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WELCOME

Hello, and welcome to RetireTheChief.org.
This site exists -

- To give a voice to those who believe that Chief Illiniwek should be retired;
- To promote discussion between those who are *pro-* and *anti-*Chief;
- To encourage a change in policy - to retire the chief.

Jay Rosenstein, in his 2001 article *In Whose Honor?* (Team Spirits, chapter 11) argued

“American Indians will always have to be part of a newsworthy event, such as a protest or the airing of a national documentary, in order to have their point of view included in the media ...”

This is also true of the much broader group of people opposed to the Chief. Their voices should be heard - and not just occasionally, or as a sound bite in television, or the occasional newspaper headline.

This site exists to try and change that. We want to help *turn up the volume* on the Chief debate, and take it beyond the opinions of the few with the resources (e.g. billboards) or access to the media.

Whether you are *pro-* or *anti-*Chief, if you would like to share your opinion with us, send us a letter that we can post on our web site, RetireTheChief.org

Regardless of your stand on this very divisive issue, [welcome](#). Please read on and hear the opinions of others.

WHY THE CHIEF?

excerpts from the online essay
Brian Jewett, RetireTheChief.org

“Why must the most visible symbol of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in general, and of U.I. sports in particular, be the Chief?”

The Chief has been a part of the University scene since 1926. Yet quite a lot of Native American people find Chief Illiniwek very degrading. Can we not respect a race of people enough to find another U.I. symbol?”

“Pro- and anti-Chief folks [at the U.I. Chief Dialogue] had very different experiences witnessing the Chief. Two voices:

“I will never forget the first time my eyes witnessed the Chief ... the whole arena watched in complete awe ... I experienced the true spirit of the University of Illinois. And it instilled in me a pride ...”

“Chief Illiniwek is painful and dehumanizing to my people. It hurts to see Illinois sports fans all over the community desecrate my religion by wearing turkey feathers that mock my sacred eagle feathers.”

“Think about someone doing an insulting impression of your spouse, your minister, your best friend. They didn’t mean anything by it, they might say, so what’s the problem? Doing something that turns out to be very hurtful to someone else is *reason enough* to stop.”

Full essay is online at RetireTheChief.org