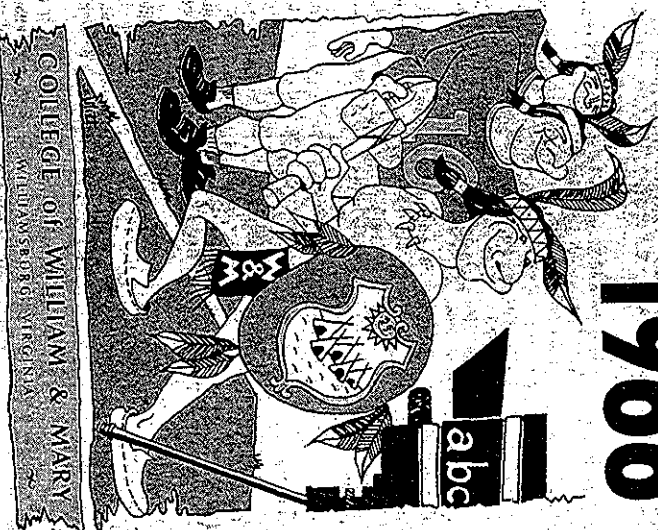


1966



A copy of William and Mary's football media guide in 1966 prominently featured an American Indian as the team's mascot. The NCAA has asked the college to examine its use of Tribe as a nickname for its athletic teams.

Va. Indians OK with W&M name

William and Mary supporters don't discard that Tribe name.

It would seem unlikely that W&M will choose — or be requested by Virginia's American Indians — to change its sports nickname, identified by the NCAA this year as one that could be offensive.

"When we take care of some of the poverty and drug and drug problems and that sort of thing in this country, then we'll worry about names," said William P. Blair, Miles, chief of the Pamunkey Indians, whose reservation is in King William County.

Decades ago, W&M's athletic teams were known as the Indians. W&M had mascots dressed in Indian outfits and used a grinning Indian as its logo. In its publications, W&M referred to home contests as being played on "The Reservation."

Gradually, W&M separated itself from those images and became the Tribe. W&M's fans don't do the Tomahawk Chop. They don't wear Indian face paint. The school's mascot is a cartoonish Colonial character called Colonel Ehrtr (Tribe spelled backwards).

"It becomes very sensitive when

there's inappropriate use of either tribal emblems, tribal representation, any specific tribe itself, or terminology that is offensive to the Native community for one reason or another," said Jacqueline Johnson, executive director for the National Congress of American Indians.

W&M Athletic Director Terry Driscoll, who's been on the job eight years, said he hasn't heard from any American Indian organizations expressing objections to the school's nickname.

"It's a tribe. We root for those," said Gertrude Minnie-HaHa Custer, historian for the Mataponi Tribe, which lives on a reservation in King William. "I've never heard of any other tribes who think it's improper."

"You know, sometimes this type of thing can get a little bit ridiculous."

William and Mary's department of anthropology includes the American Indian Resource Center, whose mission is to serve the American Indian community, scholars interested in American Indian culture and history, and the public. The center was created in 1998.

John O'Connor

Name

— FROM PAGE A1

June," he said.

About a dozen colleges since the 70s have changed nicknames as an expression of increased sensitivity toward American Indians. Among them are Dartmouth (Indians to Big Green), Stanford (Indians to Cardinal), St. John's (Redmen to Red Storm), and Marquette (Warriors to Golden Eagles). Earlier this year, Southeast Missouri State changed its nickname from Indians to Redhaws.

The NCAA recommends that self-analysis includes examination of the school's efforts to educate athletic audiences on the specific tribe used as a nickname, or on American Indians generally, the school's efforts to recruit and retain American Indians on staff, descriptions of educational programs offered by the school that relate to American Indian history, and explanation of the school's outreach to the American Indian community. In the self-study reports, the NCAA expects input from athletic-department officials, student-athletes, community leaders, conference administrators and local American Indian tribes.

The NCAA also wants to know the origin of the school's nickname and its history as it relates to the specific campus.

"We have had no negative publicity or comments with regard to being called the Tribe. We've had no issues with it in the time I've been here," said Terry Driscoll, W&M's athletic director for eight years. "Our relationship has always been good with the Indian tribes here in Virginia, so I'm not aware of any issues right here with people being concerned about the name being Tribe."

The Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee, in the conclusion to a 2002 report, stated: "In listening to American Indians, we understand that good intentions by institutions to honor Indian people do not always yield good results. The committee points out that a change in tradi-

Under scrutiny

Division I schools that use nicknames/logos/mascots related to American Indians:

- Alcorn State (Braves)
- Arkansas State (Indians)
- Bradley (Braves)
- Central Michigan (Chippewas)
- Florida State (Seminoles)
- Hawaii (Rainbow Warriors)
- Illinois (Fighting Illini)
- Louisiana at Monroe (Indians)
- San Diego State (Aztecs)
- Utah (Utes)
- William and Mary (Tribe)

tion is not an indication that institutions were wrong in the past or that institutions harbor ill will toward American Indians. (A nickname switch) is simply an acknowledgment of changing times and growing awareness and sensitivity."

The Washington Redskins, Atlanta Braves and Cleveland Indians are three professional franchises that over the years have been criticized for insensitivity toward American Indians. William and Mary is the only Virginia college on the NCAA's list.

Driscoll said William and Mary has not yet completed its self-analysis, in part because a new university president, Gene K. Nichol, will take office on July 1. Driscoll said W&M has requested a deadline extension from the NCAA.

Asked whether W&M's nickname could possibly change, Driscoll responded: "I don't know of any reason... I don't know I can't answer that question. I haven't talked to our new president about it."

According to William T. Walker, W&M's associate vice president for public affairs, Nichol has not yet been briefed on the nickname issue. Nichol is the dean of the University of North Carolina's law school.

Contact John O'Connor at (804) 649-6233 or jooconnor@mesd.speatch.com

Athletics - Indian Symbolism

The Washington Post 4/27/05

COLLEGES

William & Mary's Nickname Under Scrutiny

William & Mary must examine its athletic nickname — "Tribe" — by order of the NCAA.

The governing body of college sports is concerned about the use of American Indian logos, mascots and nicknames that some consider offensive.

William & Mary is among 30 colleges on the list, and the only Virginia school. Each must complete a self-analysis by May 1. The NCAA wants to know — among other things — the origin of the school's nickname and its

history as it relates to the specific campus.

An NCAA committee will review results and make recommendations.

"We have talked about putting more teeth into this," Robert C. Vowels Jr., the committee chair and the commissioner of the Southwestern Athletic

Conference, told the Richmond Times-Dispatch. "That's going to be a major discussion in our meetings in June."
William & Mary Athletic

Director Terry Driscoll says William & Mary asked the NCAA for a deadline extension because a new university president — Gene Nichol — will take office July 1. Driscoll says he hasn't talked to Nichol about the issue.

Driscoll told the newspaper that the Williamsburg school has not gotten negative publicity or comments from Virginia Indian tribes about the "Tribe" nickname in his eight years there.
— From News Services

Athletics -- Indian Symbolism

The Virginian-Pilot 4/27/05

FRONT PAGE

REVIEW OF W&M'S LOGO

American Indian theme challenged by NCAA

BY DIONNE WALKER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The College of William and Mary's "Tribe" is under attack.

The Williamsburg school is among 31 being asked by the NCAA to reconsider potentially offensive, American Indian-themed sports team logos.

Schools have until May 1 to do a self-analysis of the logos' impact and turn the results over

to the athletic association. **ONLINE POLL** Should W&M for review and possible recommendations. [change its tribe nickname? Vote at photonline.com.](http://photonline.com) William and Mary got an extension until Nov. 1 for its self-analysis.

The NCAA hopes to gauge community feelings and foster positive relationships between the schools and American Indians, said Corey Jackson, an NCAA assistant director of student athlete reinstatement.

It is unclear whether schools will be instructed to drop their logos or face penalties.

It's a shift welcomed by Reginald Tupponce Jr., president of Virginia Indian Tribal Alliance for Life.

"If it was another race, it would be unacceptable," he said of the mock warriors and tomahawk hand gestures common at sporting events. "Most people don't think about it in that way."

Sports

Abandon the Tribe?

By John Harvey

WILLIAMSBURG — Pressure from the NCAA may push the College of William & Mary to change its nickname.

The governing body of collegiate athletics has asked 30 institutions, including W&M, to examine their sports nickname because of an association with American Indians. Each college was asked to complete a self-analysis regarding logo, mascot and nicknames that could be viewed as offensive.

W&M athletic director Terry Driscoll said this survey is part of the college's 10-year certification process with the NCAA.

"We have a lot of compliances, self-study orchestrated by the NCAA to see if William and Mary is consistent with the

goals of NCAA," he said. Driscoll explained that the survey is distributed campus-wide, culling responses from administrators, students, faculty and alumni.

"The [NCAA] has certain guidelines they want you to address and then at the end of the process they take a look at the data they send you," Driscoll added. "What will become of that, I don't know."

About a dozen colleges have already abandoned nicknames associated with Native Americans. Dartmouth, Stanford, St. John's, Marquette, Southeast Missouri State and Miami of Ohio are among the colleges making the switch.

The survey is due back at NCAA offices May 1, although W&M was grant-

ed an extension because of the transition to new president Gene Nichol and selection of a new director of the alumni association.

News of the study drew mixed reactions from coaches and alumni contacted Tuesday.

Women's soccer coach John Daly said he would welcome a nickname change. "I think there could be a more appropriate nickname for William and Mary based on the origins of the school," he said.

Daly said nicknames such as Monarchs, Colonials, Royals and Regals are all examples befitting of the

See With W&M, page 3B

You tell us

The W&M....?

Should the College of William & Mary abandon its Tribe nickname to avoid offending Native Americans? If so, what should W&M teams be called?

Comments _____

New nickname _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Please Fax to 220-1665, email to editor@vazette.com or mail to: Gazette, 216 Ironbound Rd., Williamsburg, VA 23188.

Thank you.

Email to: editor@vazette.com

★ Will W&M abandon its Tribe?

Continued from page 1B
second-oldest college in the country.

"These are all nicknames of other institutions, but that should not necessarily mean that we could not use them," Daly added.

Daly noted that the effort toward more sensitivity should extend beyond Native Americans.

"I am of pure Irish background and I find the term 'Fighting Irish' offensive," Daly said of the nickname at the University of Notre Dame. "In my opinion it portrays the stereotypical drunk, fighting Irishman."

Despite success that includes 229 career wins and a current No. 10 national ranking, Daly said he has experienced first-hand the problem with the W&M nickname, Tribe.

In 1996 W&M was scheduled to play the University of Wisconsin in a tournament in

Colorado. Wisconsin administrators canceled the game because the college had a policy against competing against an institution with a nickname related to Native Americans.

W&M field hockey coach Peel Hawthorne said Tribe is not just a nickname, but a part of the area's culture.

"The early beginnings of William and Mary included the formation of an Indian School, which was housed in the Brafferton," she said. "Regardless of its controversial nature, our interaction with indigenous Indian tribes is an undeniable part of our history."

Hawthorne has coached field hockey at W&M for 18 years, and says the nickname embodies the essence of team and community. "Tribe brings to my mind the values of family, honor, tradition, strength, courage and unity, all of which are qualities we emphasize in sport," she said.

If William & Mary were to

rename its teams, it wouldn't be the first time.

Football teams of the early 1900s were dubbed by local sports writers as the "Fighting Virginians." In the 1920s, W&M adopted the nickname "Indians," honoring the memory of the Pamunkey, Mattaponi and Chickahominy tribes.

That moniker lasted until the 1990s when former athletic director John Randolph began phasing out Indians in favor of the Tribe. First to go were cheerleader mascots dressed as a chief and an Indian princess.

Mike Bucci, a local real estate agent and former Tribe football player, has fond memories of the Indians nickname.

"When I came here, the Indians represented something about our history," he said. "I was very proud of that nickname. It meant being brave and strong and it had a lot of integrity."

Longtime W&M football broadcasters Jay Colley and Bob Sheeran agree.

"When I think of Tribe, I'm not thinking of a group of Native Americans," Colley said. "I'm thinking of a group of athletes."

Indians symbolizes something else to Sheeran, who is also an alum. "It's all about presentation," he said. "On opening days, we've had various tribes come out and there was never an ill feeling between the two."

Daly sees the NCAA self-survey as a positive thing for W&M. "The main reason for [this survey] is that action needs to be taken," he said. "Few institutions will take action on nicknames for fear of alienating boosters, most of whom attend institutions when no one gave a hoot for the feelings of people possibly offended."

Bucci has a different reaction. "I would like to think they would have better things to do with their time," he said.

Athletics - Indian Symbolism

Reader's Reaction

Tell us what you think of this story. Click the link to post your comment.

Posted on 04/26 at 08:22 AM

We should stop using the "Tribe" name, and return to using "Indians." Ebit also needs to go. You know it's time to move on to something more important when even our Indian friends (Gertrude Minnie-Ha-Ha Gustalow) think "...it's a little bit ridiculous."

Jay Black

Posted on 04/26 at 08:22 AM

Yet another stupid example of political correctness run amok! We need to rise up and put a swift end to nonsense like this!

Charles Lambert

Posted on 04/26 at 08:22 AM

The Native Americans should be honored.

Roger Cannon

Posted on 04/26 at 08:22 AM

The NCAA should have better things to do than look for non-existent problems. Your companion piece about says it all: "You know, sometimes this type of thing can get a little bit ridiculous." It seems that the NCAA is out looking for problems, rather than solving the ones it has.

