

Redskins Change Their Name

Bowing finally to intense media pressure, the NFL Washington Redskins today announced that they are changing their name to the Washington Palefaces.

A change in the organization's name had been under discussion for several years as a result of protests from liberal and Indian groups. Those groups appeared to believe that the name carried with it an implicitly racist perspective since it has been used to define people simply because of their skin color.

The Redskins organization had disputed that claim all along, saying the name had no racist implication whatsoever, that, in fact, it represented "the more positive aspects of relations between Indians and whites," affectionately recalling that time when Indians were considered "savages" because they fought a heroic but losing battle against the white theft of their lands. They also pointed out that in poll after poll the vast majority (83%) of Americans now living on those former Indian territories do not see the term "Redskins" as offensive at all.

According to Tony Wyllie, spokesperson for the team, the new name was chosen because it carries with it the same positive values as the previous one. It recalls the same heroic era in American culture, the same sense of solidarity among Americans. And most importantly, it "just goes to show that names associated with skin color are completely benign and inoffensive."

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