

Affidavit of Dr. Ezra J. Zeitler

in support of complainants in the complaint against the Osseo-Fairchild School Board Pursuant to Wisconsin Statute § 118.134

Your affiant states to the best of his knowledge that the following is true and accurate:

1. Your affiant states that his true and correct name is Ezra J. Zeitler.
2. Your affiant states that he resides at 2315 Fifth Street, Eau Claire, WI 54703.
3. Your affiant states that he is currently employed as an Assistant Professor of Geography at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.
4. Your affiant states that his recent employment includes the following:

Teaching Experience

Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 2008-present

- Physical Geography Laboratory (GEOG 104)
- Human Geography (GEOG 111)
- Wisconsin Geographies (GEOG 379/579)
- Native Geographies (GEOG 322/522)
- Geography of the United States and Canada (GEOG 325)
- Cultural Landscape Analysis: The Northwoods (GEOG 367)
- Geographies of the Mississippi Delta (GEOG 491)
- Geography of Race and Ethnicity (GEOG 491)

Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2001-2008

- Primary Instructor, Geography of World Regions (GEOG 272)
- Laboratory Instructor, Introduction to Cartography (GEOG 317)
- Laboratory Instructor, Introduction to Physical Geography (GEOG 151)

Areas of Specialization

Cultural and historical geography of the American West and Great Plains, Indigenous geography, ethnic geography of the United States, geographies of public memory and commemoration, cultural landscape studies, cartography

Other Teaching and Research Interests

Symbolic landscapes, place identity, ethnic and nature-based tourism, geographic information systems, pedagogical issues in teaching geography

5. Your affiant states that his education includes the following:

Education

- 2008 Ph.D., Geography, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
 Dissertation: *Geographies of Indigenous-based Team Name and Mascot Use in American Secondary Schools*
 Program Major: Cultural and Historical Geography
 Program Minor: History of the American West
- 2003 M.A., Geography, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
 Thesis: *The Vitality of Ethnic Culture in Rural America: A Comparative Study of Dannebrog and Wilber, Nebraska, 1871-2003.*
- 2000 B.S., Geography, University of Wisconsin-River Falls
 Minors: Geographic Information Systems, Land Use Planning
 Thesis: *The Cultural Landscape of Wisconsin's Walloon Belgian Enclave*

6. Your affiant states that his professional memberships and associations include the following:

Professional Association Memberships

- Association of American Geographers (2000- present)
 - Ethnic Specialty Group (2000-present)
 - Board of Directors Student Representative (2006-2008)
 - Historical Specialty Group (2000-present)
 - Cultural Specialty Group (2000-present)
 - Indigenous Peoples Specialty Group (2005-present)
 - Secretary (2009-present)
 - Program Director (2009-present)
- National Council for Geographic Education (2002-present)
- Gamma Theta Upsilon, International Geography Honor Society (1998-present)
- Wisconsin Geographic Alliance (2008-present)
- Wisconsin Historical Society (2008-present)
- National Indian Education Association (2009-present)

7. Your affiant states that his research and publication record includes the following:

Refereed Journal Publications

- Zeitler, Ezra. 2009. Creating America's "Czech Capital": Ethnic Identity and Heritage Tourism in Wilber, Nebraska. *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 4(1): 73-85.
- Zeitler, Ezra. 2010. Making Places, Molding Memories: Political and Race-based Origins of Monuments, Memories, and Identities. *Historical Geography* 37.

Edited, Refereed Journal Publications

- Zeitler, Ezra. 2010. Making Places, Molding Memories. *Historical Geography* 37.

8. Your affiant states that his professional presentations, workshops and panels include the following:

Professional Presentations

- 2010 "Now our history is inspiring": *Frontier Conquest, Regional Identity, and Monuments to Expansionism in the American Midwest*. New Zealand Geographical Society Conference, Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand.

2010 *Memory, Identity, and the Tippecanoe Battlefield Monument*. 106th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Washington, D.C.

