

SPECIAL EDITION: THE MASCOT ISSUE

MOVING FORWARD

Paths to Honor

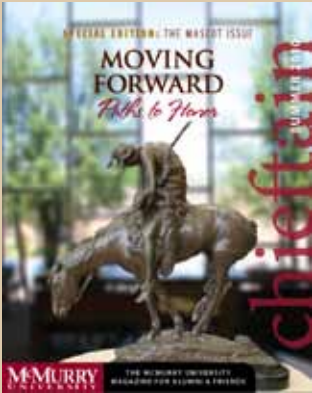


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McMURRY
UNIVERSITY

THE MCMURRY UNIVERSITY
MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS



The End of the Trail

By James Earle Fraser

1876-1953

This lone figure on his weary horse is one of the most recognized symbols of the American West. By many it is viewed as a reverent memorial to a great and valiant people. To some Native Americans, however, it is viewed as a reminder of defeat and subjugation a century ago. The monumental, 18' plaster sculpture was created for San Francisco's 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition and received the exposition's Gold Medal for sculpture. The subject of immediate popular acclaim, the image was widely reproduced in postcard, print, curio and miniature form.

Although Fraser hoped his masterpiece would be cast in bronze and placed on Presidio Point overlooking San Francisco Bay, material restrictions during the first World War made the project impossible. Instead, in 1920, the city of Visalia, California obtained the discarded statue and placed it in Mooney Park, where it remained in a gradually deteriorating condition for 48 years. In 1968, the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum acquired this original plaster statue, restored it to its original magnificence, and made it a focal point of the museum.

The bronze replica of *The End of the Trail* was donated to McMurry College by Cora Roberts in 1983 and is on display in the Jay-Rollins Library.

The *Trail of Tears* refers to a historical event in U. S. history. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 signed by President Andrew Jackson called for the forcible relocation of Native Americans by the U. S. Army to the Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). In 1831 the Choctaw were the first to be removed, and they became the model for all other removals. After the Choctaw, the Seminole were removed in 1832, the Creek in 1834, then the Chickasaw in 1837, and finally the Cherokee in 1838. By 1837, 46,000 Native Americans from these southeastern nations had been removed from their homelands, thereby opening 25 million acres for settlement by whites. Many Native Americans suffered from exposure, disease and starvation while en route to their destinations, and many died, including 4,000 of the 15,000 relocated Cherokee.



There's a trail of tears
 Flowing from our homeland
 Washing out the years
 Drowning out the red man.
 There's a broken heart
 beating like a funeral drum,
 A nation torn apart,
 So one can be born.
 There's a memory
 That the eagle holds high
 When we were free
 As the wind in the sky.
 There's a feeling inside
 That stirs our madness
 To have a chosen life
 In the fields of sadness.
 There are some empty teepees
 Falling into dust
 Like an endangered species
 We're losing way too much
 We are a world forgotten
 Pushed aside and left alone
 But comes a time when we will
 rise again.
 Oh Great One, hear our prayers
 and our song.

Author Unknown



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SPECIAL EDITION: THE MASCOT ISSUE

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12 PERSPECTIVES

- 8 | A *Native American's* PERSPECTIVE
- 10 | A *Mascot Expert's* PERSPECTIVE
- 12 | A *Cultural Expert's* PERSPECTIVE
- 14 | A *Professor's* PERSPECTIVE
- 15 | A *Student's* PERSPECTIVE
- 16 | A *Committee Chairman's* PERSPECTIVE
- 17 | A *Trustee's* PERSPECTIVE
- 18 | AN *Alumni President's* PERSPECTIVE
- 19 | THE *Board of Trustees'* PERSPECTIVE
- 20 | A *University President's* PERSPECTIVE
- 21 | A *Bishop's* PERSPECTIVE
- 22 | AN *Alumni's* PERSPECTIVE

WHAT'S *Your* PERSPECTIVE?

Let us know at www.mcm.edu/quest/



**MOVING
FORWARD**
Paths to Honor

The Journey

Whether one's travels consist of family vacations in the summer, once in a lifetime excursions to exotic locales, or weekend road trips, it is often the journey that is as memorable as the destination. McMurry University has embarked on a journey that began in 2005—not a journey we planned for, but one that is proving to be an adventure that is both memorable and character-building. And regardless of the destination at the end of the road, we will be better as a university because of the journey.

Where was our starting point? In what direction are we headed? What [in]sights have we seen along the

way? Most importantly, what have we learned through our travels? Thus far, we've passed through three legs of our journey—the first, an outside influence bringing into question our “sacred” and time-honored traditions; the second, McMurry's self-examination of those traditions and practices; and finally, our efforts to become more enlightened in moving forward on a path to honor. Below is a chronology of events presented to inform and entice others to join us on this journey to bring honor to our traditions, our heritage, and a race of people.

