



# Change the Mascot!

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## Change the Mascot Congratulates Native American Activist Suzan Harjo on Selection for the Presidential Medal of Freedom

**Oneida Nation Homelands (Nov. 11, 2014)** The Change the Mascot campaign today sends heartfelt congratulations to Suzan Harjo, who is set to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country's highest civilian honor. Harjo is the current president of the Morning Star Institute and has for decades been a leading activist working to improve the lives of Native peoples. One of the earliest advocates for changing the racist name of the Washington NFL team, Harjo was a driving force behind the petition that led to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office recognizing the team's R-word name as "disparaging to Native Americans" and canceling its trademark protections.

Change the Mascot leader and Oneida Nation Representative Ray Halbritter, expressed his congratulations to Suzan Harjo, saying:

"Suzan Harjo is a true leader, and a fearless and tireless advocate for Native Americans. She has dedicated her entire life to creating a brighter future for the next generation. For decades, she has

been relentless in demanding that the Washington NFL team change its disparaging name. The recent success of the Change the Mascot campaign has been because we are standing on the shoulders of giants – and none more so than Suzan Harjo. I congratulate Suzan, and could not think of an individual who better exemplifies the great American ideals which the Presidential Medal of Freedom recognizes.

Harjo is among elite company receiving the award this year, including Tom Brokaw, Ethel Kennedy, Meryl Streep, Stevie Wonder, and others. President Obama will honor Harjo and the other recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom in a ceremony at the White House on November 24, 2014.

"I look forward to presenting these nineteen bold, inspiring Americans with our Nation's highest civilian honor," said President Obama. "From activists who fought for change to artists who explored the furthest reaches of our imagination; from scientists who kept America on the cutting edge to public servants who help write new chapters in our American story, these citizens have made extraordinary contributions to our country and the world."

The grassroots Change the Mascot campaign, led by the Oneida Indian Nation and the National Congress of American Indians, works to educate the public about the damaging use of the R-word on Native peoples.

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