Robert Greene

Posted on 04/26 at 08:23 AM

The concept of newspeak is alive and well. Every people are *cans, *fans, etc... Animals are flocks, herds, prides, packs as are groups of people tribes, orders gangs, congregations, communities. Where is the old saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never harm me. It is doubtful that there is any ill intent to such names, and only a rise in awareness of any issue placed in the headlines." Stop causing trouble...

Larry Barlow

Posted on 04/26 at 08:23 AM

I would think the American Indian would be proud that we use their names. We use them out of respect, not derision.

Neil

Posted on 04/26 at 08:23 AM

What is truly offensive is the political correctness that has spawned rabble-rousing groups like the "Minorities Opportunities and Interests Committee" who have nothing better to do than to look for trouble and if they can't find it, they manufacture it. The use of the name "Tribe" is not derogatory in any manner. What is offensive is the trumped-up charge that it is.

Yvonne Wohlers

Posted on 04/26 at 08:23 AM

I don't believe "tribe" is a negative word to Native Americans. I agree with Gertrude Minnie-Ha-Ha Gustalow that this is getting ridiculous.

Kirsten Sanderford

Posted on 04/26 at 08:23 AM

The fact that W&M is taking the time to assess the name is good, but I see no problem and agree with Chief Miles. But do not automatically think that VA Indians will have no problem based on comments by one tribal chief and one other tribal member. Eight independent recognized tribes and a number of other Native American tribal members means that there is no single voice for VA Natives.

Robert Gray

Posted on 04/26 at 08:23 AM

I seem to remember that William and Mary had an Indian School from way back in history. That may be the origin of the "Tribe." The girls play Lacrosse which is an Indian game. As far as I know, nothing but respect is meant by the title. I vote for not giving up the name. Mary Coleman, Wm & Mary '71, '75, and '79.

Mary Coleman

Posted on 04/26 at 08:23 AM

This is just another case of political correctness gone wild. Let the name stand! Robbie Johnson Univ. of Richmond Class of 1976

Robbie Johnson

Posted on 04/26 at 08:23 AM

The use of the Indian names gives honor to Indian culture. There is no way that it can be offensive. What is next are we going to change the names of states that get the name from the Indian tribe that lived on the land i.e. Utah from the tribe Ute. By the way that is the name for the University of Utah.

Steve Schutze

Posted on 04/26 at 08:23 AM

I believe that the NCAA is overstepping its boundary in this situation. What has happened to free speech in this country? Leave William and Mary and the other colleges alone. I am sick and tired of "politically correct". The people who want everything to be politically correct are the ones who have no tolerance for other people's beliefs and opinions. Let's focus on something important like keeping William and Mary an excellent academic institution. I am from West Virginia and have been called a hillbilly, etc., but that is o.k. I just laugh about it and go on about my business. There is no way to please everyone, so just leave this alone. Next, we won't be able to call my high school the Maroon Wave, because someone doesn't like the color red. The whole situation, as I see it, is unmerited. Let's make the NCAA change its name.

Gail Gilliam

Posted on 04/26 at 08:23 AM

Having attended W&M, I am proud of my alma mater, as well as its athletic nickname. In my opinion, the name "Tribe" in no way denigrates Native Americans. In fact, I believe it honors them. If there are concerns regarding this issue, I think the best course of action would be to ask the Native Americans themselves, of which there are numerous "tribes" located in Virginia!

Rick Rowland

Posted on 04/26 at 09:03 AM

I think it is political correctness. But the college will want to be in the good graces of the "Minority Opportunities Board", or whatever it is, and they'll cave.

Richard

Posted on 04/26 at 09:04 AM

This is ridiculous. There is nothing offensive about the nickname "Tribe" for W&M, or "Seminoles" for Florida State, or Illinois "Fightin' Illini", or any other team nickname that reflects an American Indian heritage. Instead of worrying about trivia like mandating politically-correct team nicknames, the NCAA should find a way to get member institutions student-athlete graduation rates on a level with W&M. If this initiative succeeds, what about other "questionable" respected team names like "Blue Devils" (religious objections) and "Fightin' Irish" (Offensive to people of Irish descent everywhere who choose not to fight), etc? Pro nicknames like the Redskins, Braves, Indians, and Warriors gotta go too. How 'bout those "tribes" on the TV show "Survivor"...get rid of them. The name "Yankees" might offend people in the South....maybe they should change it too! In short, for the NCAA to make institutions like W&M waste time and money studying this non-issue is absurd. MEMO TO NCAA: GET OVER IT, AND PAY ATTENTION TO THINGS THAT MATTER.

Jim Evans

Posted on 04/26 at 09:04 AM

I agree with Mr. Miles, Chief of the Pamunkey Indians: there are more important issues in this country than what we call our sports teams. The NCAA should also focus on their issues, like graduation levels of it's athletes. This discussion has been had over and over again, and the majority of the people who are supposed to be offended are not. If the people who keep bringing this up really want to help the American Indian then they should help provide better education for the young and the building of skills for older reservation residents. Let's stop beating this horse and move on.

Dan Farmer

Posted on 04/26 at 09:06 AM

This is political correctness taken to an extreme. "Tribe" is a reference to a school for Native Americans that operated on the campus in the 18th century. The mascot is celebrating the rich history of a great university and is not denigrating anyone. People concerned about this issue

ought to focus on real problems like the substance abuse and unemployment problems plaguing Native American reservations. Matt McGuire '95

Matt McGuire

Posted on 04/26 at 09:06 AM

My great-great-grandmother was full blooded Cherokee. She was not offended by the use of terms such as Tribe, Redskins etc. She felt that it was more important what the Great Spirit new about her than what some other person thought of her. As she put it I am not a Native American, I am an American! I will not divide nor segregate myself into a sub culture of any kind. I love the freedom I am afforded as an American and will forever hold those freedoms near and dear to my heart. You can not look back and wish the lands we once owned were still ours they are not. We can not live in the past. We must look forward and live each day to its fullest. Life changes and evolves. If we are to be a happy people we must learn to ride those waves of change without loosing our identity or drown the ocean of political correctness. We must respect each others right to believe as we will. We should not try to push our own beliefs of objectives onto anyone else. Be happy within yourself and you will be truly happy. If you do not love yourself then you will not be capable of truly loving anyone or anything else.

Denise

Posted on 04/26 at 09:06 AM

It's just ridiculous for W&M to change their name. The politically correct are sucking the life, color and culture out of this country and it's sad.

MELanie

Posted on 04/26 at 09:06 AM

I have two comments, one serious, one humorous. 1. Give me a break. Mascots are honored, not made fun of. All of us born in the US are 'Native Americans'. The majority of Indians do not have a problem with the names of the mascots. The 'Activists' are just that, people who have little else to do but complain about something trivial instead of trying to make life better for themselves. 2. What next? PETA? Look out Terrapins, Blue Hens and Spiders. You may be next!

Gilbert Button

Posted on 04/26 at 09:06 AM

THIS IS A JOKE RIGHT, IM OF NATIVE DESCENT AND I THINK ITS GREAT, ILL BET ITS A WHITE OR BLACK LIBERAL WHO BROUGHT THIS UP RIGHT?

BRAD JONES

Posted on 04/26 at 09:40 AM

Dear Mr. O'Connor, God save the Nation from Liberals, the politically correct and all other ignoramuses. There is not enough space on your site for a proper reply. So I am writing a letter to your equally Politically Correct Editorial Page and will send you a copy. Briefly, I do not know if it is a fault of reporting or a failure on the part of W&M to adequately reply. In the inception of W&M there was a farm that had as it's purpose to provide funds for the education of the Native People as well as whites at the school. So many of the students attending there over the past 312 years were of mixed heritage, W&M white and American Indian, that it is simply a case of the NCAA Idiots not knowing and per my opinion not giving a damn about W&M's mutual heritage-White and Red- But! I promised a letter. So that's all for now. I doubt that it will see the print of the TD Sincerely, John M. Chinn coboy@mindspring.com

John Chinn

Posted on 04/26 at 09:40 AM

Are there not more important stones in the news today, such as how to properly punish sex offenders? Or how about assessing the state of our public schools so that no more students are raped in auditoriums like in Columbus, Ohio? Oh, that's right. I forgot that it is more important to make people happy than to do what's right.

Loreigh Kildare

Posted on 04/26 at 09:40 AM

What Mary Coleman says is correct. William and Mary started out life with a school for the local tribes. Had they just pulled the name out of a hat, that would be one thing but it's in the original charter. Obviously it's up to the school to further educate people as to why they chose that name and it would be nice to have the backing of the VA. tribes, but honestly, what does the NCAA have to do with it? Why do they need to have a "major discussion"? Why do they need to waste money tracking down the origin of the school's mascot? For heaven's sake, you can look at the original charter for the school from 1618 and figure that one out!!!

Posted on 04/26 at 09:40 AM

As a proud graduate of W&M, I agree with Mary Coleman and Rick Rowland. William and Mary did indeed have an Indian school in the 18th century. That's the origin of the nickname. I also recall that we changed from "Indians" to "Tribe" in the 70's to be more politically correct. Now that's not enough? Are native Americans offended, or honored? The offence was 200 years of genocide. Not honoring native American heritage will not correct that.

Marg Scott

Michael Barnes

Posted on 04/26 at 09:41 AM

In a word , outrageous. I We are of Irish background and proud of it. We most certainly don't want Notre Dame to reassess their name. One would think that with all of the other problems facing college athletics the NCAA would have more important things to concern themselves with.

Jim McAvey

Posted on 04/26 at 09:41 AM

It appears that the true Native Americans of Virginia do not have a problem with the use of the name "Tribe" for the W & M teams, so why is there a question? Political correctness and the nanny state. There are too many people running around with way too much time on their hands and they have ordained themselves to be better qualified than the rest of us to make decisions. Keep the name. David Ropelewski

David Ropelewski

Posted on 04/26 at 09:41 AM

I believe that W&M chose to honor the fact that there was first a school for Indians on the future site of the College. I always felt proud that the College was being respectful of its original purpose. W&M is probably one of a very few schools using the Indian nickname out of a real connection and genuine respect for its historical link.

Sharon Rateau

Posted on 04/26 at 09:41 AM

Among the more important issues of our day, this appears...

Albert

Posted on 04/26 at 09:46 AM

I was astounded when my alma mater Stanford dropped (late 60's) the name "Indians" for its athletic teams. Even the student who was a native Indian and performed in full gait at all events questioned the move. But the few loud voices prevailed. American Indians should be proud that a fine academic institution (S) have them as their mascots. It was a foolish move in the 60's and it is even more foolish to bring it up again today. What the NCAA should be concerned about is "why many institutions have lowered their academic standards so they can have potentially winning teams." Student athletes deserve a meaningful education, and some of the courses offered to keep them in school is shameful. But, money prevails.

craig callahan

Posted on 04/26 at 09:46 AM

Sports teams choose a mascot with characteristics which they (and their fans) can admire. Team names attributed to Native Americans are selected because they reflect qualities such as courage, tenacity and a strong spirit. Can you imagine a team choosing a name solely to ridicule itself, a name that reflects weakness or cowardice? (Go you Virginia Benedict Arnolds!)

Buddy Ward

Posted on 04/26 at 09:50 AM

I think that this question should be posed to the American Indians. I am a white American and I cannot speak for another culture. Out of respect for the American Indians, I suggest everyone listen to their concerns. Thank you for making people aware of this possible degradation of a group of people.

Bonnie Pizzeck

Posted on 04/26 at 10:10 AM

If the Native Americans of Virginia have no objections to the nickname, then I think there is no problem with the nickname 'Tribe.' William and Mary has gotten away from its original nickname and mascots, so their new mascot and less-specific nickname are much more politically correct.

Posted on 04/26 at 10:25 AM

David Porter

Lighten up! I'm beginning to think that everyone is getting a little too sensitive and that "Political correctness" is dividing this country rather than uniting us. I'm Welsh, and centuries ago, my ancestors were tribal. So what? Let it go.

Kathy King

Posted on 04/26 at 10:35 AM

Political correctness has gone WAY too far, its evolved into political stupidity!!

Howard Mackinnon

Posted on 04/26 at 10:57 AM

Silly. If you look up tribe in the dictionary, there is no mention of Native Americans or Indians. It states "a social group comprising numerous families, clans or generations" while a tribesman is merely "a member of a tribe." The NCAA needs to get over itself and, like someone else mentioned, look at the stats on graduating athletes and other issues in athletic programs. Leave W&M alone!

Karen S.

Posted on 04/26 at 10:58 AM

William and Mary used to be the "Indians" but changed the name to Tribe out of respect for those Native Americans that believed the mascot was not respectful. Please note in the 1700's, the College opened a school for local Native American boys and men if they wanted to learn to read, write etc. The origin of the name is connected with the history of the school, and its geography. It would be more unusual if the mascot were something artificial like - "Tigers" or some other animal not found in Tidewater.

Lauren Morgan

Posted on 04/26 at 10:58 AM

What a joke; the Minority Opportunity and Interest should be worrying about the huge dropout rates among minorities instead of turning off more people with their politically correct drive.

bob

Posted on 04/26 at 11:11 AM

As a William and Mary alumnus, I regard the nickname "Tribe" with pride for my school and its heritage with regard to Virginia's Native-American tribes. Let's not revise history to forget that W&M was originally an Indian school, not just the alma mater of founding fathers Jefferson and Wythe.