Todd Neer, member of Ko Sari men's social club, wears traditional American Indian dress and talks with visitors to Tipi Village



The NCAA Decision and McMurry's Response

In November 2004, the NCAA asked 33 schools to submit a report evaluating the use of Native American imagery on their campuses. McMurry formed a committee to research and write this report which was submitted to the NCAA. After the self-evaluations from each school were conducted, 14 of the schools changed their Indian or Indian-related nicknames and/or mascots.

Nineteen schools, including McMurry, made decisions to request further consideration by the NCAA.

The NCAA looked over all the evaluations and came out with a new policy on August 5, 2005 prohibiting NCAA colleges and universities from displaying hostile and abusive racial/ethnic/national origin mascots, nicknames or imagery at any of the 88 NCAA championships. The NCAA committee also strongly suggested that these institutions follow the same best practices of institutions that do not support the use of Native American mascots or imagery.

Based on McMurry's longstanding commitment to honor Native Americans, an appeal to the policy was submitted by McMurry to the NCAA Executive Committee on December 19, 2005. The NCAA granted McMurry a "stay," meaning that the new rules would not be enforced until after a decision was made on the appeal. On May 18, 2006 the NCAA staff committee considering the University's appeal to continue use of its Indian name and imagery recommended that McMurry's appeal be rejected.

In response to this decision, McMurry appealed the NCAA staff committee's decision by letter dated June 12, 2006, sent to the NCAA Executive Committee. The appeal was based on two main themes: the arbitrariness of the NCAA's decision-making process and the inconsistent messages that came from the process. Arguments were also

publicly voiced in a press conference on June 26, 2006.

The NCAA Executive Committee met to address the University's final appeal on August 3, 2006 and reconfirmed its original decision. The Board of Trustees met on October 13, 2006 and voted to discontinue the use of the Indian mascot. During the 2006-2007 academic year, the University took measures to adhere to the guidelines provided by the NCAA, including the removal of any reference to Indians from athletic facilities, including the floor and walls of Kimbrell Arena, chairs, the scoreboard, travel bags, and all varsity athletic uniforms.



Note: 12 of the 19 schools affected by the 2005 NCAA policy have changed or discontinued the use of Indian nicknames; five schools named after specific tribes, such as the Florida State Seminoles and the Mississippi College Coctaws, made successful appeals; one school was allowed to keep its nickname but was put on a watch list; and the University of North Dakota was unsuccessful in its lawsuit against the NCAA to keep its Fighting Sioux

nickname. For additional information on the NCAA decision and subsequent actions, visit www.mcm.edu/quest/

Charting a Course of Action

In early fall 2008, the Task Force on McMurry's Native American Connection was commissioned by Dr. John Russell, McMurry President. The task force was charged with evaluating written and visual representations and practices on campus to determine if they show honor and respect for the Native American culture. Recommendations were to reflect the following: 1) honoring Native Americans and their culture, 2) preserving traditions which alumni hold dear, and 3) focusing attention on the needs and opinions of new students coming to the University.

The Task Force agreed that regardless of how traditions have evolved, we as a university demonstrate pride in our Native American connection, and even without the mascot,

the identity remains. In evaluating our current use of Native American symbols, language and practices, it was determined to be impossible for non-Native Americans to accurately decide whether certain text, graphics, and practices are respectful or disrespectful to Native Americans.

It was agreed that even though the Task Force worked diligently to educate themselves on the issues, the complexity of their charge was far greater than a short term task force was equipped to address, and that the process of educating ourselves as a university should be greatly broadened to include a larger involvement from all stakeholder groups. It was suggested that McMurry host a two-day symposium on honoring Native Americans that would provide an opportunity for intellectual exchange to ask questions, to exchange ideas, and to discuss resolutions together.

The symposium idea was further discussed in a meeting with Dr. John Russell. It was recommended that the symposium be utilized to wrestle with the concept of what it means to honor our Native American heritage. The purpose should be to transform the issue into an academic exercise rather than an emotional experience centered around a mascot. Dr. Russell approved the symposium proposal, and requested that the task force formally approve and issue a series of recommendations for consideration by the McMurry Board of Trustees.

The Board approved the proposal to host a symposium in the spring of 2010 for students, faculty, administration, trustees, alumni, and other stakeholders. The stated purpose was “to educate and share diverse perspectives about the Native American culture; to provide an academic venue for students, faculty and alumni to wrestle with what it means to honor our Native American heritage; and to establish a clear understanding of our identity as a university with, and apart from, a mascot.” Subsequent to Board approval, Dr. Russell commissioned a committee to

plan the event scheduled for March 11-12, 2010.

Note: For additional information on the deliberations of the Native American Task Force, visit www.mcm.edu/quest/.

