College dropped Apaches in 2000

Southwestern College had its own moment of reckoning with an inappropriate nickname and mascot. For reasons long lost to history, in the mid-1960s SC's sports teams were christened the Apaches. An accompanying mascot was a leather-faced profile of a Native American man much like the image on a worn buffalo nickel. For generations the name and mascot repelled thinking people in the community. Southwest ern College had Mayan-style architecture and the Apaches never lived in the South Bay. San Diego County is Kumeyaay Country with a little bit of the Shonehbone Widge in the area that is now Escondido.

Like good soldiers, though, faculty and students embraced the Apache. Legendary baseball coach Jerry Bartow – named the baseball field after years of pressure. Cleveland Indians and Washington NFL franchise to change their names after years of pressure. "We want Major League Baseball to accept its responsibility and remove the name of Texas Rangers from its Arlington, Texas franchise," he said. "The league should no longer profit off the suffering inflicted on our people. Neither should MLB confuse the players' popularity with acceptance of the Texas Rangers' namesake nor what those hired guns did to tens of thousands of Americans of Mexican ancestry." Attorney Sheryl Ring said the Texas Rangers baseball team is a mockery to the Mexican people and should be removed. "We want Major League Baseball to reject namesake's violent history."

MURDER AT LA MATANZA – Historians say Texas Rangers killed hundreds, possibly thousands, of Mexicans and Tejanos in South Texas from 1915-19, calling the victims “bandits.” They were actually legal landowners, ranchers, farmers or Latino Texans traveling in their home state. This photo was taken in October 1915 by Texas Rangers proud of their work. Courtesy Dolph Briscoe Center for American History/University of Texas at Austin

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Chicano leaders call for the Texas Rangers baseball team to reject namesake's violent history

BY CAMILA GONZALEZ, Editor-in-Chief

Porvenir, Texas, has no Texas Rangers baseball fans. It has no baseball fans. Porvenir is an uninhabited ghost town in the West Texas borderlands because its inhabitants were exterminated or driven off in 1918 by the Texas Rangers – the paramilitary vigilantes, not the baseball team. After murdering every man and teenage boy in the frontier village, the Rangers sent away the surviving widows and children on a forced march into the desiccated prairie.

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The Rangers: Latino leaders insist baseball glorifies violent vigilantes

In 1966 the Texas Rangers were brought in to break up a strike by farmworkers in a rural area south of Crystal City in Zavala County. Gutiérrez said Mexican and Mexican-American farmworkers were beaten, kicked and shot. One laborer, Magdaleno Dimas, was killed. Naming a baseball team for the Texas Rangers is an affront to Latinos, Gutiérrez said. “They’re laughing in our faces,” he said. “The (Texas Rangers) commit atrocities against Mexicans, and yet who goes to the baseball games? Mexicans? That is because we do not know our own history.” Morones agreed. Latino players are rarely found in major league parks. More than 30 percent of major league players are Latinos, including many of its biggest stars. Gutiérrez said the entertainment system in Texas and the United States is “Anglo-centric” and too often overlooks historic episodes of violence and mistreatment of minorities. Most Americans, he said, never heard of Porrero, the destruction of the Black town Rosewood, Florida or the White riots of Tulsa, Oklahoma which burned a thriving Black business district to the ground. The Texas Rangers, he said, got the Hollywood treatment. “Everything written about the Rangers is glorious, fantastic,” he said. “None of that is true. They are murderers of Mexicans and they have been for a long time.”

While working with the Padres in the 1990s, Morones had an opportunity to meet with the managing owner of the Texas Rangers Baseball Club, Texas governor and future U.S. President George W. Bush. Morones pressed his case that his team should not be named for the Rangers. Bush, generally considered a moderate on race for a Republican, was not receptive. “I got nothing but a blank stare,” he said. “Governor Bush wasn’t having it.”

Dougma Garcia said he likes baseball, but is no fan of the Texas Rangers moniker. Garcia said his mother, grandmother and grandfather lived in Porrero. Pedro Cano, his great great grandfather, and Chico Cano, a great uncle, lost their land resisting the Black town Rosewood, Florida or the White riots of Tulsa, Oklahoma which burned a thriving Black business district to the ground. The Texas Rangers, he said, got the Hollywood treatment. “Everything written about the Rangers is glorious, fantastic,” he said. “None of that is true. They are murderers of Mexicans and they have been for a long time.”