2009 *Imperialist Nostalgia and Indigenous Team Names in Secondary Schools*. National Indian Education Association Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

2009 *Black Hawk and the Origins of Midwestern Identity*. 105th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Las Vegas, Nevada.

2008 *Geographies of Indigenous-based Mascot Use in American Secondary Schools*. Race, Ethnicity, and Place Conference IV, Miami, Florida.

2008 *Memory and Meaning in Contested Secondary School Mascot Imagery*. 104th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Boston, Massachusetts.

2007 *Commemorating Conquest: Native American Iconography in Secondary Schools*. 103rd Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, San Francisco, California

2006 *Imperialist Nostalgia and the Native American High School Mascot*. Race, Place, and Ethnicity Conference, San Marcos, Texas

The Politics of (Polka) Dancing: Promoting Heritage and Preserving Czech Culture in Wilber, Nebraska. Meeting of the Great Plains-Rocky Mountain and West Lakes Divisions of the Association of American Geographers, Lincoln, Nebraska

2006 *'You don't want a nickname like the Squirrels or something': Native American Athletic Team Names in American High Schools*. 102nd Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Chicago, Illinois

2005 *American High School Athletic Team Names: A Geographic Appraisal*. 101st Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Denver, Colorado

2004 *Hinterland Homogeneity and Cultural Vitality in Rural Ethnic Enclaves*. 100th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

2003 *Iowa's Bohemian Cultural Landscapes*. North American Meeting of the Czech and Slovak Society of Arts and Sciences, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

The Persistence of Ethnic Identity in Nebraska's Czech Enclaves. 45th Annual Western Social Science Association Conference, Las Vegas, Nevada

Role of Religion in Preserving Ethnic Identity. 27th Annual Interdisciplinary Great Plains Symposium, Lincoln, Nebraska

Ethnic Identity in Contemporary Rural America: A Study of Two Nebraska Enclaves. 99th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, New Orleans, Louisiana

2002 *Relics of Bohemian Culture in the Central Great Plains*. Annual Meeting of the Southwest Association of American Geographers, Laredo, Texas

Cultural Landscape of Nebraska's Czech Communities. Czech and Slovak Society of Arts and Sciences World Congress, Plzeň, Czech Republic

Cultural Landscape of Howard County, Nebraska's Danish Enclave. Nebraska Academy of Sciences Annual Meeting, Lincoln, Nebraska

2001 *Rural Landscapes of Wisconsin's Walloon Belgian Community*. 97th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, New York, New York

9. Your affiant states that his research and publication record includes the following:

Selected Cartographic Publications

Forthcoming St. John, Rachel. *Line in the Sand: The Western U.S.-Mexico Border, 1848-1934*. Princeton University Press. (five maps)

2009 Jacobs, Margaret. *White Mother to a Dark Race*. University of Nebraska Press. (two maps)

Wunder, John R. and Kurt E. Kinbacher, eds. *Reconfigurations of Native North America*. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press. (six maps)

Rader, Benjamin. *American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Televised Sports, 6th Edition*. Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. (three maps)

2007 Graybill, Andrew R. *Policing the Great Plains: Rangers, Mounties, and the North American Frontier, 1875-1910*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. (three maps)

Lynch, Thomas. Literature in the Arid Zone. In *The Littoral Zone: Australian Contexts and Their Writers*. Eds., Cranston, C.A. and Robert Zeller. Amsterdam: Rodopi Press. (one map)

Wunder, John R. Indigenous Homelands and Contested Treaties: Comparisons of Aborigines, Saamis, Native Americans, First Nations, and Euro-Nation State Diplomatic Negotiations since 1300. In Patricia Grimshaw and Russell McGregor (eds), *Collisions of Cultures and Identities: Settlers and Indigenous Peoples*, p. 19-58. Melbourne: University of Melbourne Department of History. (four maps)

2006 Burnett, Amy Nelson. *Teaching the Reformation: Ministers and Their Message in Basel, 1529-1629*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (three maps)

Moul, Francis. *The National Grasslands: A Guide to America's Undiscovered Treasures*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. (twenty-three maps)

