Indian mascots perpetuates the past, pre-European settlement. *This in turn stimulates continued growth of misperceptions of today's Indians.* Mascots are either stereotypically majestic, or grossly deranged into odd, exaggerated figures. For the majority of the public not exposed to Native American culture, these pictures generate fictitious stereotypes toward today's Native Americans. It seems that if Native American people do not "live up" to romanticized thoughts perpetuated in the majority of people's minds, they are invalidated in various degrees.

Who is being honored? The majority of people, when asked what they think of *today's* Native Americans respond with various remarks, ranging from "alcohol abuse to too many on welfare". Yet they remain vehemently on guard of anyone who would want to change their mascot. A picture. The "heroic" Indian.

Through the color of my skin and the knowledge of my family's culture I have had [unfortunately] many opportunities to hear the misguided thoughts of non-Indians, in regards to Native Americans. The ignorance must be fought with education, and it is our duty as citizens of this planet to honor all cultures, ethnic, racial, sexual, religious, and spiritual diversity. It is everyone's responsibility.

Please support SB341.

Thank you.



Rebecca Pittner
UW - Stevens Point
American Indians Reaching Out

**TESTIMONY BY ANDREW GOKEE
FOR
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING OF SB341
JANUARY 28, 1998**

My name is Andrew Gokee, and I am a member of the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewas. I am an education professional and a parent of four children, all enrolled in public school in Wisconsin.

I am here in support of SB341, a bill to prohibit use of certain nicknames, logos, and mascots pertaining to American Indian people.

The use of these types of symbols has been a long-standing concern to me as an American Indian person. The use of such symbols serves to reinforce widespread stereotypical perceptions of Native people.

The use of American Indian mascots evokes a demeaning sense of self worth for American Indian people and communities. At a time when parents strive to preserve a sense of cultural pride, heritage, and values in our families, the dehumanizing imagery of Indian mascots and logos have a confusing and negative impact on our children in terms of maintaining a positive cultural identity. The sheer mockery of our people, culture and religious practices sends a very negative message to our children in terms of their "Indianness".

Those who purport to "honor" us with such symbols are severely misguided. In my experience and interaction with scores of Indian people, I have yet to meet someone who has expressed a feeling of "honor" as a result of the various antics used by mascots during sporting events. Indeed, the use of such mascots often invites the cry by opposing fans of "scalp the Indians!" or some similar retort; is it surprising that we do not feel honored?

I suppose it is possible to find somewhere, an American Indian who condones or even supports the use of American Indian nicknames, mascots, and logos. Such examples are often sought out and used by those seeking to maintain the status quo. Such was the case in the Antebellum era, and yes, there were even those who also denied that "Jim Crow" laws were morally indefensible. Let us take a lesson from history and accept tokenism for what it is worth - very little.

As we prepare for the 21st century, we find an opportunity for lawmakers to address this 19th century problem. Please have the moral fortitude to say no to the continued dehumanization of American Indian people, our culture, and spirituality. Very recently, the state of Wisconsin became a national leader in the restructuring of social welfare programs. By passing SB341, your voice can help the nation understand that the time has passed when such dehumanizing practices should be accepted or condoned.

Thank you.



I would like to thank you for letting me speak ~~under~~ under the Bill 1341

My name is Mike Cieling and I am a junior at Menomonee High School. I have come to you today to convince you that at Menomonee we wear ~~the~~ the Indian logo with pride and show ~~as~~ as if I am as strong as the native Americans are. At Menomonee High School. I have found that people of my school ~~do~~ have spoke but are not being listened to. Our elected leaders who we called upon ~~are~~ ^{are} now leading us to stray. When we had the vote in the school for a new logo, we were not listened to, and these young adults that will lead the future are not listening to us. So I have come to you today to show you that in the election for a new logo I was denied my democratic right to ~~the~~ vote by the election held ~~in~~ ^{last year in 1974} ~~in~~. On the ballot that I received there was the ~~one~~ ^{SIX} choices to choose from, ~~no~~ ^{with} no line, no box, nothing to write my choice on the ballot and when the ballots were counted the ballots that had Indians on them were thrown out. As if an election for president as long as I am a student at Menomonee.

High school my ballot should count, which worries me as a member of the Menomonee High School, but I understand considering the election held by Carin Worthley and the Student Council. Is this what the Patriots of our society, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Thomas Paine and Henry ~~Washington~~ intend to teach us? Could our four fathers actually stomach the idea of people being ~~forced~~ forced out of their principle rights?

I would like to think not. So now I think the problem is obvious, so I would like to thank you for your time and I will always have faith in Democracy. And wear the logo with Dignity, Strength, Honor and pride.

Thank you