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Enrique Morones

CONTINUED FROM PG. S1

APACHES:
Sycuan donation motivated SC name change
its name to The Aluhapeus, the ancient language spoken by The Apaches. Efforts by Native Americans in the 1970s and 1980s to press- sure high schools and colleges to eliminate Indian mascots bypassed Southern California. It just did not seem like anyone’s pri- ority, though in the 1980s The Aluhapeus switched its name to The Sun.

Change came in 1995 after Dr. Serafin Zauta took the helm as college president. The development scholar, Zauta had served in K-12 schools in poverty stricken areas of Southwest U.S. Native American reservations.

Empathetic to Native Ameri- can culture and steeped in their history, Zauta was receptive to a proposal by the Band of the Kumeyaay Nation. Newly affluent San Diego County Na- tive American tribes made a move to eliminate Indian mascots in the region. A Sycuan leader offered Southern California Native American tribes names for their athletic teams if the college would change its name and mascot.

Zauta and the coaches agreed. There was some push- back from the reservation-based on nostalgia, but it was insignificant. The name change is expected to bring the college a needed photogenic, powerful animal from Mesoamer- ica in its sport’s history and a prosper- ing the jaguar pounced at the opportunity and became the university’s new mascot in 2000. A Sycuan leader offered Southern California Native American tribes names for their athletic teams if the college would change its name and mascot.

SC’s first jaguar was a bit- theren spotted cutout that did not exactly strike fear in the hearts of college athletic opponents. She was sent back to the jungle and replaced with the bradford black jogger today’s students wear on sweatshirts and football jerseys.

Bartow changed Apache to Apaches, in honor of San Diego County Native American tribes that made a move to eliminate Indian mascots. The college agreed to the name change and started using the name that same year. It just did not seem like anyone’s priority, though in the 1980s The Aluhapeus switched its name to The Sun.

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Empathetic to Native Ameri- ca...
Rangers as the noble heroes, García said.

“No baseball team should be named after a domestic terrorist organization,” he said.

Morones said naming a team the Texas Rangers is no different that naming a team after terrorist organizations such as Isis, Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram or the Proud Boys. Legions of American Latinos of the Southwest are descendants of victims of vigilante crime, he said, and have violence embodied in their family histories.

“We will never erase that stain and we must never forget those innocent people killed by the men who violated,” he said. “We must not forget families who were robbed of children at gun point and their rights denied because of the color of their skin.”

Young Americans have begun to challenge the presence of statues and monuments around the nation that glorified the Confederacy, slave owners and people with histories of violence, Morones said. Many Texans are calling for the removal of Confederate statues at the state capital and on the grounds of the University of Texas. Cities and towns with statues and monuments to the Texas Rangers are also initiating discussions about the appropriateness of statues.

Dallas Love Field Airport removed a notorious statue of Jay Banks, a Texas Ranger who whipped other Rangers to assault Black children attempting to go to school.

That is a good start, Morones said, but even cross-town, multicultural San Diego has a racist statue.

“In our downtown in Horton Plaza is a statue of Pete Wilson, the architect of Proposition 187, a racist, anti-Latino bill that did a lot of damage to Latinos all over the state,” he said. “Wilson is a symbol of hate and division, which has no place in a multicultural city like San Diego. Our city is one third Latino, but has a statue of a man who dehumanized and demonized the Latino community for political gain.”

A hot, dusty wind drags through what remains of Porvenir. Devolution reigns. Indigenous ghosts have wandered a century, mostly forgotten.

Gutierrez said he will Never forget and will not rest until the Texas Rangers join Cleveland in finding a new name. The Rangers, however, are playing hardball and have given no indication they will need new uniforms tops soon.

“While we may have originally taken our name from the law enforcement agency, since 1973 the Texas Rangers Ranger Football Club has forged its own, independent identity,” read a 2020 statement from the team. “The Texas Rangers Baseball Club stands for equality. We condemn racism, bigotry, and discrimination in all forms.”