Wishart, David J. Natural Areas, Regions, and Two Centuries of Environmental Change on the Great Plains. *Great Plains Quarterly* 26(3): 147-166. (one map)

2004 Wunder, John R. "Looking After the Country Properly": A Comparative History of Indigenous Peoples and Australian and American National Parks. *Indigenous Law Journal, Volume II*, p. 27-66. (three maps)

10. Your affiant states that he has received the following honors and awards:

Honors

2008 Recipient, Leslie Hewes Award for Outstanding Graduate Student in Geography, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

2008 Recipient, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award

2007 Recipient, UNL Office of Graduate Studies Warren F. and Edith R. Day
Dissertation Research Award

2006 Second Place, Great Plains/Rocky Mountain/West Lakes AAG Regional Meeting
Ph.D. Paper Award

Recipient, AAG Historical Geography Specialty Group Dissertation Research Proposal Award

Third Place, AAG Indigenous Geography Specialty Group Student Paper Competition

Recipient, Certificate of Recognition for Contributions to Students, University of Nebraska-
Lincoln Teaching Council and Parents Association

2004 Second Place, AAG Ethnic Geography Specialty Group Student Paper Competition

2000 Recipient, University of Wisconsin-River Falls Chancellor's Award for Service to
the University

11. Your affiant states that he been involved in the following scholarship/professional service:

Service to the Profession

2009-Present Member, University of Wisconsin-River Falls Department of
Geography & Mapping Sciences Alumni Advisory Board

2009 Adjudicator, Graduate and Undergraduate Paper Competition, Wisconsin
Geographical Society Meeting, Stevens Point, Wisconsin

2009 Manuscript Reviewer, *Journal of Cultural Geography*

2009-Present Secretary and Program Director, Indigenous Peoples Specialty
Group of the Association of American Geographers

2009 Adjudicator, Wisconsin State Geography Bee

2009 Guest Editor, Volume 37 of *Historical Geography*

2008 Organizer, Memories, Memorials and Identities. Paper Session at the 104th
Annual Meeting of the AAG, Boston, Massachusetts

2007-2008 Student Representative, Chancellor's Commission on the Status of
Women, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

2006-2009 Student Representative, AAG Ethnic Geography Specialty Group Board of
Directors

2007 Organizer, Indigenous Peoples: Hegemonic Symbolism and Discourse in
Public Space. Paper Session at the 103rd Annual Meeting of the AAG, San Francisco,
California

2007 Chair, Re/envisioning Place in a Spatial World: Indigenous Peoples and
'Place-based struggle.' Paper Session at the 103rd Annual Meeting of the AAG, San
Francisco, California

2006-Present Developer and Manager, Indigenous Peoples' Knowledges and Rights Commission of the International Geographical Union Website

2006 Manuscript Reviewer, "Indigenous Peoples' Knowledges and Rights," a special issue of *Geographical Research*

Field Trip Organizer, Old and New Ethnic Landscapes of Small Town Nebraska, Great Plains/Rocky Mountain/West Lakes Regional AAG Meeting, Lincoln, Nebraska

Co-Organizer and Co-Chair, Breaking into Publishing. Panel Session at the Great Plains/Rocky Mountain/West Lakes Regional AAG Meeting, Lincoln, Nebraska

Chair, Examinations in Ethnicity and Population Change. Paper Session at the Great Plains/Rocky Mountain/West Lakes Regional AAG Meeting, Lincoln, Nebraska

2005-2006 Student Representative, Great Plains/Rocky Mountain/West Lakes Regional AAG Conference Organizing Committee

President, UNL Geography Student Organization and the Alpha Phi Chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon (Geography Honorary Society)

2003-Present Developer and Manager, AAG Ethnic Geography Specialty Group Website

12. Your affiant states that he has been awarded the following grants:

Grants

2010 \$24,500. Curriculum Development Grant awarded by the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire for immersion course on Western Wisconsin dairying, migrant labor, and migrant homelands in Vera Cruz, Mexico.