Tim Padgett

Posted on 04/26 at 11:12 AM

Let's not get caught up on frivolous details. The noun 'tribe' is a common name unless it speaks about a specific tribe. We can all say that we come from a tribe, but if the reference does not refer to a specific tribe, what's the issue?

horace e. dabney

Posted on 04/26 at 11:16 AM

Why people, especially fellow Native Americans, can't see that Indian mascots are derogatory is beyond me. Mascots perpetuate an image of our people as less than human, cartoonish, and "the noble red man". Why not honor teams with names like Atlanta blacks, New York Jews, etc. Doesn't sound right does it?

Homer Wiggins

Posted on 04/26 at 11:38 AM

Ridiculous. I think the NCAA should spend more time on this important political/correct issue and totally ignore revising their archaic and senseless college recruiting rules. I think the activists who are pushing this agenda should be successful in removing all athletic nicknames such as Indians, Braves, etc. that remind us of the courage, bravery and fighting spirit of their ancestors so that we forget their heritage all together. Who would want to be associated with a great institution like W&M? I think William & Mary should be punished for the lip service they paid to this issue decades ago when they changed from Indians to The Tribe. They should have to forfeit all athletic contests to the University of Richmond Spiders (please don't come after us) since that date and until they change the name again. W&M should be forced to adopt a nickname that more accurately reflects their surrounding, such as The Wrens or The Powder

Magazines:

Dale Morris

Posted on 04/26 at 11:38 AM

I am an American Indian; Penobscot and Cherokee. Somebody, somewhere has waaaaay too much time on their hands to worry about the name of the college ball teams. There should be more concern about the 'functional literates' our colleges are foisting out into the world with degrees. Move on to the real problems facing our schools.

Toni

Posted on 04/26 at 11:39 AM

Why do we continue to attempt to rewrite history? Just leave well enough alone and focus energy on really important issues in this world, other than trying to appease every interest group and be politically correct.

Brenda Davis

Posted on 04/26 at 11:39 AM

Political correctness gone overboard. I'm a W&M grad and I would hate to see the name have to be changed. There are certainly bigger issues, injustices and offenses that should take priority over changing a sports team's name. Let's focus on those.

Katherine

Posted on 04/26 at 12:02 PM

How sad, but true... instead of forging ahead with new ideas and concepts for the future we have become bogged down begging to be forgiven for the past..we have become the "United States of the Offended"

Barry Woody

Posted on 04/26 at 12:11 PM

Was this story supposed to run on April 1? Big time college athletics are in total disarray, graduation rates stink in many of the perennial powerhouses, and performance enhancing drugs are an issue. I really don't see the harm in using "Tribe" as a name for W&M's athletic teams. Maybe to satisfy the pc'ers they should name themselves after something W&M has plenty of..bricks. Of course, I imagine the basketball teams would be OFFENDED if they had to play as the William and Mary Bricks! GO BIG RED!

Bill Patteson

Posted on 04/26 at 12:36 PM

As an alum of W&M, I hope that the administration stands up against this ludicrous attack by the NCAA on the Tribe name. Looks like the liberal, PC logic that is rampant in academia today is extending outside the classroom and on to the athletic playing fields.

Allen Cox

Posted on 04/26 at 12:36 PM

I'm sorry the Indians out west are so bitter about their heritage. As a Christian I believe the NCAA should also be looking at all the mascots who are Devils. I don't like that! Perhaps an atheist might also object to those mascots and nicknames who are Saints. Go Tribe!!!! Tom Bleickl, W & M Class of '66

Tom Bleickl

Posted on 04/26 at 12:57 PM

Denver Cowboys, Minnesota Vikings, New Orleans Saints, San Fran 49er's, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Seattle Mariners, Pittsburgh Pirates, Texas Rangers, New York Yankees, and Chicago White Sox - as a person of European descent these names offend me. Also, New York Giants and Tennessee Titans, aren't these names offensive to obese people?

Josh Graden

Posted on 04/26 at 01:06 PM

There are all kinds of "tribes" all over the world, just as there have been, are now, and will be in the future all kinds of "warriors," and "braves," and "natives" etc., etc., etc..... Please can we just GET OVER these "showboat" efforts to avoid "offending" every group that decides it has some sort of "identity" to protect? We (as a society) are no more interested in "not offending" them than they are genuinely interested in "preserving" anything other than any special benefits/status that their "cultural identity" might convey. And, for the record, I am of American

Samoan descent and my husband has an Iroquois great-grandmother back there somewhere.

Alice Looney

Posted on 04/26 at 01:36 PM

I read this and couldn't understand why this is an issue. If you look the word "tribe" up in the dictionary it states: A unit of social organization comprising several local villages, bands, districts, lineages, or other groups and sharing a common ancestry, culture, language, and name. I think you should be looking into why and how girls at the age of 9 can get their hands on steroids. This is a REAL problem not what a college athletic team calls itself. Stop trying not to offend people and their culture and go after REAL problems. I think children taking drugs is BIGGER than what your college calls itself. Conclder please. Chris Lane

Chris Lane

Posted on 04/26 at 01:50 PM

It really shouldn't take W&M too long to compose a letter to the NCAA advising it to get a grip and find something of substance to worry about. I hope they are just waiting for the new Prez to bless such a letter. If he spends more than 10 minutes on this before bursting into laughter, the search committee failed. Now, if the Roundheads want to do something about that Virginia Cavalier...talk about taking sides! Up Cromwell!

Steve Haner, Class of 76

Posted on 04/26 at 01:51 PM

"Here we go again," as Ronald Reagan used to say when established views were challenged by those with a personal gripe. Only in this case, it's the tiresome tactic employed by the practitioners of politically correct speech. The naming of sports teams is an old and established tradition which the politically correct adherents are determined to demolish because their sensibility is offended. Perhaps they are suffering from longstanding mistreatment and massacre of Indians. It was wrong, of course. But I don't know of a single Indian who wakes every morning wishing to be called a "Native American." For those who are uninformed, anyone born in America is a native American. If the term is offensive, then the proper term is "aborigines." If that too is offensive, then one needs to adapt to life, or seek an abode on some other planet.

Michael J. Pacella

Posted on 04/26 at 02:00 PM

It's pretty funny the venerable Times Dispatch would solicit comment on this. The paper already knows exactly the line of comments they will receive. Maybe the TD is taking a clue from Fox News?

Todd Rogers

Posted on 04/26 at 03:01 PM

Those that think that this is not important probably have never had an athletic team use their particular race or ethnicity as a nickname. It easy to criticize when you are not walking in shoes of oppressed.

Justin

Posted on 04/26 at 03:01 PM

It's sad to see that being "offensive" to someone means the right to free speech should be abridged. If anything offends someone, that minority person/group has the right to boycott or lobby against it to change the opinions of the majority in the minority favor. Neither the minority or majority rules this way. But to flat out say that sanctions should be placed against a team, government or person because they "offended someone" is not constitutional, rather it is a product of some dictatorial "committee" oligarchy. You can't make everyone happy, especially when a group is diametrically opposed to the majority. If the minority cannot sway majority opinion, then the minority should just deal with it instead of making the majority suffer loss of their right to self-expression. This goes beyond sports, it is for any expression.

Tara W.

Posted on 04/26 at 03:01 PM

Who is this jerk, Robert C. Vowels, Jr., and who are the members of his board? Since it's their ambition to seek publicity by any idiotic means then it seems to me that we should be duly informed by your newspaper of exactly who these people are, their political background, their nationality, and why they are using, or should I say allowed to use, their positions for such childish behavior while bothering others with this mindless crap.

Richard Booker

Posted on 04/26 at 03:02 PM

I agree with Bill Miles, there's a lot more important issues needing attention than schools with Idian mascots. Let's get real here.

Diane

Posted on 04/26 at 03:02 PM

Webster defines the word 'tribe' as "a group of people sharing an occupation, interest or habit." Their example of the word usage is "a tribe of students" - which, shockingly (insert sarcasm), is what we, the students of William and Mary, are. None of our paraphernalia contains any form or mention of Indians - aside from the occasional two feathers. Okay, so let's argue that the feather is "offensive." If we were to change the feather and replace it with, I don't know, a four leaf clover - are we then being offensive to Irish people? There has to be a point where we stop. We do not have an Indian mascot. Our mascot, Colonel Ebert, is essentially a giant green bugfish looking blob with a hat - the furthest possible thing from an Indian! We in no way, shape or form portray any depiction of American Indians today. I think the mere suggestion of changing the name is ridiculous.

Stephanie

Posted on 04/26 at 03:02 PM

I was a student at W&M in the late '80s. This issue came up then by campus "progressives" to change the Tribe mascot because it was insensitive. Someone came up with the brilliant idea of asking the tribes in Virginia what they thought and they all were proud to be associated with the College. For some reason, the "progressives" ended their quest. It seems history is repeating itself.

Steven Hanna

Posted on 04/26 at 03:10 PM

Some Native Americans are proud that a good institution would use a name that would refer to them. This "It may offend someone" has to stop somewhere. Instead of attempting to pass a bill about low young people wear their clothes, maybe the General Assembly needs to pass a bill that forbids any public money going to a college that has anything to do with the NCAA. After all, this offends me that public money must be spent to do the evaluation.

Charles Absher

Posted on 04/26 at 03:22 PM

American colonists referred to American Indians as "savages." That would be a bad team name. But when W&M calls their team the Tribe, they obviously mean something positive. "Tribe" has an upbeat connotation and implies camaraderie.

Mr. Mark Smith

Posted on 04/26 at 03:31 PM

As denoted by Webster's Dictionary: "Tribe: A system of social organization comprising several local villages, bands, districts, lineages, or other groups sharing a common ancestry, culture, language and name; A political, ethnic, or ancestral division of ancient states and cultures, esp. any of the three divisions of the ancient Romans. Any of the 12 divisions of ancient Israel. An ancient Greek phyle. A group of persons sharing a common occupation, interest or habit. A large family. A taxonomic category placed between a family and a genus." I think the NCAA imposing the self-study is insane. Any way you look at it, the word tribe means a gathering of people, a collective. The NCAA needs to get their head out of the gutter, it's a brave, new world.

Jennifer Phillips

Posted on 04/26 at 04:00 PM

Frankly, I am sick and tired of "changing times and growing awareness and sensitivity". Call ME insensitive, but I find nothing remotely offensive about The Tribe. I just hope the college will not fall prey to the demon called Political Correctness. What a shame the NCAA continues to ignore and avoid the truly serious issues, and allows a ridiculous committee like this to justify its existence by debating mascots.

Laura

Posted on 04/26 at 04:00 PM

After many years of cheering for the Indians and then the generic "Tribe", I am saddened that we are no longer able to recognize the venerable American Indians first taught at William and Mary. They are our heritage. We honor them by using their good name. How sad if we are no longer able to consider the heritage that we all have whether it is American Indian, black, white, Hispanic, or even slave history. It is what makes us who we are today. We should not forget it and we are in the process of doing so.

Micki Stout

Posted on 04/26 at 04:01 PM
A completely artificial, manufactured "issue" with no real weight or import. Absolutely a waste of ink and paper.

Ted

Posted on 04/26 at 04:16 PM

William and Mary had as one of its original missions an indian school. This school and the resource center of today are an integral part of the college. So is the name "Tribe" which is a tribute above all. Let's hope the College has the backbone to stand up to these boneheads on this issue. This will be an interesting trial by fire for the new president.

Barbara Grant

Posted on 04/26 at 04:54 PM

Another example of misplaced priorities by the NCAA. One would think that the academic performance of student athletes would be the highest priority of the NCAA but the pursuit of money and political correctness now reign supreme. The NCAA bureaucracy has outlived its usefulness to intercollegiate athletics.

Ronald Jordan

Posted on 04/26 at 04:54 PM

If I were an Indian I would be proud! Tribe is not derogatory... Give us all a break!

Mike Perriclio

Posted on 04/26 at 04:54 PM

In no way should William and Mary be included with these other schools. The feather in the WM logo is the only possible reference to Indian culture at the school. The mascot name is "Ebir" which everyone should be able to see is Tribe spelled backwards. The mascot is a green "gumbly" like figure with a tri-cornered hat that represents colonial Williamsburg. It would be a shame for WM the second oldest University to be forced to change their name.

Scott

Posted on 04/26 at 05:15 PM

I think the Virginia Indians have it exactly right. We have a lot more to worry about than the name of sports teams. We have a lot to learn from these first Americans!

Donna Kniceley

Posted on 04/26 at 05:16 PM

Political correctness has become absurd. This is such a waste of time for a public university that has so many other priorities that are so much more important than a useless NCAA investigation. Plus, their resources are limited. Tribe denotes a group of Indians and is not a slur. How could this be offensive to anyone??? I'm sure there is someone out there with nothing better to do that is upset by this team name. Get a job.

Trey McCallie

Posted on 04/26 at 05:38 PM

"Political correctness" has gone too far! I respect the American Indians (Native Americans?) very much; my great grandfather was a Blackfoot Indian. However, I do not feel offended by "Tribe," "Indians," "Braves," or any other team name, which has nothing to do with disrespect. The NCAA should be more concerned about the ways in which college athletes are being used to raise money for universities!

Anonymous

Posted on 04/26 at 05:38 PM

There are way too many bored people in this world who sit around concerned about the use of the word "Tribe" for William and Mary. If the American Indians are not concerned and do not feel disrespected, where is the problem? The mere fact that this logo for William and Mary students, alumnae, and fans produces excitement, support, loyalty and enthusiasm should say something about its value. What's next? The Atlanta Braves need to be brainstorming a politically correct logo for themselves? When does this overkill mentality end?

