

University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign

Office of Public Affairs

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Gary Smith
Director, Marching Illini
132 Harding

Dear Gary:

As the chancellor's designated hitter on Indian questions, I'm in need of your help.

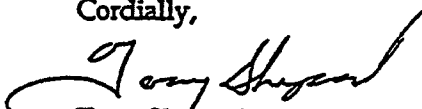
I've received a copy of the two-page "Chief Illiniwek Tradition" sheet handed out last week to applicants for the role of Chief. It probably has been years since anyone reviewed this, and it has a number of shortcomings that we should fix, on grounds of both accuracy and sensitivity.

I've enclosed a copy with the areas of concern highlighted in yellow, along with a note on possible solutions. If you would like any help from my office in reworking this, I would be glad to provide it.

Also, if the band has any other material on the Chief, it would be a good idea to review it. FYI, between football and basketball seasons, we did a similar rewrite of the material on Chief Illiniwek that the athletic division will use in programs and media guides.

Thanks for the help. Please call if you have any questions, suggestions or other thoughts.

Cordially,



Terry Shepard
Deputy Associate Chancellor for Public Affairs

bcc: J. Rowan
W. Savage

Recommended changes in two-page handout "Chief Illiniwek Tradition"

Paragraph 1 – We need distinction between the real origin and meaning of *Illiniwek* and Bob Zuppke's interpretation of it in introducing it to the campus. *Illiniwek* actually was one of the Algonquin-language names for the confederation of Illini tribes (the ending "wek" was changed to "ois" by the French, thus giving us the name of the state). As used by the Indians, the name meant roughly "the people." (The library has books on this.)

Paragraph 2 – We absolutely must eliminate the word *redskin*.

Paragraphs 3 & 4 – Let's eliminate the words *genuine* and *authentic*, which put us on undefensible ground. While tradition has it that Lester Leutwiler wore "authentic Indian attire" and performed "a genuine lively Indian dance," the odds of those being truly authentic and genuine are very small. They were, after all, based on a Boy Scout project, not a careful study and recreation by a trained expert in Indian tradition or dance.

Paragraph 7 – As music is your area of expertise, could you investigate Indian drumbeats? I am told by Indian musicians that many of the beats we have become accustomed to thinking of as Indian are really Hollywood – in particular, the four-beat with the emphasis on the first beat: BOM-bom-bom-bom. We would be on better ground if our Indian beats – any time we use them – were more authentic.

Also, I suggest we change the last line from "frenzied ending" to "exhilarating ending." One of the criticisms of the Chief's dance is that it is much wilder and more frenzied than true Indian dances.

(Continued)

Recommended Changes – Page 2

Page 2 / Paragraph 1 – I suggest we delete the phrase "In the beginning the original dance steps were authentic Indian movements but" on the above grounds.

Page 2 / Paragraph 2 – Delete the word *Indian* from before pony, since it was in all likelihood not a literal Indian pony. Delete "authentic war" from before dance, because of the above questions of authenticity and because even if this were a true war dance – which I have heard no convincing evidence to support – a war dance is a stereotype of Indians that we should avoid.

Page 2 / Paragraph 3 – Smoking the peace pipe is both a special Indian rite and a stereotype of Indian behavior. I assume we have stopped doing it; if not, we should. The fact that we even own a peace pipe is a sensitive issue among the Indians with whom I have dealt. I recommend deleting the whole paragraph. At the very least, we should indicate that we no longer engage in this practice.

Page 2 / Paragraph 4 – Delete the word *authentic* from in front of "honorary princess." It sounds like protesting too much and, besides, authentic honorary is something of a contradiction in terms.

Page 2 / Paragraph 5 – We should add a phrase to make clear that: a) this outfit is for display and is not used; b) that we have legal permission to own eagle feathers. Our possession of eagle feathers is perhaps the most sensitive point of this whole affair. Indians hold eagle feathers sacred and have had to fight hard to retain their special right to own them, thus making them touchy about anyone else possessing them.

Page 2 / Paragraph 7 – Because of the above, we should explicitly say that the headdress used in performances is not made of eagle feathers (my best information is that it is turkey feathers). Similarly, if the back-up headdress — obtained from Frank Fools Crow does, indeed, have eagle feathers, we should avoid using it and make sure we have the federal papers allowing us to own it.

It also would help to say, if it is true, that the current outfit was purchased from (and not just made by) Fools Crow, whose implicit approval lends support to Chief Illiniwek and the band's ownership of the outfit.

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CHIEF ILLINIWEK TRADITION

The name Illiniwek first appeared on the Illinois scene by none other than Robert Zuppke, who in a pep-rally speech said, "Illini is the name of a tribe of Indians and the word 'Illiniwek' means the complete Indian man, the physical man, the intellectual man, and the spiritual man."