2009 \$2,000. Curriculum Development Grant awarded by the University of Wisconsin System Institute on Race and Ethnicity for Geography of Race and Ethnicity course.

2009 \$650. Travel Grant awarded by the Race, Ethnicity, and Place Conference to present research at the Fifth Biennial Conference in October, 2010.

2009 \$1,200. Student-Faculty Research Collaboration Grant awarded by UW-Eau Claire Office of Research and Special Projects (ORSP) for "*Geography of Minnesota High School Hockey*" with Evan Byers.

2009 \$1,200. Student-Faculty Research Collaboration Grant awarded by UW-Eau Claire ORSP for "*Geographic Bias in the National Football League Draft, 1970-2008*" with Darin Mertig.

13. Your affiant states that his resume also includes the following:

Service to the University (University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire)

2008-present Member, Broad Field Social Studies Curriculum Committee
2008-present Member, American Indian Studies Faculty
2009-present Member, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) Advisory Board

Service to the Department (University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire)

2008-present Co-advisor, Geography-Anthropology Club
2008-present Organizer and host, fall and spring semester campus-wide
Geography Bee
2008 Developer, online department scholarship applications

Service to the Public (University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire)

Member, Wisconsin Indian Education Association Indian Mascot and Logo Taskforce
Volunteer Presenter, L.E. Phillips Senior Center, *Origins and Consequences of Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, January 23, 2009
Volunteer Presenter, L.E. Phillips Senior Center, *Origins and Consequences of Conflict in Tibet (Xizang)*, February 18, 2009

14. Your affiant states that, based on his research, experience and study, that the following is true and accurate to the best of his knowledge:

I have been following the Native American mascot debate since the early 1990s, when school leaders in Seymour and Shawano, two eastern Wisconsin cities with ties to Native American communities (Oneida and Menominee, respectively), retired their “Indians” names and iconography despite significant pressure within their communities to maintain the status quo. Since then I have examined the phenomenon of using athletic team nicknames in American secondary schools quite vigorously and focused on the use of Native American-based names and iconography for my Ph.D. dissertation in geography. There are two primary reasons why Osseo-Fairchild’s “Chieftain issue” is geographical in nature. First, the Osseo-Fairchild community is an active participant in a network of more than 1,368 secondary learning institutions nationwide using race-based imagery that has been scientifically proven to lower morale among minority students. Secondly, the Osseo-Fairchild community has struggled over its sense of place-based identity since the “Chieftain” name has come under scrutiny. Generations of OFHS graduates consider their memories of traditions associated with the school’s nickname to be sacrosanct despite the central role that such traditions can play in appropriating Indigenous cultures and maintaining negative stereotypes about Indigenous peoples. In the following paragraphs I will place Osseo-Fairchild High School in a broader context of the Native American nickname and mascot controversy and explain how these names and associated iconography are tied with White America’s nostalgic appetite for frontier conquest and conclude with the results of a University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire survey suggesting that the only way the Osseo-Fairchild School District can disassociate itself with Indigenous references and begin to heal as a community is by retiring its “Chieftain” name completely.

National Context

Since the earliest days of permanent settlement, European colonists and their American descendents searched for a source of collective identity free of European influences. The conquest of the Western wilderness and its peoples was eventually adopted as the uniting and defining characteristic. The continent’s Indigenous peoples, therefore, played a special role in the development of American identity. First viewed as hosts, Native Americans were soon viewed as a hostile threat to European American existence. Once defeated, stereotypes of Native Americans and their cultures were resurrected in art, literature, Wild West shows, film,

and television to reinforce ideologies founded on racial superiority and the rightful inheritance of the continent. The use of Indigenous-based team names and mascots is an equally effective method of indoctrinating these ideologies into new generations of Americans.