Sara Vale

Posted on 04/26 at 05:39 PM

The Brafferton, the building at W&M that houses the President's office, was the site of an Indian school in the early 1700s. Thus, the Tribe nickname has a long and significant link to the school. The NCAA should devote more time and effort to other matters -- like the graduation rates of student-athletes. If I remember correctly, W&M was at the top of the list for graduating its student-athletes.

Frank Lynch

Posted on 04/26 at 05:39 PM

Political correctness has gone too far!! I'm not even sure whether to use the term "Native American" or "American Indian." My family has Indian ancestry and I certainly don't see the use of such mascot names as disrespectful. The NCAA should not waste its time on such a "tempest in a teapot" when there are real issues to be addressed. NCAA, get a grip!!

Gary

Posted on 04/26 at 06:11 PM

I think it is out of this world. To even change any name that has been around for a long time. "The Tribe" or any Indian name is just as nice as any of the other name that have been said over the years on any of the college level or pro levels.

lynn

Posted on 04/26 at 07:16 PM

I went to a William and Mary game for the first time last fall. I am Chickahominy and I went with a friend that is Pamunkey. He said, some time ago, he had been asked to ride down the middle of the field wearing a breach cloth and a war bonnet. He politely declined. During the game that I attended, the stands were filled to capacity with people (I have to say that they almost all appeared to be White Anglo-Saxons) who were gesticulating as though throwing a tomahawk, yelling "Go Tribe!" Many had paint striped along their cheeks. I stopped and asked a few people if they knew of the tribes in Virginia. All responded "What tribes?" By the time I left I was deeply disturbed and saddened. I vowed not to go to any other W&M games. I strongly suggest reading the article The Racist Mascot from Urbana-Champaign - Why You Should Boo Illinois By FRANCIS BOYLE. It gives a fresh view point on this behavior. I also suggest knowing why and how W&M got their few original Native students, and why now they don't recruit students from the VA Native population.

Melissa

Posted on 04/26 at 07:16 PM

Whether a name is disparaging to a group or honors it is all in the perception. It is hard to imagine that a school would purposely use a name that had a negative implication. If a school or organization would publicize why it uses the name and project its positive implications it would go a long way to satisfy those that object to it and at the same time improve the school's image.

Jeanette Schnock

Posted on 04/26 at 07:40 PM

Realizing that there are many more and greater things in American Indian history that justify pride, I don't know whether American Indians should feel "proud" of having the name "Tribe" assigned to the William and Mary athletic endeavors. I do know, though, that I feel tremendously proud of the historically grounded, common-sense reactions to this non-issue that have been demonstrated by those of our Virginia Indians who have addressed it. Pamunkey chief William Miles and Mattaponi historian Gertrude "Minnie Ha-Ha" Custalow clearly possess the wit and the humanity to realize that an institution does not adopt for its teams the name of something that it intends to dishonor. It is precisely this kind of wit and humanity that has characterized every contact that I have had with members of our Virginia tribes. The name of their family/social unit does the College of William and Mary honor, and I hope that they will permit that name to remain.

Sharon Chang

Posted on 04/26 at 07:40 PM

I'm glad the NCAA is investigating the use of nicknames related to Native Americans. It's about time they stopped wasting time on unimportant things like: a) gambling; b) college football playoffs; c) graduation rates; d) students who quit college early or by-pass it entirely for professional careers; e) whether any of the three hundred pound linemen playing college football use steroids; f) college coaches who are paid many multiples of the salaries of college professors; and even of college presidents; g) student athletes who somehow can afford luxury SUVs on campus; h) cheating by athletes to maintain eligibility; and i) corporate sponsorship of collegiate sports. So here's to the NCAA's bold steps to eliminate all uses of names derived from American Indians. I'm sure that this august organization will also move its two main offices

from those two highly insensitively named places, Indianapolis, Indiana, and Shawnee Mission, Kansas.

John Gibney

Posted on 04/27 at 09:01 AM

Tribe is not a word unique to "native Americans". There are "tribes" all over the earth. The NCAA should spend more time making sure minority athletes graduate and less time worrying about someone being offended. You can find someone who is offended by anything if you look hard enough.

Bruce Grant

Posted on 04/27 at 09:02 AM

What's next? Do we have to get rid of the Minnesota Vikings? The Boston Celtics? The Fighting Irish of Notre Dame? The West Virginia Mountaineers? I've never considered any of these mascots as personal insults, but hey, whatever makes you happy. I always thought of these names as a tribute to the people who lived on the land before the colonists came, a way to remember them as part of an area's history.

Mark M

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LETTERS

VA. GAZETTE - 5/4/2005

Tribe defined

Don't change the Tribe name. Just drop the feather and replace it (if it *must* be replaced)

with a symbol that more globally represents the meaning of the word "tribe" as defined below:

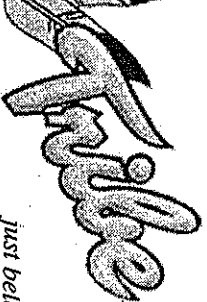


tribe-A unit of sociopolitical organization consisting of a number of families, clans, or other groups who share a common ancestry and

culture and among whom leadership is typically neither formalized nor permanent. A political, ethnic, or ancestral division of ancient states and cultures, especially: Any of the three divisions of the ancient Romans, namely, the Latin, Sabine, and Etruscan. Any of the 12 divisions of ancient Israel. A phyle of ancient Greece. A group of people sharing an occupation, interest, or habit: a tribe of graduate students. Informal. A large family. Biology: A taxonomic category placed between a subfamily and a genus or between a suborder and a family and usually containing several genera. - The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, Copyright 2000, by Houghton Mifflin Co.

tribe (trb) n. An occasional taxonomic category placed between a subfamily and a genus or between a suborder and a family and usually containing several genera. - The American Heritage Steadman's Medical Dictionary Copyright 2002, 2001, 1995, by Houghton Mifflin Co.

Main Entry: tribe. Pronunciation: trb. Function: noun. a category of taxonomic classification sometimes equivalent to or ranking just below a suborder but more commonly ranking below a subfamily. - Merriam-Webster's Medical Dictionary 2002, Merriam-Webster Inc.



tribe-A unit of sociopolitical organization consisting of a number of families, clans, or other groups who share a common ancestry and

Anita M. Williams
1028 Norwyk Lane
James City

Tribal usage fuels debate

Some say William and Mary's use of Tribe as a nickname is acceptable. Others say it's derogatory. The NCAA is interested enough to ask for answers.

BY DAVE JOHNSON
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Barty Bass isn't commenting or justifying it. The truth is, such things have always rubbed him the wrong way.

But simply put, William and Mary's use of "Tribe" as the nickname for its sports teams doesn't rank high on his list of concerns.

"Honestly, we've been through this unpleasent times," said Bass, chief of the Nansemond Tribe in Suffolk. "If it's done in the right manner, I don't have a problem with it. In a lot of instances, people don't do it the right way and we don't appreciate it. But with William and Mary, I don't see a problem with them doing that."

Whether you agree with Bass' bottom line or not, he's certainly right about one thing: We have been through this unpleasent times. In 1988, a group of students wanted the school's mascot to be a phoenix — a mythical bird. Nine years before that an alumnus wrote the student newspaper to protest the use of Tribe as the school's nickname.

The latest came in November, when the NCAA's Minority Opportunities and Interests

Pressure Tribe/87

► **TRIBE** Continued from B1

Use of tribal nicknames draws criticism

Committee contacted 30 member institutions with American Indian nicknames, including Seminoles, Warriors, Ikhini and Tribe. Each was asked to submit a self-analysis to the NCAA no later than May 1.

Because it was dealing with its NCAA certification process and between presidents at the time of the request, William and Mary has been given an additional six months to comply.

"We have not started the process," said Tribe athletic director Terry Driscoll. "Until we finish our NCAA self-study for certification, we're not going to be in position to do it. Something will have to be done later this spring or in the summer."

"This is generally done outside of the athletic department. It's more of an institutional process. Until we actually go in and begin the process, I can't tell you what form or shape it will take."

The Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee is asking each of the 30 schools to complete a self-analysis that includes the nickname's origin, the college's efforts to inform athletes of its meaning, and how

"An extensive study was done here in 1998, and we did not find anyone offended by the name. It's in keeping with the tradition of the college. One of the early missions of W&M was to educate Native Americans. Thirty-six of 7,500 students here are Native Americans."

William & Mary's associate vice president of public affairs on the school's nickname

the institution relates to the American Indian community. Among those the committee hopes to hear from: athletes and administrators, and local American Indian leaders.

W&M officials say there is no issue with the nickname. "An extensive study was done here in 1998, and we did not find anyone offended by the name," said Bill Walker, associate vice president of public affairs. "It's in keeping with the tradition of the college. One of the early missions of W&M was to educate Native Americans."

Thirty-six of 7,500 students here are Native Americans."

The last few years have seen several NCAA schools abandon nicknames that were seen as offensive to American Indians. St. John's, for instance, changed from Redmen to Red Storm.

Miami of Ohio is no longer the Redskins — it's the RedHawks. Marquette ditched Warriors in favor of Golden Eagles.

The National Football League has the Washington Redskins and Kansas City Chiefs. Major League Baseball has the Atlanta Braves and the

Cleveland Indians. The National Basketball Association has the Golden State Warriors. The National Hockey League has the Chicago Blackhawks.

None of it goes over well with Reggie Imponce Jr., president of the Virginia Indian Tribal Alliance for Life. Neither for that matter, does William and Mary's use of Tribe.

"Some say a nickname like the Redskins is more offensive than Tribe," said Tupponce of the Upper Mataponi Tribe outside Richmond. "While that may be true, it is still offensive. It shows a lack of respect. This area is so historical. I'm sure they could find something else that would be a good symbol."

"I believe them when they say they mean no offense, but offense can still be taken. If you picked any other ethnic group, like African-Americans or Latinos, could you see (a team) picking a derogatory name that would offend them? I don't think any other ethnic group would tolerate it."

Staff writer Mary O'Brien contributed to this report. ■

Evolution of a name



In 1935, the school adopted Indian as the nickname for the teams. The name was changed to Orange and Black in 1937, and to Orange and White in 1938.

In the mid-1980s, the school changed its nickname from Indian to Tribe.

Photo: ACTUARIS/ST



What's in a name? That's the question facing W&M

By TOM ROBINSON, The Virginian-Pilot

© April 28, 2005

Last updated: 10:42 PM

TalkNet:
Discuss the nickname

To a large degree, nicknames of sports teams are fanciful words designed to promote identities and honor histories but mostly to sell "officially licensed" T-shirts.

Saints and Presidents.
And we do worship our Lions, Tigers and Bears with the zeal of Knights.

We defend our Hokies, Hoyas and Hoosiers like Vandals, Vulcans and Vixens, which are all current college nicknames — although reasoning why Utah's NBA team remains the discordant Jazz 26 years after fleeing New Orleans is a tough nut.

But that's sort of the point.

It's all a silly game that diverts us from the sticks and stones of the world for a little while. Names don't matter.

Except they do when the specter of personal insult or exploitation is raised. Usually, this is done by those put off by the use of nicknames related to the American Indian culture.

Now, as far as I know, PETA's Banana Slug branch was silent when California-Santa Cruz began stamping that slimy mollusk onto its official letterhead.

But a logo with a pair of feathers and a word — Tribe — often used in reference to American Indians would be certain to draw placards and protest, right?

Not in Williamsburg, at least, where Terry Driscoll toils as William and Mary's athletic director.

"I only know about the College of William and Mary, and this subject has not been an issue during my time here," says Driscoll, who's been on the job eight years. "I have no reason to assume, based on what I know, that this is an issue we would need to deal with."

He may have to, considering that the NCAA has asked its members with American Indian-related nicknames to check their propriety in a time of sharpened sensitivities.

For now, its committee on minority opportunities and interests just wants to know things like how nicknames such as Indians and Braves came to be used, as well as a school's educational mission concerning American Indians.

William and Mary, for one, was founded in part to educate American Indians. The school, whose teams were once known as the Indians, received a six-month extension because of its pending change of presidents and will report back to the NCAA by November. Driscoll says.

American Indian nicknames are a hot button that pits the right of self-determination against what's right. Social and economic agendas charge the matter, and administrators buffet in the winds of pro- and anti-political correctness.

The Cleveland Indians' name persists, despite their hideous caricature logo, because of a deep history and a brand identity that sells everything from media rights to souvenir keychains.

But reasonable people can buy an Indians ticket or let even a blatant name like the Washington Redskins roll off their tongue with no thought of slurring American Indians.

In that vein, the William and Mary Tribe seems harmless.

That, though, is one of the rubs of it: The only way a team starting today would even skirt the fringes of American Indian names would be if the players were actually American Indians.

Yet, schools that threaten to change their nickname, especially if perceived as bowing to outside pressures, need to be prepared for some big-money alumni to threaten to tear up their checks.

Such is the battle for momentum in the debate.

In the long run, it may not matter in William and Mary's case that "tribe" is defined as a group of similar people and not any particular race of people.

What might matter, unless the NCAA is willing and able to issue a binding prohibition, is whether American Indians support the name and intention.