The redskin heritage - Illiniwek - began in 1926 when Ray Dvorak, Assistant to A. A. Harding, Director of Bands, enlisted the aid of Lester Leutwiler, a University of Illinois student with an interest in Indian lore.

At the half-time ceremony of the Illinois-Pennsylvania football game, Leutwiler made his first appearance as Chief Illiniwek. He wore authentic Indian attire he had made for himself to demonstrate Indian dancing, a project he studied as a Boy Scout.

Just as the Illinois Football Band (so named in those days) was about to march into the formation. P E N N, Chief Illiniwek ran from his hiding place just north of the Illinois stands and took over the leadership of the band with a genuine lively Indian dance. Halted in the center of the field, the band played "Hail Pennsylvania", Pennsylvania's alma mater song. As Chief Illiniwek saluted the Pennsylvania rooters, William Penn (impersonated by George Adams, U of I drum major in appropriate Quaker dress), came forward and accepted the gesture of friendship offered by the Indian Chief and joined him in smoking the peace pipe. At the close of the half-time ceremony, William Penn and Chief Illiniwek walked arm in arm across to the Illinois side of the field to a deafening ovation.

In 1928 two new marches were written for the University of Illinois band:

The Pride of the Illini March - Karl L. King
The March of the Illini - Harry Alford

These two marches, "telescoped" together with the addition of the song "Hail to the Orange", made and still make up a musical sequence which has been repeated game after game and year after year. This trilogy has been identified as "Three in One".

The band marches down the field to the spirited music of "The Pride of the Illini March" - suddenly the bandmen sing the Trio of the march (words by Ray Dvorak) - the band-changes direction - the music of "The March of the Illini" - the drum major vanishes - Chief Illiniwek emerges-from-nowhere—he-dances to the Indian flavored march melody supported by Indian drums: As the marching formation I L L I N I spelled out by the band comes to a halt, Chief Illiniwek with raised arm and hand extended, salutes the Illini rooters as the song "Hail to the Orange" is sung by the band and/or by the rooters. This beloved song is followed by the Illiniwek theme again, first softly as the dance by Illiniwek increases in vigor, the music develops to a great climax as Chief Illiniwek brings his dance to a frenzied ending.

In the beginning the original dance steps were authentic Indian movements but as the tradition progressed through the years variations have been worked in to make it a more active and artistic ceremonial so that his dance will excite the football crowd and be visible to all in the stands. The dance pace of 272 steps per minute is two times faster than the marching cadence.

At one time Illiniwek rode on an Indian pony bareback into the stadium, but the late Mr. Zuppe, long-time U of I grid mentor, chased the Chief off one muddy afternoon, claiming that the horse did more damage to the gridiron than both teams and band combined. Since then, Illiniwek does the traditional and exhausting dance down field and the authentic war dance on the 40-yard line.

Smoking the peace pipe, initiated by the Chief in his first appearance, has been done over the years with U.S. presidents, senators, governors and presidents of many colleges and universities and countless other dignitaries.

In 1943, when most of the men on the Illinois campus were enrolled in military programs, there was no Chief Illiniwek. Idelle Stith, a journalism major from Fairfax, Oklahoma, was drafted as Princess Illiniwek. Idelle was an authentic honorary princess of the Osage Indian tribe. She had spent most of her life on the Osage Indian reservation where her father had been an attorney dealing with Indian affairs. She was as sensational an Illiniwek as her male counterparts, and kept the tradition alive during the World War II years.

CHIEF ILLINIWEK ATTIRE

The Indian dress displayed in the Harding Band Building was given to the University of Illinois in 1930 by the late Isaac Kuhn, a long-time Champaign merchant. Webber Borchers, Illiniwek II, purchased the suit from the Sioux Indians at the Rosebud Reservation near Rapid City, South Dakota. The headdress is trimmed with beadwork and is outlined by 91 eagle feathers and fur ornaments which sweep to the ground. The costume, which weighs more than 20 pounds, has a breastplate of porcupine quills with leather thongs and bead trim, and includes gauntlets of buckskin covered with beadwork decoration. Trousers and shirt are both of buckskin with beadwork trim. The moccasins for the Chief Illiniwek are entirely covered with beadwork except for the soles, and the letter "I" is worked into the design.

This costume was first worn for the U of I-Army game in the Yankee Stadium in New York City in 1930 and the same costume was inherited by all subsequent Illiniweks until 1952 when Mr. Kuhn again financed a complete face-lifting and renovation.

A second costume was introduced in the fall of 1967 in the Illinois vs Pittsburgh game. The third costume (presently in use) was made by Chief Frank Fools Crow, the reigning leader of the Oglala Tribe of the Sioux Indian nation. The purchase of this costume was made possible through the donations of Robert Eisner, a Champaign businessman. It too was presented at an Illinois vs Pittsburgh game, this one on September 25, 1982.