Secondary school athletic team names, mascots, and their associated imagery are as old as interscholastic athletics, which were incorporated into after school programs during the first decade of the twentieth century. Similar to place names (like Osseo and Fairchild), communities chose team nicknames to distinguish themselves from neighbors. Over time, a team’s nickname can become a source of identity for a community and can also become synonymous with that community for residents and non-residents alike. Team names are often reflections of a community’s geography – its economy, demography, physical environment, tastes, and values. Considering the value communities place on team names, let’s examine the most popular team names among the nation’s 18,973 high schools in 2005.

In 2005, the ten most popular names were, in order of frequency, *Eagles*, *Tigers*, *Bulldogs*, *Panthers*, *Wildcats*, *Warriors*, *Lions*, *Cougars*, *Indians* and *Trojans* (Table 1). Seven of these names are wild predatory animals, and *Trojans* (as they are depicted in high school iconography) and *Warriors* are persons trained to kill, or human predators. The presence of *Indians* on this list of predators indicates that those selecting the nicknames perceived America’s Indigenous peoples to be hostile and predatory and should be feared. Additionally, if all Indigenous-based nicknames like *Braves*, *Chiefs*, *Redskins*, and others are accumulated into a single category, they total 1,368 and become the most popular names in the country. This fact supports the argument that Native Americans are viewed as trophies of conquest by non-Natives.

The ethnic composition of a school’s student body often mirrors that of the community. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics indicates that 1,087 (79%) of the high schools using Indigenous-based team names during the 2005-6 school year had a White majority (Table 2). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, Osseo-Fairchild falls within this category, as 1,376 of the 1,430 persons (94.8%) under the age of eighteen in the year 2000 were White (Source:

<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sdds/ethnicity.asp?county1=5511220&county2=5509070&state1=55&state2=55>). This fact also supports the argument that Native Americans are viewed as trophies of conquest by non-Natives. Unable to relive their victory over Native Americans, as they had “buried the hatchet” and succumbed to a poor reservation life, Whites in the early twentieth century began “playing Indian” in existing fraternal associations such as the Order of the Red Men and as members in newly-formed organizations like the Boy Scouts, the Campfire Girls, and sports nicknames and mascots. Many of these practices, including the use of Indigenous-based nicknames and mascots, continue today.

Indigenous-based (<i>Indians</i> , <i>Braves</i> , <i>Chiefs</i> , etc.)	1,368
<i>Eagles</i>	1,049
<i>Tigers</i>	860
<i>Bulldogs</i>	791
<i>Panthers</i>	753

<i>Wildcats</i>	672
<i>Warriors</i>	586
<i>Lions</i>	444
<i>Cougars</i>	437
<i>Trojans</i>	379

Table 1. Frequency of the most popular team names in American secondary schools in 2005. Source: *Clell Wade Coaches Directory*.

Race	# of Schools	% of Schools
White	1,087	79.5
Indigenous	87	6.4
Black	75	5.5
No Majority	70	5.1
Hispanic	47	3.4
Asian	2	0.1
Total	1,368	100.0

Table 2. The ethnic composition of secondary schools using Indigenous-based team names in 2005. Source: National Center for Education Statistics.

As these data show, the Osseo-Fairchild School District is a member of a nationwide network of educational institutions that glorify Manifest Destiny and disparage the diverse cultures and histories of America’s Indigenous peoples to new generations of students. These students, who are predominantly White, are disadvantaged when learning to live among an increasingly diverse American population.

Local Context: The “Chieftain” Name

In the course of my recent research I examined nicknames used in every high school in the United States. I found that, in 2005, there were exactly 39 high schools that used the nickname of “*Chieftains*” and 67 that used the nickname “*Chiefs*.” In every instance where a high school used the nickname of “*Chieftains*” or “*Chiefs*,” that nickname was determined to be an Indigenous-based nickname. In other words, there was not a single circumstance that I encountered of a high school in the United States where the nickname “*Chieftains*” or “*Chiefs*” was used that had an alternative meaning. Therefore, in the context of high school athletic nicknames in the United States, the words “*Chieftains*” and “*Chiefs*” have only one meaning –

that of an American Indian “chieftain” or “chief.” While it is true that the words “chieftain” and “chief” have alternative meanings routinely used in other contexts, they simply do not exist in America’s high schools.