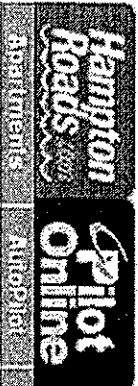
"When we take care of some of the poverty and crime and drug problems and that sort of thing in this country, then we'll worry about names," Bill Miles, chief of the Pamunkey Indians in King William County, told the Richmond Times-Dispatch this week.

Critics can note, though, that the school had no trouble pulling back from the "Indians" nickname in the '80s.

Time, and the NCAA, may determine if it will ultimately need to trade in the Tribe for Royals, Professors or Garden Weasels.

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A truce for the Tribe

The Virginian-Pilot
© April 30, 2005
Last updated: 9:59 PM

Earlier this year, the NCAA asked 31 universities to study whether their nicknames, mascots or logos are offensive to American Indians. Among those schools is the College of William and Mary, which calls itself the "Tribe."

In the lifetime of current students, William and Mary's teams were the "Indians," its mascots dressed in what was supposed to be Indian garb, and a grinning Indian served as a logo. All that is gone now, thankfully; pretty much the only connection to those days is a logo that includes a couple of green and gold feathers, under script that spells out "Tribe."

It's not the most attractive or sophisticated logo, but it's hard to find much offense in it, at least among Native Americans in the region. "It's a tribe. We root for those," Gertrude Minnie-Ha-Ha Custalow, historian for the Mattaponi Tribe, told the Richmond Times-Dispatch. "I've never heard of any other tribes who think it's improper."

There are, of course, plenty of appropriations that are offensive to Native Americans and others.

The Washington Redskins NFL football team is easily the most egregious example, but in the NCAA there are Redmen and Braves to which many people take offense. In all cases, there is a great deal of a institution's identity and money tied up in mascots and team names, concerns that can sometimes overwhelm good sense.

Some colleges, of course, have made changes. Stanford, for example, is now the Cardinal, not the Indians; the St. John's Redmen are now The Red Storm.

William and Mary's situation is arguably different. The school was founded in the 17th century, partly as a place for Native Americans to be educated. That experiment went so horribly awry that the "Indians" nickname was not just inappropriate, it was dishonest. Still, those early intentions remain part of the school's storied past and its identity.

That historical connection, the relatively early abandonment of its offensive mascot, and the fact that "Tribe" is arguably if not practically an ethnically neutral term, has spared the school from a new outcry. Even in debates about racial sensitivity, after all, there are degrees of offensiveness, just as there are degrees of incivility. So far, at least, "Tribe" doesn't appear to be either.

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nicknames.

Stanford, for instance, dropped its Indians moniker to become the Cardinal . No word yet on the reaction of the hierarchy in the Catholic Church.

Dartmouth's Indians morphed into the Big Green. But the Big Green what? This is an Ivy League school. Surely someone noticed the lack of a noun.

In that same vein, Syracuse recently abandoned its Orangemen – to the great relief of orange people everywhere – and became simply the Orange.

Since political correctness nearly always elbows aside common sense, may I humbly suggest a few new nicknames for William and Mary?

In honor of the university's most famous alum – no, not Jon Stewart – they could call themselves the Jeffersons.

Given the school's colonial history, the Musket Balls might work.

Then again, excited fans might drop the word "musket."

To recognize the incredible academic standards at William and Mary – Phi Beta Kappa was born there – how about these:

The Brainiacs.

The Einsteins.

The William and Mary Mensas.

I'm just trying to help.

Wait, a minute, I think I have it. According to the university's home page, the College Building was burned in 1862, "... set on fire by drunken soldiers of the 5th Pennsylvania Cavalry."

Why not the Drunken Soldiers? That ought to offend just about everyone.

No?

All right then, how about the William and Mary Whippets?

Reach Kerry at (757) 446-2306 or at kerry.dougherty@cox.net.

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Athletics -- Indian Symbolism

On the warpath

Fans defend nickname

By John Harvey

WILLIAMSBURG — "The politically correct idiots are at it again," wrote Baxter Bell, a 1949 William & Mary graduate. "The 'Tribe' or 'Indians' is a fine name for William and Mary with its history. Even the real Indians are honored to have William and Mary use that name."

You tell us:
The W&M...?
Should the College of William & Mary abandon its Tribe nickname to avoid offending Native Americans?

Bell's sentiment is typical among fans who responded to a Gazette coupon published Wednesday. They were reacting to word from the NCAA that 30 colleges reconsider nicknames associated with Native Americans.

"When I think of Tribe, I think of a family that works hard, works together and that goes through difficult situations and overcomes adversity and has to be skilled and awake to stay alive," wrote Billy Pulliam. "What is disrespectful to anyone about that?"

Most respondents consider the issue trivial. "The Tribe nickname is a tribute to Native Americans in this area," wrote David Faith. "What liberal [expletive deleted]!" added Bob Wildman. "William & Mary's heritage is rooted in support of betterment for the Indians, so leave well enough alone and don't bow to the do-gooders who are interested in what they perceive is for the Indians own good," wrote C.G. Gerard.

See Tribe page 4B

★Tribe name defended

Continued from page 1B
Wilford Kale, co-author of a history about W&M football, was among the first to respond. He said the name should only be abandoned under one condition. "If Virginia's Indian Tribes ask for such action"

"Don't give in," pleaded John Ayscue. "Even the chief of the Pamunkey Tribe says that there are more important things to worry about than changing the nickname."

Others blamed the NCAA. "Let's have William and Mary show some backbone, stick to its guns, and say our nickname is the Tribe," wrote Charles Griggs. "It's the same as the Washington Redskins, who have been besieged for years about changing names. Thank God they are still the Redskins."

"Where has common sense gone?" asked Jeff Platte. "Doesn't the National

Collegiate Athletic Association have some real business to attend to?"

"I wonder if PETA would like to investigate the University of Wisconsin Badgers mascot?" Platte added. "Refusing to play the Tribe because of their *nickname*? For shame. Let William and Mary students decide how they want to be known on the athletic fields."

"William & Mary should tell the NCAA to find more important issues to fuss with than this sort of silliness, which has absolutely no relevance to the use of Tribe as its nickname," wrote Leonard Wood.

Robert Shuman, a 1950 W&M grad, wants the college to scrap 'Tribe' and return to 'Indians.'

"That is an honorable name and was selected because the student body felt that it connoted an inspiring and

admirable image," he said. "One does not demean by trying to emulate strong and heroic models. To succumb to such spurious logic opens one to forever dancing at the end of the chain of political machination; having nothing to do with either the college or its respect for the Indians of choice."

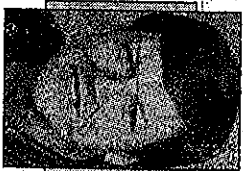
A few readers prefer a new nickname.

"I recommend that the college deep-six the feathers attached to the William and Mary logo, which infer a Native American connection," offered John Kurec. "Start a public relations campaign educating the public about the nickname."

Lafayette High guidance counselor Virginia Carey suggested "War Hawks" as an alternative. "It's alliterative with William and Mary," she said. "Could keep the feathered logo too."

Athletics -- Indian Symbolism

4/30/85



Rusty Gaither
Infield coach

NCAA is nitpicking on proud nickname

"Touchdown for the Tri..." No. "That basket gave the Ind..." Can't say that either. "Fair visits the mound for a pow..." Oops.

The NCAA's latest move at political correctness has struck home, where the College of William & Mary has been asked to re-examine use of "The" as a nickname. Those of at least 30 colleges may be regarded as an affront to Native Americans, according to the NCAA.

About once a decade, someone objects to "Indians," a nickname that dates here to 1915. Never mind that the Brafferton once housed a school for Indian boys.

The college has been responsive to some degree. In the early 1990s the athletic department phased out the use of "Indians." Also gone are the costumed chief and princess who once patrolled the sidelines.

In their place we got "Ehrt," a costumed mascot that resembles a green Cookie Monster with a tricorn hat. He too is offensive, but only in an aesthetic sense. Talk about an identity crisis.

Admittedly, the nickname hasn't always been in the best taste. In the 1960s, then-football coach Lou Holtz proudly wore his hat with the same toothy-grinned cartoon Indian long used by the Cleveland Indians.

That caricature is long gone. The only visible ties are two feathers attached to the W&M logo (but not on the uniforms).

Most colleges that incorporate the touchy nickname do so out of a sense of honor. Chippewas, Mooccams, Seminoles and Illini, for example. The tribes usually approve.

The NCAA is overstepping by "suggesting" name changes. It would do better to focus on colleges where the nickname is an open affront, or work harder to achieve graduation rates like those of William & Mary.

Women's soccer coach John Daly wouldn't mind a new nickname here. What really offends him is Notre Dame's use of "Fighting Irish," which he sees as stereotyping the Irish as drunken brawlers. Daly's right, though: I doubt the NCAA will make any such suggestion to Notre Dame. It carries far too much weight, having once negotiated its own TV contract outside the NCAA.

Louisiana-Lafayette calls its teams the Ragin Cajuns, a wild-eyed stereotype of indigenous peoples. Let's not overlook religion. A half-dozen colleges call their teams "Crusaders," a representation of one of Christianity's more misguided ventures.

Any impetus to change a college nickname should come from within each campus, not from the NCAA.

Several universities have done so: Miami of Ohio (Redskins to Red Hawks), Marquette (Warriors to Golden Eagles) and St. John's (Red Men to Red Storm). Syracuse shied away from Orangemen in favor of Orange, even though the original nickname apparently had nothing to do with Indians.

The defense of W&M has been swift, evidenced by 20 coupon responses, letters and a last Word call after John Harvey's report Wednesday.

Go, Tribe! □
More — Letters 21A Last Word 18D.

4/30/05

Athletics -- Indian Symbolism

Keep the Tribe nickname

LETTERS

Respectful term

When I think of a tribe, I think of a family that works hard, that works together, that goes through difficult situations, that overcomes adversity, and that has to be skilled and awake to stay alive. What is disrespectful to anyone about that definition?

William & Mary has already dropped the Indians nickname. I do not think they should drop the Tribe. W&M represents excellence in college athletics, not just winning and losing, but in graduating and learning life skills from team and individual sports. The athletes represent the college in an outstanding manner through sportsmanship and overall conduct.

Let's go, Tribe! Do you have your season football tickets? For the first time in 43 years I am pleased to say I've bought season tickets. Let's sell out Zable Stadium for every game. Let's support those guys and give them a great home field advantage. We can do it if we all work together.

Billy Pulliam
James City

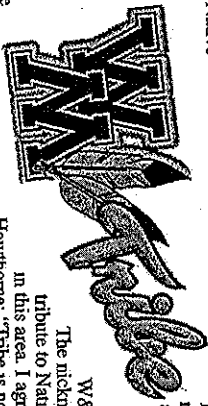
Tribe pride

Some individuals in the student body have filled me with pride in the success of American Indians, complete with a multitude of examples of their cultural and spiritual strength and ingenuity. I have been encouraged as a Native American to be proud of my heritage and to be proud of the people I have selected to attend college with. I have been encouraged to be proud of the people I have selected to be my friends and to be proud of the people I have selected to be my teammates. I have been encouraged to be proud of the people I have selected to be my neighbors. I have been encouraged to be proud of the people I have selected to be my classmates. I have been encouraged to be proud of the people I have selected to be my colleagues. I have been encouraged to be proud of the people I have selected to be my friends and to be proud of the people I have selected to be my teammates.

Eric Gorman
3155 Henry St.
Williamsburg

Stick to tradition

In regard to the April 27 Gazette article, "Will W&M abandon its Tribe," and the question about whether the nickname should be abandoned, in my opinion, the College of William & Mary should *not* abandon its Tribe name. When is this political correctness going to end?



The nickname Tribe should not be viewed as offensive. It is not portrayed as such in W&M sports.

The nickname is a tribute to Native Americans in this area. I agree with Peel Hawthorne: "Tribe is not just a nickname, but a part of the area's culture." I also agree with Mike Bucci: "The Indians represented something about our history... It meant being brave and strong and it had a lot of integrity."

I strongly disagree with Coach Day's comments. There will always be those who will disagree with any name selection and cite it as offensive.

I graduated in 1971 from Peninsula High School in New Jersey. Our name "Indians" was taken from the area Lenape Indian tribes. The name was selected for many of the same reasons as listed above and was always portrayed respectfully.

I'm proud to root for the W&M Tribe because it is my local team. Let's keep the Tribe's proud tradition intact. Enough is enough!

David P. Faith
James City

Apparently the National Collegiate Athletic Association has solved the abysmal student-athlete graduation rates, pathetic academic programs and booster cheating at the nation's Division I-A jock schools. It can now address that great pressing social issue of Native American-themed college nicknames.

Along with a host of other colleges and universities, the College of William & Mary will be required to perform a self-analysis and submit a report to the august ruling body of intercollegiate athletics concerning the history of the "Tribe" nickname and how the college interfaces with the local Native American population.

Years ago W&M abandoned "Indians" and went with "Tribe" as the moniker for its sports teams. I went to my trusty Webster's and found tribe defined as follows: "(1) a social group comprising numerous families, clans or generations together with slaves, dependents, or adopted strangers; (2) a group of persons having a common character, occupation, or interest; (3) a category of taxonomic classification sometimes equivalent to or ranking just below a suborder or ranking below a subfamily."

Nowhere in the definitions is there a reference to Native Americans. To dispel any PCers' angst, I recommend that the college deep-six the features attached to the W&M logo,

which imply a Native American connection (that should also placate the PEFA people) and start a public relations campaign educating the public that the nickname Tribe refers to a generic group of people and is not directly affiliated with any specific group, especially Native Americans. If necessary, a disclaimer can be attached to each W&M product retaining this new policy. Problem solved! And I provide this solution to the college with no remuneration expected.

