



Change the Mascot!

August 18, 2017

Mr. Daniel Snyder
Washington Redskins
21300 Redskin Park Drive
Ashburn, VA 20147-6100

Dear Mr. Snyder:

We have long disagreed about your continued insistence on promoting, marketing and profiting from your football team's name and mascot, a dictionary-defined racial slur that does great harm to Native American communities. However, at a moment in which we have seen armed neo-Nazis, Ku Klux Klan leaders, and an assortment of white supremacists and other racists terrorize a city within your team's geographic area, we are hopeful that we can momentarily set aside those disagreements and find common ground with you on a related effort to end the promotion of proud and unrepentant icons of bigotry.

Specifically, we are asking you to join with other teams and end the practice of venerating segregationists who helped promote the Confederacy and its abominable legacy of slavery. We invite you and the Washington football team to officially join our effort to remove the statue and separate stadium memorial to George Preston Marshall – the founder of your franchise.

Marshall's bigotry extended well beyond his abhorrent decision to use a racial slur as his team's name. During his day, he was one of America's most infamous and outspoken segregationists – and his legacy is marred by discriminatory words and deeds directed at people of color.

Marshall, for instance, openly supported the ban on African American players in the NFL. In fact, he was the very last team owner to permit an African American player on his team, and he only did so under the threat of sanctions by the federal government. Marshall's racist beliefs drew support from the American Nazi Party, and he even went so far as to stipulate in his last will and testament that his foundation would not distribute any resources to schools or programs that promoted the intermingling of children from different races.

Marshall was also a proud proponent of the Confederacy. As VICE Sports reported: “In 1959, just before the South Carolina legislature would first fly the rebel flag over its capitol dome, Marshall wanted to show his support for the Southern fight against integration and desegregation. He changed a line in his team's fight song from ‘Fight for old D.C.’ to ‘Fight for old Dixie.’ To drive the point home, he also had the marching band play ‘Dixie,’ the unofficial national anthem of the Confederacy, immediately following the fight song.”

After the terrible events in Charlottesville, officials in Baltimore – which is also in your team’s area – opted to remove Confederate iconography from their city. At the same time, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Rays and Lightning together dedicated resources to remove a Confederate memorial from that city’s courthouse steps. Similarly, Boston Red Sox owner John Henry is presently leading efforts to change the name of Yawkey Way, a street in the city named after a former team owner who refused to integrate the team.

As the owner of the Washington team, you are in a unique position to make a similar — and desperately needed — gesture in your own community. You can play a pivotal role by removing the Marshall memorial in front of your team’s previous stadium, and remove Marshall’s name from the stadium section at your team’s current stadium.

Now more than ever, the community your team represents and the nation in which you live -- needs those of us from all walks of life to unify against the forces of bigotry. Our vigorous disagreement over your use of the R-word will continue, but at this moment of national crisis we believe there is a unique opportunity for us to stand together in solidarity and immediately remove these symbols of hate. We hope you agree.

Sincerely,



Ray Halbritter
Oneida Indian Nation Representative



Jacqueline Johnson Pata
Executive Director, National Congress of American Indians



David Grosso
D.C. Council, At-Large