In notable contrast, the nickname of “*Warriors*” does have alternative meanings within the context of high school athletic nicknames, such as that of a knight in shining armor, a knight mounted on a horse, a Roman warrior, a Spartan or Trojan warrior, etc. Because the word “warrior” has accepted historical alternative meanings as a high school athletic nickname, a “*Warriors*” nickname is not inherently a race-based nickname which enables a successful redefinition of such a nickname into an alternative nickname not involving race. The same is true for a nickname of “*Blackhawks*” or “*Black Hawks*” where many high schools use that nickname to mean a black colored bird. The nicknames of “*Raider*” and “*Red Raider*” similarly have accepted historical alternative definitions within the context of high school athletic nicknames. And it is therefore common practice for high schools to be able to satisfactorily redefine the nicknames of “*Warriors*,” “*Blackhawks*,” “*Raiders*,” and “*Red Raiders*” into a specific alternative definition not involving race. Because these nicknames have alternative historical meanings within the context of high school athletic nicknames, a person listening to a sports report on television or reading the sports page does not automatically assume that the usage of any of those nicknames infers that an American Indian is the team’s mascot. In contrast, because the nicknames of “*Chieftains*” and “*Chiefs*” have only one accepted and universal historical meaning within the context of high school athletics in the United States in the year 2010, I do not believe that it is possible for a high school to try to claim that it can satisfactorily redefine either of these names and thereby eliminate the historical connotation of race in the minds of those who are exposed to the nickname, whether alumni within their own school district, or students or adults in competing school districts, or people elsewhere in the Wisconsin who may hear of the nickname on a sports report. Due to the connections between the nicknames “chieftains” and “chiefs” are tightly defined with images of Native Americans in high school athletic nicknames, I believe that it is disingenuous for a school district to try to claim it has the ability to redefine either of these nicknames in a manner such that it will satisfactorily end the relationship with race and stop the promotion of discrimination, pupil harassment and stereotyping that is so inherent with the use of these two nicknames within the context of high school athletics. A survey administered to 260 students at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire in May of 2010 supports this assertion. Before describing the outcomes of this survey, some clarifications are necessary:

- Before beginning the survey, students were given a piece of blank paper and were informed that the survey was about “their high school experience” and not about Native American mascots.
- Students were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that they did not have to return their survey.
- Questions were asked orally.

Survey

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your home state?

4. When someone mentions the word “Chieftain,” what image or images do you think of? (After asking the question, the word “Chieftain” was written on a blackboard in front of the class.)
5. Is it fair to assume that most people think of a Native American when they hear the word “Chieftain”?
6. Did you attend a high school with a Native American nickname, mascot, or logo?
7. Was there a high school in your athletic conference (including your own) that had a Native American nickname, mascot, or logo?

Results

- 90.8% of respondents were aged 18-22, meaning they had graduated from high school within the past five years.
- 51.9% of respondents identified themselves as female; 48.1% identified themselves as male.
- 78.8% of respondents made explicit references to Indigenous peoples and their cultures when asked to describe the images they associate with a “Chieftain.”
 - In total, respondents made 528 descriptions of the word “Chieftain”
 - 100 (18.94%) of the descriptions was “Native American”
 - 97 (18.87%) of the descriptions was “Indian”
 - 54 (10.23%) of the descriptions was “Chief”
 - 53 (10.04%) of the descriptions was “Leader”
 - 46 (8.71%) of the descriptions was “Headdress”
 - 21 (3.98%) of the descriptions was “Feather” or “Feathers”
 - 19 (3.59%) of the descriptions was “Tribe”
 - 18 (3.4%) of the descriptions was “Mascot”
- Less common descriptions (frequency of 1 to 3) included “Indian head,” “War paint,” “Teepee,” “Princess,” “Heritage,” “Respect,” “Tradition,” “Reservation,” and “Warrior”
- 84.2% of respondents feel it is fair to assume that most people think of a Native American when they hear the word “Chieftain.”
- 10.4% of respondents attended a high school with a Native American nickname, mascot, or logo.
- 54.2% of respondents had a high school in their athletic conference that had a Native American nickname, mascot, or logo.