John Kurec
York

Unoffensive word

"Tribe" should *not* be abandoned; unless Virginia's Indian tribes ask for such action, and thus far they say no. The tribe, unlike other attributions to Native Americans, is hardly offensive. And the logo-type of W&M with the feathers likewise shows no decision toward Indians.

If pressed, the new nickname might be "Royals" for King William and Queen Mary. The other obvious nickname, "Monarchs," was taken many, many years ago by Old Dominion University, which at one time was the Norfolk division of W&M.

Wilford Kale
427 Hempstead Rd.
James City

No correlation

I suggest the NCAA look up the definition of the word "tribe" in Webster's New World Dictionary. The definition contains no reference to Indians or Native Americans:

Based on the origin of the word, perhaps some ancient Romans, Latins, Sabines or Etruscans might be offended, if any were still alive, but not Indians or Native Americans (whatever they are, as any person born in the Americas is a native).

William & Mary should tell the NCAA to find more important issues to fuss about than this sort of silliness. Based on Webster's definition, there is absolutely no relevance between William & Mary's use of the word Tribe as its nickname and Native Americans.

Leonard T. Wood
100 Harbour Town
James City

Tribe name change

'I agree that the William & Mary mascot name should be changed. Drop the Tribe and bring back the Indians. Fans will flock to the reservation.'
More — Story inside, Infield Chapter 1B.

Growth cont.

'In the April 23 Gazette, we learned that half of the tenants in New Town will be local companies moving or opening new branches. Will anyone ever consider that maybe we're overbuilding retail and other spaces in town? Williamsburg Crossing sits maybe 1/4 empty, and with the possible closing of Charmke Theater we still don't know what's going to fill those spaces. At other malls, it seems like musical chairs as companies move to New Town, High Street or other new developments. What's going to happen to the huge Riverside building at Williamsburg Crossing after it opens at the new hospital?'

Tribe defined

Don't change the Tribe name. Just drop the feather and replace it (if it *must* be replaced) with a symbol that more globally represents the meaning of the word "Tribe" as defined below:



Tribe-A unit of sociopolitical organization consisting of a number of families, clans, or other groups who share a common ancestry and

culture and among whom leadership is typically neither formalized nor permanent. A political, ethnic, or ancestral division of ancient states and cultures, especially: Any of the three divisions of the ancient Romans, namely, the Latin, Sabine, and Etruscan. Any of the 12 divisions of ancient Israel. A phyle of ancient Greece. A group of people sharing an occupation, interest, or habit: a tribe of graduate students. Informal. A large family. Biology: A taxonomic category placed between a subfamily and a genus or between a suborder and a family and usually containing several genera. - The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, Copyright 2000, by Houghton Mifflin Co.

Tribe (trib) n. An occasional taxonomic category placed between a subfamily and a genus or between a suborder and a family and usually containing several genera. - The American Heritage Steadman's Medical Dictionary Copyright 2002, 2001, 1995, by Houghton Mifflin Co.

Main Entry: tribe. Pronunciation: trib. Function: noun. a category of taxonomic classification sometimes equivalent to or ranking but more commonly ranking below a subfamily. - Merriam-Webster's Medical Dictionary, 2002, Merriam-Webster Inc.

Anita M. Williams
1028 Norwyk Lane
James City

5/4/05

Tribes name change cont.

"I read with interest the article in Wednesday's paper about William and Mary possibly changing its name from Tribe. Nowhere in my Webster's Dictionary is 'Tribe' described as a group of Native Americans. 'Tribe' goes back to Roman times. 'Tribe' is a social group of people with common interests who band together. Sounds like a football game to me."



"To avoid controversy, why not change William and Mary's nickname to something that represents the current student body. How about calling them the 'Jaywalkers?'"

W&M suicides

"Rather than blame Wal-Mart for the William and Mary suicides, perhaps there should be an inquiry into student life on campus. Why didn't faculty and staff recognize that these poor souls were in distress? Where were their friends and roommates in their time of crises? It's really sad that the blame is always shifted away from those who are most responsible."



Shifting culture

"In response to the person asking about major concerts and gathering places such as sports bars: Years ago concerts were presented at William and Mary Hall. The Shakespeare Festival was larger. Colonial Williamsburg was well-attended, and museums were open seven days a week. I suspect the culture has shifted in favor of something else."



"In response to a request for a Russian language tutor: I am a graduate student at William and Mary and speak fluent Russian as well as English. I would be happy to discuss a possibility of tutoring your daughter. Please call 592-6838."

Publication: The Virginian-Pilot, **Section:** Hampton Roads, **Page:** 28, **Date:** Thursday, May 05, 2005



To NCAA: Leave W&M's team nickname alone

It's unreasonable that the NCAA is asking the College of William and Mary to re-evaluate its team mascot/name, the Tribe, because it has a relationship to Native American Indians.

- The definition of "tribe" does not refer to Native American Indians but any families, clans or other groups who share a common ancestry, culture and leadership.
- William and Mary was originally founded in the 1600s to educate Indians. Therefore, the name Tribe is historically appropriate.
- Almost any school mascot can be offensive to someone, somewhere. Perhaps the NCAA should have Notre Dame change its name from the Irish. And what about West Virginia's Mountaineer? Do all West Virginians run around with a rifle and act like a hillbilly?

If the NCAA is going to force William and Mary to change its mascot, it should have all teams eliminate their names and just be referred to as team A, B, C, AA, BB, CC, etc.

The NCAA should require all its member schools to visit William and Mary and study why it's so successful in developing student athletes. W&M's football team graduated all its scholarship athletes, one of only two teams in the NCAA to achieve what should be the real goal of a school's football program.

The NCAA needs to focus its attention on improving education and graduation rates for athletes, and leave school mascots alone.

Bruce C. Holbrook W&M Class of 1971 Norfolk

5-6-05

Trible Nickname Wins Cheers

EDITOR, TIMES-DISPATCH:
In its effort to root out offensiveness, the NCAA has asked William and Mary to examine its athletic nickname, the Tribe. Talk about swatting at gnats!

If the NCAA really wanted to tackle the problem, maybe it ought to get William and Mary to change the name of the college. After all, isn't the name "William and Mary" the epitome of anti-Catholic prejudice? When King James II of Eng-

land, a closet Catholic, had a son, Catholic succession to the English throne was assured. But this was too much for the English to tolerate. The pro-ly Protestant William and Mary were basically invited to take over the country, and Britain's "no popish monarch" policy has continued to this day.

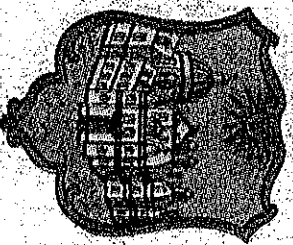
Maybe that can of worms is too big for the NCAA to open.

RICHARD P. PAVCUN,
COLONIAL HEIGHTS.

❖ ❖ ❖

EDITOR, TIMES-DISPATCH:
The NCAA is making very public its concern about the use of the nickname "Tribe" at the College of William and Mary. I am curious why it has never made a public announcement extolling the fact that William and Mary sustains one of the highest graduation rates of student-athletes in the country.

In fact, the College's football team is one of two Division I schools (the other one is Duke University's) with a 100-percent graduation rate. The overall NCAA graduation rate hovers around 60 percent. Instead of requiring that



WILLIAM & MARY

William and Mary waste its time and money on an issue that seems to be a problem for no one other than the political correctness police at the NCAA. I suggest it divert its energy to promoting William and Mary as a shining example of how college athletic programs should be run.

SUSAN HARTMAN,
RICHMOND.

Tribe name cont.

“Conservatives pride themselves on their sense of history, but I wonder if they realize that the term ‘Indian’ is a misnomer. The early explorers believed they were actually in India, and thus it seemed logical to them to name the native people there Indians. Even to this day, when one refers to Indians there’s a confusion about whether that means the tribal people of North America or the inhabitants of the subcontinent of India. Native Americans are understandably upset by this mis-characterization of their ethnicity. The only analogy I can think of is that if we called the people living in the United Kingdom ‘British.’ The natives of Scotland, Ireland and Wales would beg to differ. I suppose to be politically and anthropologically correct, we should use address to the aboriginal inhabitants of our continent by their tribal affiliation instead of the all-inclusive and incorrect term ‘Indian.’ However, I’d agree that the somewhat more benign term, ‘Tribe’ for the William & Mary team doesn’t seem offensive.”

“If the William & Mary athletic teams would simply change their name to ‘Los Indios,’ it would solve two PC problems. (1) It should satisfy the folks who cringe at the word ‘Indians.’ (2) It should satisfy the ones who press for a more bilingual, socially diverse society. Then the Gazette could let the Spanish language columnist translate it.”



5/13/05

W&M Tribe

When I think of the tribe, I think of a family that works hard, that works together, that goes through difficult situations, that overcomes adversity, and that has to be skilled and awake to stay alive. What is disrespectful to any-

one about that definition?

William and Mary dropped the "Indians". I do not think they should drop the "Tribe." William



and Mary represents excellence in college athletics — not just winning and losing, but in graduating, learning life skills from team and individual sports, and representing the college in an outstanding manner through sportsmanship and overall conduct.

Billy Pulliam
Williamsburg

Team nicknames

Some time ago Dave Fairbank took issue with the use of Redskins as a team nickname. More recently a story ran regarding the NCAA demand for a review of college nicknames including William and Mary's use of Tribe. ("Tribe usage fuels debate," April 28). Fairbank and the NCAA presume such nicknames offend Native Americans and once upon a time so did Sports Illustrated.

A March 2002 article in Sports Illustrated reported on the campaign against Indian nicknames. SI took a poll and the results did not support the presumption. From the article, "Asked if high school and college teams should stop using Indian nicknames, 81 percent of Native American respondents said no."

What does that say about William and Mary's use of Tribe? SI quoted: "As for pro sports, 83 percent of Native American respondents said teams should not stop using Indian nicknames, mascots, characters and symbols. When asked if they were offended by the name Redskins, 75 percent of Native American respondents in-

SI's poll said they were not, and even on reservations, where Native American culture and influence are perhaps felt most intensely, 62 percent said they weren't offended."

SI also made the observation that, "There's a near total disconnect between Indian activists and the Native American population on this issue."

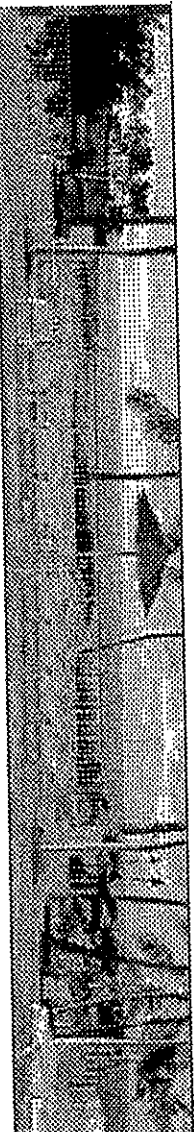
SI interviewed Suzan Harjo, president of the Morning Star Institute, an Indian-rights organization based in Washington, D.C. She dismissed the opinion poll results as, "There are happy campers on every plantation" or as evidence that "Native American self-esteem has fallen so low that they don't even know when they're being insulted." What arrogance.

The Daily Press can do a better job of providing some balance on this subject.

Joe Leming
Newport News

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Mascots create divisiveness on some campuses

By Steve Weberg, USA TODAY

He was a no-show at college basketball's Final Four in St. Louis last month, but make no mistake: Illinois' headdress-bedecked Chief Illiniwek was not forgotten.



By Seth Perlman, AP file

Illinois is weighing dropping mascot Chief Illiniwek, who did not appear at the Final Four.

A fixture at the school for almost 80 years, dancing during intermission of Illini athletics contests, the Chief continued to stir emotions and debate — conspicuous by his absence as the Illini played beneath the Gateway Arch for a national championship. Is he a homage to American Indians and their place in Illinois history? Or as critics contend, is he an offensive racial stereotype?

The university, while insisting the character is a "tradition" and not a mascot, has weighed the issue since the 1980s. Opponents sued two months ago, asking a Cook County, Ill., court to bar his appearances.

At the same time, Chief is one of most visible targets of a broad review by the NCAA, which itself is measuring modern sensibilities and weighing whether the governing body can and should impose a ban on all Native American nicknames and mascots. Its decision is due in August.

"I think member institutions now understand the seriousness of this issue," says Robert Vowels, commissioner of the Southwestern Athletic Conference and chairman of the NCAA's Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee.

"People are telling you that in some instances it's hurtful, it's discriminatory, it's degrading. When you have those types of issues and sentiments coming out, you have to take a serious look at it."

Thirty schools in Divisions I, II and III were ordered by the NCAA to assess their use of Indian nicknames, mascots or logos and file reports by May 1. They'll be reviewed first by Vowels' committee, then by an NCAA executive committee subcommittee on gender and diversity issues and finally by the presidents and chancellors who sit on the full Executive Committee.

Interestingly, the diversity subcommittee will be headed by Alcorn State President Clinton Bristow. Also a member of Vowels' conference, the school calls its sports teams the Braves and is among those under NCAA scrutiny.

<http://usatoday.printlnthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=USATODAY.com+-+Mascots+create+...> 5/16/2005

Not the first look

The Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee already has weighed in once on the Indian mascot question, declaring in an Oct. report that "it is time for this tradition to be retired." But the panel went on to "acknowledge and support member institutions' self-dete this issue."