High profile name changes

School and sports nicknames have been slowly evolving since the early 1970s, with dozens of professional and college teams moving away from the use of Native American mascots. Not fast enough for Native America advocates.

Stephanie Cruz, a University of Oklahoma doctoral candidate, and about 175 scholars still have Indian-based names or mascots, including at least 200 that still use the derogatory size “rednecks.”

“Schools across America are perpetuating the myth of Native Americans as aggressive, warlike and savage,” she said.

Cruz and the makers of the 2017 documentary “More Than a Word” call for the Kansas City Chiefs, Chicago Black Hawks and Atlanta Braves to join the Cleveland Indians and Washington Redskins as defunct sports franchises that abandon Native American names and imagery.

Native American mascots are the most common among those drawing criticism in the United States today, but there are others. There is organized opposition to names and images that depict white settlers, Confederates and other white supremacists, Crusaders and names hostile to Muslims, and names that glorify violence.

One are some professional teams and universities that have abandoned Native American and white supremacist names or symbols:

1969

Philadelphia

Warriors move to
San Francisco

and become the Golden State Warriors.

1972

Dickinson State University of North Dakota drops The Sagas as its mascot and eventually settles on Blue Hawks.

1973

Eastern Washington
University discontinues The Sagas to become The Eagles.

1974

Dartmouth College stops using The Indians and switches to The Big Green.

1979

St. Bonaventure University dumped The Brown Indians and The Brown Squaws to become The Bonnies.

1991

Eastern Michigan University moves on from The Hurons and rebrands as The Eagles.

1994

New York’s St. John’s University replaces The Redmen with The Red Storm.

1997

Miami University of Ohio abandons The Red Knights to become The Redhawks.

1999

Oklahoma City University retires The Chiefs and becomes The Stars.

2000

The College of William and Mary changed its nickname from The Indians to The Tribe, a name that has not entirely placated its community.

2006

Midwestern

State University of Wichita Falls, Texas changes from The Indians to The Mustangs.

2007

University of Illinois drops its Indian face mascot and logo, but retains the name Illini.

2008

Arkansas State University retires The Indians to become The Red Wolves.

2018

The Cleveland Indians stop using blushing Chief Wahoo as its mascot. In 2021 the team announces it will change its name to The Guardians.

2020

The Washington Redskins, under pressure from FedEx, which purchased naming rights for the stadium, announced it will abandon its name and logo. A new name has yet to be announced.

Compiled by The San staff

50 years of debate, but SDSU still the Aztecs

San Diego State University’s mascot and name, the Aztecs, came to the Montezuma Mesa in 1945 and was called “disputable” controversial until the early 1970s when the American Indian Movement began to gain influence in the United States. Early attempts to start a conversation about the name and mascot and the Montezuma Rangers were brushed aside in the mid-1970s and early 1980s. Wealthy alumni threatened to halt donations to the university, which was growing in enrollment and ambition.

In 2015 the university renamed the mascot and gave it a new outfit that was supposed to be a line of a beakface cheerleader and more in line with an Aztec warrior of the 1500s. The adoption of the mascot first appeared in 2014 to mixed reviews. The Aztecs said upset that Montezuma was sidelined and younger activists, along with a group of SDSU professors, argued that any Aztec mascot was inappropriate.

Zuma the jaguar was introduced in 2010 as a secondary mascot in an effort to test market an alternative. It was an unsuccessful effort, and Zuma was quietly put out to pasture in 2014.

American Indian Studies Professor Ozzie Monge brought the issue to the public again in 2015 with a paper that argued against the name and the mascot. Monge described the “noble savage” stereotype and said SDSU had reduced the Aztec people “to a good luck charm.”

In 2018 battle lines hardened. SDSU faculty and students organized an effort to do away with the Aztec, which more than 5000 supporters of the mascot signed an online petition “to Save The Aztec.” In February 2019 President Sally Roush appointed a 17-member Aztec Identity Task Force to re-examine the issue. That May the committee recommended keeping the Aztec name, but was split on whether to retain the warrior mascot. Roush accepted the recommendations and the Aztec remains the moniker of the university.

Few people involved said they thought the debate was over.

Sources: San Diego Union-Tribune; SDSU Daily Aztec, SDSU President’s Office report Decisions on Aztec Identity