Discussion

There are many observations that can be drawn from this survey, but the most important finding is that it is difficult to divorce the word “Chieftain” from Indigenous peoples and cultures. Seventy-nine percent of respondents associated the word with Native Americans and 84% of them feel that most people would do the same. It is also important to note that schools using Indigenous-based team names, mascots, and imagery affect students in other schools as well as those in the home school. In other words, the use of the *Chieftains* nickname by the Osseo-Fairchild School District has an effect on student dispositions towards Indigenous peoples in area schools as well.

I visited Osseo-Fairchild High School when I began my research on this topic in 2006, and I remember seeing a narrative of the Ho-Chunk history under an Indian head logo on a wall that defined the community as “Ho-Chunk territory,” implying that the area encompassed by the Osseo-Fairchild School District was historically Ho-Chunk land. I find this statement to be

contrary to the historical geographical record. Treaty maps indicate that the geographic area encompassed by the Osseo-Fairchild School District lies entirely in what was established to be Dakota Sioux territory by the Treaty of Prairie du Chien as negotiated between the tribes and the United States in 1825. The Ho-Chunk territory was determined by the Treaty of Prairie du Chien to lie south of the Black River, while Dakota Sioux territory lay north of the Black River and included the land that is now the Osseo-Fairchild School District. The representation of the Osseo-Fairchild community as “Ho-Chunk territory” is incorrect and represents a “false history” as taught by the Osseo-Fairchild School District to its students. Academic institutions, whether a university or high school or elementary school, must maintain academic integrity, and a part of that academic integrity is reflected by teaching the truth in terms of history rather than creating a false history to justify the use of race for an athletic nickname policy. I believe that it is fair to say that all educators, regardless of the type of educational institution, would and should be appalled that a school district and school board would facilitate the teaching of a false history with regard to the history of the school district in order to facilitate the continued use of race for an athletic nickname policy. Such a practice by a school board strikes at the very heart of what education should be all about. Sadly, it is all too common to see that athletic decisions and preferences drive academic decisions and practices within schools in the United States.

If it is a fact that Osseo-Fairchild has a display implying that the history of the Osseo-Fairchild School District is tied to the Ho-Chunk rather than the Dakota Sioux, it is important that any such false history be corrected as part of the process of eliminating the race-based *Chieftain* nickname and logo and to restore academic integrity to the education in the School District. To only go back 75 years from 2005 (as I understand was the case in the “historical” narrative that was approved by the Osseo-Fairchild School Board) and represent that period as a “true history” is unfair to the harsh realities suffered by so many Native peoples prior to 1930. Ignoring the historic dispossession and removal of the Dakota Sioux people from the area in and surrounding the Osseo-Fairchild school district is a second travesty aimed at the Dakota Sioux whose history has been ignored and replaced by a romanticized version of post-1930, void of the tragedy imposed on the Dakota Sioux in earlier times.

Summary

The results of my Ph.D. dissertation research, the survey I administered to students at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, and anecdotal observations I have read of people’s reactions toward the proposed retirement of Osseo-Fairchild’s nickname lead me to conclude that the *Chieftains* name should no longer be used and references to Indigenous peoples be severed. The use of this nickname carries with it strong ties to the dispossession and displacement of Indigenous peoples and the subliminal ties to racial superiority associated with frontier conquest. As a school that has used an Indigenous-based name, I hope that the curricula truly teaches the real history of Wisconsin tribes as expected under Act 31 and including the Dakota Sioux in order to guaranteeing that every graduate of Osseo-Fairchild High School knows and understands Native history and cultures. This is the most sincere form of respect, as has been requested by the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council.

15. Your affiant states that he believes that the use of the “chieftains” nickname and logo by the Osseo-Fairchild School District promotes discrimination, pupil harassment and stereotyping.