Schools asked for explanations

The NCAA requested that 30 member schools give explanations for why they use Native-American nicknames, mascots or logos. Twenty have replied while the others received extensions, according to Corey Jackson of the NCAA.

School	Div.	Nickname
Alcorn State	I	Braves
Arkansas State	I	Indians
Bradley	I	Braves
California State-Stanislaus	II	Warriors
Carthage College	III	Redmen
Catawba College	II	Indians
Central Michigan	I	Chippewas
Chowan College	III	Braves
William & Mary	I	Tribe
East Stroudsburg	II	Warriors
Florida State	I	Seminoles
Hudson College	III	Braves
Hawaii	I	Warriors
Illinois	I	Fighting Illini
Indiana of Pennsylvania	II	Indians
Louisiana at Monroe	I	Indians
Lycoming College	III	Warriors
Merrimack College	II	Warriors
Midwestern State	II	Indians
Mississippi College	III	Choctaws
McMurry	III	Indians
Newberry College	II	Indians
North Carolina at Pembroke	II	Braves
North Dakota	II	Fighting Sioux
San Diego State	I	Aztecs
Southeastern Oklahoma State	II	Savages
West Georgia	II	Braves
Stonewall College*	II	Chieftains
Utah	I	Utes
Wisconsin Lutheran College	III	Warriors

*School announced May 4 it will change nickname to Skyhawks as of July 1.

Braves, six that use Warriors and a handful others that borrow from individual tribes: Chippewas, Choctaws, Fighting Sioux.

Almost all those schools say the intent is to honor American Indians. Many cite decades of tradition. Several, including Florida State, relationships with specific tribes and permission to use Indian imagery.

North Carolina at Pembroke, for example, was founded specifically to educate the region's sizable Indian population, and its admisi restricted to Indian students for 70 years until the late 1950s. Its nickname is the Braves, and its logo — designed by an American In depicts an Indian with a hawk on his shoulder.

A letter from interim education dean Zoe Locklear, a Lumbee Tribe member, to the NCAA cites the "connectedness of this institution <http://usatoday.printthis.clickability.com/pw/cpt?action=cpt&title=USATODAY.com+-+Mascots+create+...> 5/16/2005

American Indian heritage" and says "feelings around this issue run high in the community, especially among native peoples who want the logo left as is."

Criticism of other schools, however, ranges from charges of racism to the perpetuation of historically inaccurate stereotypes to outright sacrilege — misappropriating feathers, costumes and dances that are used by American Indians in religious ceremonies.

While Pembroke claims an "irrefutable right" to use its nickname and logo, it maintains "institutions without clear and legitimate Indian origins do not have such a right."

Some progress made

Elsewhere, a handful of schools has yielded to the political heat. Southeast Missouri State originally was on the NCAA's list of scrutinized schools but replaced its Indians nickname with Redhawks and, in January, announced a new mascot and logo. Marquette, which won the 1977 NCAA men's basketball tournament as the Warriors, dropped the name and its Indian mascot in 1993.

Marquette reaffirmed its refusal to reinstate the nickname just last week, though it's having trouble coming up with a widely acceptable replacement.

Division III Carthage (Wis.), which declined either to provide USA TODAY with its response to the NCAA or comment beyond a 1994 policy statement, intends to keep Redmen for its men's teams. Division I St. John's, however, which won the 1985 Final Four as Redmen, changed its name to the Red Storm in the early 1990s. On May 4, Division II Stonehill (Easton, Mass.) announced it would drop Chieftans for Skyhawks.

Another stance: Wisconsin will not schedule teams with Native American nicknames but will play such schools in the postseason.

Shy of imposing an outright ban, the NCAA may measure progress in such increments.

"I was talking to some folks," says the SWAC's Vowels, "and they were trying to explain to me that every symbol, every caricature, every name might have different significance. Sometimes, it's whether feathers are up or down. There's symbolism there that we all don't know about.

"What I've gotten from people I've talked to, some of the tribes and some of the American Indians is that if we can raise awareness, educate people on what's going on, that's a start."

The responses

Some of the schools' responses to the NCAA regarding their policies on the use of Native American nicknames, logos and mascots:

● **Illinois** says it's pursuing "a consensus conclusion," something that has eluded the university for more than a decade of debate. Though taking no position on the future of Chief Illiniwek, it points to a trustees resolution in September "that the State's heritage and its American Indian culture and traditions shall be preserved, affirmed and publicly celebrated." Biology professor and Chief Illiniwek critic Stephen Kaufman calls the response "superficial" and a "whitewash."

● **Southeastern Oklahoma State** has toned down its imagery, replacing its costumed Indian mascot with a pony (named Spirit), changing the logo on athletic gear and removing other symbolism from the campus.

But the university is located in Durant, Okla., site of the Choctaw Nation's headquarters and bordered by the Chickasaw Nation. Because a change would risk disconnect with alumni and potentially affect fundraising, the school says, it expects to keep the Savages nickname unless the NCAA steps in.

"Being a Savage denotes a love for the game, enthusiasm, discipline, honesty, appreciation, striving, and the attitude of becoming a victor," it says. "Our conclusion is that Southeastern's nickname is associated with Native Americans *only* in the minds of individuals or groups who do not comprehend the connotation embraced by athletes at the University."

● **North Dakota** also says it will stick with its nickname, the Fighting Sioux, at the direction of the state's board of higher education.

Like Illinois, the school contends it doesn't use a mascot to entertain during athletic events but occasionally allows a dancer in authentic American Indian regalia to briefly perform. "The University strives to use the name in a highly and completely respectful fashion on and off campus," it says. Dissenters say they'll file a supplemental report with the NCAA.

● **Utah** did away with its Indian mascot in the early 1980s, switching to a red-tailed hawk named Swoop, but continues to call its teams the Utes with permission of that tribe, it says.

"If the day comes when the tribe prefers we don't use it, then we will respect that," says Fred Espin, the school's vice president for university relations, via e-mail.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Athletics

<http://chronicle.com/weekly/v51/i39/39a02901.htm>

From the issue dated June 3, 2005

Pride or Prejudice?

Some colleges back away from using American Indian names and mascots for athletics teams, while others defend them

By ERIC WILLS

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights declared in 2001 that American Indian nicknames and mascots at colleges were "inappropriate" and "disrespectful" and should be eliminated.

Inspired in part by the commission's recommendation, the National Collegiate Athletic Association decided to investigate the issue on its own. Now, four years later, the work of the NCAA's Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee is coming to a close.

The association identified 31 member colleges with American Indian mascots, nicknames, or logos and asked them to file reports by the beginning of May, evaluating how they use such imagery.

In August the panel will submit a report to the NCAA's Executive Committee suggesting a course of action, which may include measures as severe as a ban on such nicknames.

"I think the NCAA's involvement has tremendous significance, regardless of what the outcome is," says Ellen Staurowsky, a professor and chair of the department of sport management and media at Ithaca College. "A starting point in these types of discussions has to be raising awareness."

The issue is by no means new. Stanford University and Dartmouth College retired their "Indians" team nicknames more than 30 years ago, after bitter fights with alumni. In the past two years, at least six colleges have retired American Indian mascots or nicknames. In February the State University of West Georgia eliminated its "Braves" nickname and soon will announce a replacement. The NCAA's increasing interest in the issue played a role, says Beheruz N. Sethna, the university's president. Stonehill College decided in early May that its athletics teams would be known as Skyhawks rather than the Chieftans. Respect for American Indian culture, as well as the NCAA's interest, influenced the decision, says a college spokesman.

Southeast Missouri State University, without a mascot since the 1980s, chose "Redhawks" in October to replace both "Indians" for its men's teams and "Orahkians," after a Cherokee princess, for its women's teams. The new nickname enables the university to market its athletics programs without an "arm tied behind its back," says Charles R. Wiles, marketing-and-promotions director. "It was just a matter of time," he says, "before the NCAA got tougher."

Always a Seminole

Some other colleges, however, are not budging from loyalty to their American Indian-related mascots. For more than 25 years, a succession of Florida State University students have portrayed Chief Osceola, planting a flaming spear at midfield before every Seminoles home football game. In its report to the NCAA, Florida State uses a common defense of such imagery, saying that it is not only respectful but a celebration of the culture.

"Our use of the symbols and images of the Seminole demonstrate the highest honor and respect for a Nation of People whose uncompromising fortitude and strength of character we want our athletes to emulate in all arenas of sport," wrote Lee F. Hinkle, vice president for university relations, in the university's report.

Detractors respond that such imagery fosters stereotypical views of American Indians. Ms. Staurowsky sometimes asks students in her sports-management classes at Ithaca who Chief Osceola is. Without hesitation most of them respond that he is Florida State's mascot. But, she says, they do not know who the real Osceola was, nor can they describe his fate -- beheading -- at the hands of U.S. soldiers.

"I think that says that there is a certain level of naïveté or disingenuousness, that you can take a sports mascot and have that be a meaningful vehicle for education of the American populace," she says.

Florida State officials note that the university portrays Chief Osceola with the knowledge of the Seminoles in Florida and Oklahoma. Florida members of the tribe participate in the university's homecoming parade and help design the regalia worn by Chief Osceola, and Florida State offers scholarships to tribe members.

A number of institutions argue that local tribes support their nicknames and mascots. They include Mississippi College and the University of Louisiana at Monroe.

Even among American Indians, though, there is disagreement over the issue. The chief of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Mitchell Cyprus, did not return *The Chronicle's* telephone calls but has affirmed his support of Florida State's nickname in previous interviews. Nevertheless, in 2001 the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma signed a statement, along with other tribes, condemning the use of American Indian mascots and nicknames by colleges. Florida State's report does not mention the statement.

David W. Narcomey, a member of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, says he is helping to draft a tribal resolution that if passed would speak against Florida State's use of its mascot. Referring to the Seminoles of Florida, Mr. Narcomey says, "I believe they have not seriously looked at the mascot issue and fully explored its impact."

Corey Jackson, the NCAA's staff liaison to the minority-interests committee, draws a pointed comparison: "In the 1960s, certain people in the South felt that the situation was okay with Jim Crow." Sometimes, he says, "the issue is much bigger than one local community."

Even in Florida there are dissenting voices, such as Susan Anderson. A working mother and a Cherokee, she enrolled in Florida State in the late 1970s and completed her degree in the mid-1990s. As someone who participates in traditional Cherokee ceremonies, she says the use of regalia by the student who plays Osceola trivializes items that she finds sacred.

Since the early 1990s, she has participated in protests outside Florida State's home football games. "At first, as a young person, it simply depressed me," she says. "As I matured, it made me more angry."

In its report, Florida State says that there is no evidence that the Seminole nickname is racist, creates a hostile environment, or is sacrilegious.

Tribal Tensions

The voices of local American Indians have been raised on some campuses. At the University of North Dakota, Leigh D. Jeanotte, director of American Indian services and a member of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Tribe, says his input and that of others was omitted from the university's report about its "Fighting Sioux" nickname. "The NCAA was asking for some active involvement of the campus community regarding this issue," he says. "None of that took place here at UNND."

In its report, the university emphasizes its American Indian programs and says it "is recognized as a national leader in providing access and opportunity for American Indians and other minority populations."

"Arguably," the report says, "the university does more than any other institution of higher education in the United States to celebrate the American Indian culture."

Mr. Jeanotte helped file a minority report with the NCAA, questioning whether such cultural programs can be used to justify the nickname. It argues that most American Indian programs at the university are financed by federal grants, and that the directors of the programs have established "outstanding reputations despite the controversy" surrounding the nickname.

Charles E. Kupchella, the university's president, says he has not seen the minority report and cannot comment on it. He notes that North Dakota's strategic plan includes support for American Indian programs, and that such institutional support "can't be explained away."

Moreover, North Dakota says it is bound by a 2001 ruling by the state's Board of Education that says the university's athletics teams must be known as the "Fighting Sioux." That ruling came a few days after an alumnus, Ralph Engelstad, said that if the nickname was changed, he would halt construction of a \$100-million hockey arena he was donating to the university.

The NCAA's Mr. Jackson says that although he has not yet read North Dakota's report, the argument that a university is bound by what its state board dictates is circular. The association, he says, will look into "institutions that don't want to face up to the issues."

Faculty members at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign say they have been shut out of a report on the university's nickname and its use of Chief Illiniwek, portrayed by a student who dons buckskins, paints his face blue and orange, and dances during the halftimes of football and basketball games. In June 2004 the Board of Trustees called for a "consensus conclusion" on the use of the mascot that would be acceptable to a majority of alumni, students, and faculty members.

In its report, Illinois did not explore the issues in any depth, says Stephen J. Kaufman, a professor of cell biology who is an outspoken critic of the mascot's continued use. "The report dodges and dances around many of the NCAA's questions" and shows that university administrators lack the courage to take a stand, he says in an interview. He points to the recent decision of the president of Marquette University to turn down an offer of \$2-million from two trustees -- and resist subsequent pressure from like-minded alumni -- to restore a retired American Indian nickname (*The Chronicle*, June 18, 2004). Perhaps the NCAA will have similar conviction, Mr. Kaufman says.

Supporters of the use of Chief Illiniwek think doing away with the symbol would have a negative impact on their university. Howard Wakeland is an associate dean emeritus of engineering and president of the Honor the Chief Society, a nonprofit group with more than 1,000 members, whose goal is to keep Chief Illiniwek a part of university life. He says, "It really does something for the esprit de corps."

