

## Foster a better understanding

Dear Editor,  
Hello. In the hopes of fostering a better understanding between the Native American population and the mainstream culture of Erie County and Behrend College, I am requesting that your news department consider standardizing the ethnic description your staff uses in describing the indigenous population of the western hemisphere in news reports and stories.

In the 504 years since the Columbus encounter, aboriginal citizens of the Americas have had to combat stereotypical racism which has its historical roots in the erroneous survey of the Native American people whom Columbus encountered. After determining that these peaceful natives were not of the Muslim faith, Columbus assumed that he had made his way to the subcontinent of India and had met up with Hindu citizens, hence the term "Los indios" from where the misleading term "Indians" originates. Although the error was discovered relatively soon after Columbus returned to Europe, the damage was already done and the stereotypes established.

Approaching this subject from a different, but equally important angle, I would also like to request the consideration of your sports department staff writers from refraining the using of the description of racially intolerant nicknames such as and including: the Washington Redskins, the Kansas City Chiefs, the Atlanta Braves and especially the Cleveland Indians. By flowing the precedent of a number of Oregon newspapers which now refer to those teams as the Washington DC NFL team, the Kansas city professional football team, the Atlanta National League baseball team, and the Cleveland professional baseball team, clarity of sports reporting can be maintained without confusion. This nickname ban also extends to offensive college team nick-names, as well as league standings and transaction ledgers. This unprecedented move not only did not hurt newsstand sales, it attracted many accolades for the media owners and staff.

Please consider standardizing the future references to western hemisphere indigenous citizens to the legitimate cultural term, Native Americans, as well as any specific tribal nation identity. Due to the increasing prevalence of news

reports being utilized in a number of academic classroom settings for current events awareness, the historical accuracy would be greatly appreciated.

Also, in this time of fiscal conservativeness and the budget cutting of redundant expenses, it is ludicrous to have to re-educate our young people and students in higher education to the legitimacy of Native American land claims in the western hemisphere, when respected news venues such as yours could progressively correct the longest standing American historical inaccuracy through editorial control. Thank you for your concern.

If anyone would like any further information regarding this matter, please feel free to contact me at (814) 459-0907.

Cordially yours,  
Charles J. Kader  
Native American Journalists  
Association  
(Mohawk Nation)



THE EXORCIST



### The Behrend College Collegian

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