'True' Braves

Amid such controversies, the University of North Carolina at Pembroke stands out as an unusual case. Founded in part by Lumbee Tribe members in 1887, the institution enrolled only American Indians until the 1950s. The student body remains more than one-fifth American Indian.

In its report, Pembroke cites widespread local support on the campus and among the local tribes for its "Braves" nickname. Jimmy Goungs, chief of the Lumbees and a Pembroke graduate, calls the founding of the university "one of the greatest accomplishments of our people."

Zoe W. Locklear, a Lumbee who is interim dean of the School of Education, heard that message. "To borrow a popular line from a television show," she says "the tribe has spoken."

There are a few dissenters, as illustrated by a survey the college conducted for its official report. Around 7 percent of more than 1,300 respondents, including those on campus, alumni, and local residents said they were not in favor of continuing to use the nickname and logo. In 1991 Pembroke did respond to criticism from American Indian tribes and replaced its "Braves" mascot, a student who dressed up in an American Indian outfit, with a red-tailed hawk.

Vernon Bellecourt, director of the National Coalition on Racism in Sports and the Media, which opposes the use of American Indian mascots, says he respects Pembroke's right as an American Indian institution to choose its own name. Nevertheless, he hopes that it will replace the nickname to set an example for other colleges and "provide leadership on this issue."

Then there is the case of the University of Hawaii-Manoa, which found its "Warriors" nickname specified for inclusion by the NCAA. As a spokeswoman explained, the nickname refers to indigenous people from Hawaii, not American Indians. The university will file a report, although it missed the May 1 deadline.

Limited Options

The NCAA has often been skittish about wading into intracampus debates, including this one. The association's Committee on Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct urged all colleges to stop using American Indian nicknames in 2002 but said it recognizes that controversies over nicknames "may be addressed most effectively by the individual institution, its community, and conference, rather than at the national level."

Both Florida State and North Dakota quote that passage in their reports. Philip A. Harneson, senior associate to the president of North Dakota, who wrote the university's report, was less subtle in the local *Grand Forks Herald* on May 1: "The NCAA does not have the authority to order a school to use, or not use, a particular name, or mascot," he said. He did not elaborate in an interview with *The Chronicle*.

In the interim report it filed in 2002, the NCAA's minority-interests committee, which comprises 15 college presidents, athletics directors, and other officials, and is chaired by Robert C. Vowels Jr., commissioner of the Southwestern Athletic Conference, says there are a number of penalties that it can

recommend to the Executive Committee.

In 2002 the NCAA forbade championship events from taking place in South Carolina and Mississippi because of those states' continuing use of the Confederate battle flag. Those bans remain in effect.

Apart from attempting an outright ban on American Indian nicknames and mascots, the NCAA could suggest that colleges that decline to give up such imagery be barred from postseason tournaments, or be prevented from bringing their mascots to such games, or be fined.

"It's tough to tell" what will happen, says Mr. Jackson.

If the NCAA does nothing, many colleges will be left to respond to the opinions of deep-pocketed alumni who treasure the tradition of Indian nicknames at their alma maters. Southeastern Oklahoma State University emphasizes that point in its report.

"The complete elimination of Savages as a nickname ... is judged to be a highly value-laden process that would be emotionally charged and would immediately create a severance or disconnect with many alumni," it says. "The immediate consequences would be very costly to the university in terms of fund-raising activities with sports-minded alumni."

But Richard D. Little, senior director of communications at Miami University, offers some surprising empirical evidence. In 1996 the Ohio institution retired its "Redskins" nickname in favor of "Red Hawks." Before the decision was made, many alumni raised protests and threatened to permanently withhold donations.

The year after the name change, the university had the largest fund-raising response in its history.

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IN DEFENSE OF NICKNAMES

The National Collegiate Athletic Association is studying its members' use of American Indian images, mascots, and nicknames in their sports programs. The NCAA's Minority Interests and Opportunities Committee asked 31 colleges to file reports explaining why their nicknames were not offensive. Following is a list of those institutions, their current or former team nicknames, and a summary of their reports. Four institutions declined to provide their reports or information about their nicknames to *The Chronicle*.

- **Alcorn State U.**
Braves
Did not provide information to *The Chronicle*.
- **Arkansas State U.**
Indians
Maintaining nicknames and three American Indian mascots; committed to their "dignified" and "responsible" use.
- **Bradley U.**
Braves
Keeping nickname but has no American Indian logos or mascots.
- **California State U.-Stanislaus**
Warriors
Announced new mascot, a medieval knight.
- **Carthage College**
Redmen/Lady Reds
Board of Trustees says it will ensure that the nickname remains "a term of respect" and will review it if a campus consensus emerges.
- **Catawba College**
Indians
Eliminated American Indian mascot in 1998 but still uses "C" logo with feathers. Has support of Catawba Tribe and says it is sensitive to the issue.
- **Central Michigan U.**
Chippewas
Keeping nickname. No mascot or American Indian rituals or imagery. College has relationship with Saginaw Indian Chippewa Tribe; nickname is used with "pride and respect."
- **Chowan College**
Braves
Did not provide information to *The Chronicle*.
- **College of William and Mary**
Tribe

*

Received an extension until November 1 to file its report with the NCAA.

- **East Stroudsburg U. of Pennsylvania Warriors**
Keeping nickname but has no American Indian imagery, mascot, or logo.
- **Florida State U. Seminoles**
Keeping nickname. Seminole Tribe in Florida supports name's use, which "honors and respects American Indian culture."
- **Husson College Braves**
Replaced nickname with Eagles in September, partly as a result of NCAA interest.
- **Indiana U. of Pennsylvania Indians**
Began using bear as mascot in 1999, but retained nickname after consulting with local tribes. Says the nickname arose in part from the university's name.
- **Lycorning College Warriors**
No mascot; retired Indian-head logo in 2004 as "an important step in distancing the nickname . . . from negative associations."
- **McMurry U. Indians**
Discontinued use of Indian mascot in mid-1990s but retains nickname and Indian-head logo. Continues to "represent the culture with dignity."
- **Merrimack College Warriors**
Unveiled "Mack the Warrior" mascot and logo in 2003, replacing American Indian figure, in part because of NCAA interest.
- **Midwestern State U. (Tex.) Indians/Lady Indians**
Keeping nicknames. No mascot; logo contains arrows and spears. Kiowa Tribe supports its use.
- **Mississippi College Choctaws/Lady Choctaws**
Keeping nicknames. Local community, including Choctaw Tribe, has supported mascot, which the college says "conveys character,

integrity, discipline." College is in process of filing report with NCAA.

- **Newberry College (S.C.)**
Indians
Did not provide information to *The Chronicle*.
- **San Diego State U.**
Aztecs
Did not provide information to *The Chronicle*.
- **Southeast Missouri State U.**
Indians/Otawkians
Replaced nicknames with "Redhawks" last fall, in part because of NCAA interest.
- **Southeastern Oklahoma State U.**
Savages
Keeping nickname, but removed Indian mascot and symbols from campus in mid-1990s. Has relationship with Choctaw and Chickasaw Tribes.
- **State U. of West Georgia**
Braves
Announced it was eliminating nickname in February, in part because of NCAA interest. No new name yet.
- **Stonehill College**
Chieftains
Replaced nickname with Skyhawks in May out of respect for American Indian culture and because of NCAA interest.
- **U. of Hawaii-Manoa**
Warriors/Wahine
Still working on report to NCAA. Says nickname changed last year from "Rainbow Warriors," which refers to indigenous Hawaiians, not American Indians.
- **U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**
Fighting Illini
Keeping nickname and trying to reach "consensus conclusion" on campus over use of Chief Illiniwek, a student dressed as an Indian chief.
- **U. of Louisiana at Monroe**
Indians
Keeping nickname and a mascot intended to be authentic representation of American Indian. Says local tribes support its use.
- **U. of North Carolina at Pembroke**

Braves
Keeping nickname; institution was founded by American Indians; students, faculty members, alumni, and local tribes support nickname's use.

- **U. of North Dakota**
Fighting Sioux
Keeping nickname; state's Board of Education ruled in 2001 that it must.

- **U. of Utah**
Utes
NCAA gave extension to file until June 1. University says that local tribe supports nickname's use.

- **Wisconsin Lutheran College**
Warriors
Keeping nickname. No mascot; retired Indian-head logo in 1987.

SOURCE: Chronicle reporting

<http://chronicle.com>

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OTHER OPINIONS

It's time for W&M to let go of "the Tribe"

BY JOSEPH P. COSCO

In my collegiate life, I have been a Dartmouth Indian and a member of the William and Mary Tribe. Wah-hoo-wah, and all that.

But not long after I left Dartmouth College in 1971, the school gave up its Indians, judging the nickname offensive to Native Americans. Now William and Mary may be asked to drop the Tribe. The National Collegiate Athletic Association has asked colleges to re-evaluate their use of Indian-related nicknames.

W&M's athletic department doesn't seem inclined to give up the Tribe and those distinctive crossed feathers on the football helmets. Wasn't it enough that the teams, once known as the Indians, switched to the Tribe some 20 years ago? No need to make another change?

W&M athletic director Terry Driscoll recently told The Virginian-Pilot, "I have no reason to assume, based on what I know, that this is an issue we



The Tribe logo.

need to deal with."

That may be so, but I wish William and Mary would deal with it and do the right thing — find a new nickname.

I know that William and Mary and other schools say they are not out to caricature, exploit or offend Native Americans. And, yes, some of these names and mascots are said to be legitimized by history. Both William and Mary and Dartmouth were founded in part to educate American Indians.

However, if William and Mary's early experience with Indians is anything like Dartmouth's, then this is a specious argument

I'm not well versed in William and Mary lore, but I know enough about Dartmouth history to know that those alumni who fought so bitterly to keep the Indian nickname were acting from ignorance or hypocrisy. Dartmouth had no right to call its teams the Indians. Not after what the college did to one Indian in particular.

At Dartmouth we were told how the Rev. Eleazar Wheelock founded the college in 1769 as a school for New England Indians. The school's motto would become "Vox clamantis in deserto" — "a voice calling in the wilderness." It was all very romantic.

But it wasn't the whole story. Thankfully, Dartmouth President John Kemeny started telling the real story in 1970, when he called for a renewed commitment to Dartmouth's original mission.

Still, it wasn't until many years later that I finally encountered the sad tale of Samson Occom (1723-1792), and found in him the ugly truth embodied

I learned this from his modest but eloquent autobiography, "A Short Narrative of My Life." Occom covers it all in a 10-page manuscript found gathering dust in the Dartmouth College archives in 1982.

Occom had the misfortune of being born a Mohegan Indian in 18th-century Connecticut. By now, New England's tribes had been decimated by war, disease and encroachment by white settlers. Occom knew survival meant assimilation, and this he tried to do by becoming a Christian at age 16 and learning to read and write.

He found a mentor in the Rev. Wheelock, a Congregational minister with visions of converting and educating Indians. Occom's rhetorical and writing skills were such that Wheelock sent him to England as a fundraiser for a new Indian school in the north woods of New Hampshire. Occom delivered some 300 sermons and raised nearly 12,000 British pounds for

Wheelock's project.

However, Occom's American dream soon turned sour. It was, as might be expected, the same old story of duplicity, injustice

and betrayal, with the Indian in his prescribed role of victim. Occom discovered that he'd been paid for 12

years of service what a white missionary was paid for a single year: His life ended in poverty, with him labeled an ingrate and bitter at his treatment by the white man.

"It was all because he was a 'poor Indian,' he concludes. "I can't help that God has made me so; I did not make myself so."

And what of Dartmouth College? As Occom foretold, Dartmouth would forget its Indian mission and become a college for rich white kids. But this story has a bit of a happy ending.

Spurred by President Kemeny's call for a renewed commitment, the college started

recruiting Native American students, initiated a program in Native American studies, and dropped the Indian nickname in favor of Big Green.

Students from more than 100 tribes have since attended Dartmouth. In the class of 2000 was a descendant of Samson Occom. The circle was completed.

I'm glad Dartmouth dropped the Indian nickname. And I hope William and Mary makes the noble gesture of retiring the Tribe, just as it so gracefully let go of the Indians in the 1980s.

There are other ways to "honor" Indians. Start a Native American Studies program. Truly educate Native Americans. Read Samson Occom's autobiography. But give up the nicknames.

Drop the Tribe, William and Mary. Do it for Samson Occom.

■ Joseph P. Cosco is an associate professor of English at Old Dominion University in Norfolk and a former reporter for The Virginian-Pilot. E-mail him at jcosco@odu.edu.

There are other ways to "honor" Indians.

Athletics - Indian's symbols m 6/7/2005

ATHLETICS

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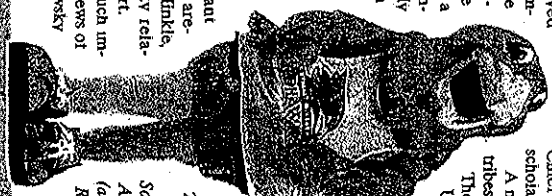
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OSCEOLA CUPS



In Defense of Nicknames

The National College State Athletic Association is studying the membership lists of 29 American Indian mascots, including the names of their sports departments, mascots, and logos.

Committee says that colleges are reporting a decline in the number of American Indian mascots, but that the number of colleges with such mascots is still high.

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Southeast Missouri State U. replaced its American Indian nickname and mascot (above) with a new nickname and mascot, Rowdy the Redhawk (left).



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