The Quest for Understanding

In the spring of 2009, a committee of university staff and faculty were commissioned to plan an academic symposium. The event was titled *The Quest: An Academic Institution Seeks to Honor Native Americans*.

The first meetings of the Native American Symposium

Committee consisted of finding suitable speakers for the event and establishing a workable format. After some lengthy discussions, it was determined that we would invite three speakers, all prominent in their fields, to come to McMurry to speak at the symposium. The following individuals were contacted, and each agreed to participate in the symposium: Dr. Gordon Bronitsky, a noted anthropologist who currently works with Native Americans in cultural events around the world; Dr. C. Richard King, Professor of Ethnic Studies at the Washington State University at Pulliam, who has published numerous articles and books concerning Native American mascot issues; and Dr. Thom WhiteWolf Fassett, an internationally-known advocate for Native American rights, and consultant for the federal government on Native American issues.

The committee determined that all three speakers would present a major keynote address, each followed by several small group discussions. A team of professors were charged with producing thought-provoking questions for the small group discussions during the event. During the question and answer period following each keynote address, the team would formulate discussion questions that were entered into a computer and projected on an overhead screen for the small group discussions. Located at each table would be a student recorder who was charged with taking notes for the group. The discussions and





AND REGARDLESS OF THE DESTINATION AT THE END OF THE ROAD, WE WILL BE *better as a university* BECAUSE OF THE JOURNEY.

comments were to be recorded and collected.

The event was marketed through area media outlets and invitations were extended to students, faculty, alumni, the Board of Trustees, community leaders, Native American organizations and interest groups, regional school districts, and statewide high schools with Indian mascot names. *The Quest* was held on March 11-12, 2010 and over 100 people attended the event. It was deemed a resounding success by participants who found the discussions to be spirited and insightful. Presentations and table discussions were recorded and transcribed for future use. After the symposium, the planning committee met, and based on insights and observation obtained from the event, the committee made the following recommendations:

- 1) We believe the practices and traditions now in place need to be examined with the intent of honoring Native Americans in appropriate ways.
- 2) In addition, the committee respectfully recommends that the University continues to seek new opportunities for future programming, including curricular and extracurricular, to enhance current efforts, to educate ourselves and others, and to bring honor in substantive ways to Native Americans.

The final report and recommendations were submitted on April 22, 2010 to President John Russell and future committees/groups for appropriate implementation.

Note: For additional documentation on the planning and outcomes of The Quest, visit www.mcm.edu/quest/.

Moving Forward

The journey continues for us as a university. As fellow pilgrims, we are opening our minds to new information, broadening our perspectives, and developing a greater understanding of what it means to seek “honor, truth and right” while we “cherish tradition.” We are experiencing change—as a university and as a group of people. In *The Book of the Vision Quest* Steven Foster said:

“How can I make a new beginning if I simply return to the old? The answer lies in the return. You will not come back to the ‘same old thing.’ What you return to has changed because you have changed. Your perceptions will be altered. You will not incorporate into the same body, status, or world you left behind. The river has been flowing while you were gone. Now it does not look like the same river.”

Change for an academic institution can be exhilarating. As we move forward on *paths to honor*, we celebrate the “good” past and eagerly embrace the “better” future. ■

Sacred Wind, a sculpture by Terry Gilbreath, stands in the campus quad



Christian Principles and the Treatment of America's Native Peoples

Thom WhiteWolf Fassett serves as a prominent authority on Native American issues. As keynote speaker for *The Quest*, Dr. Fassett addressed the topic “Theological and Ecclesiastical Challenges for an Academic Institution to Honor Native Americans.” His words impressed on listeners the unjustness of one culture inflicting on another its spiritual, governmental and cultural systems, thus dismissing and negating the value of the other. In providing a historical perspective of the colonial settlement of the United States and the place of Native American peoples in recorded history, Dr. Fassett noted the existence of vibrant social and cultural systems prior to colonists’ attempts to “civilize the savages.” In his emphasis on the wounds inflicted upon an entire race of people, he quoted Chief Seattle, chief of the Duwamish: “We are at the end of living and the beginning of survival.”

His discourse then raised a more sobering question: “How does Christian America rationalize the treatment of a people who were decimated by new immigrant cultures and religious values, whose lands were seen as a commodity of commerce and not as a sacred living organism?”

Dr. Fassett’s thought-provoking presentation was disturbing in its truths of the past, yet heartening in its hope for the future. Below are several key points voiced during his presentation and quoted in Dr. Fassett’s book entitled *Giving Our Hearts Away: Native American Survival* (2008).

“The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it,” (Ps. 24:1a), translated into Native American spiritual practice, appropriately captures the spirit of a people and of the hundreds of Native nations that once inhabited what is now the United States—people who continue to honor the original instructions of the Creator.

We see the original stewards of this continent estranged from the land as exploitative forces initiate measures so severe as to produce startling case histories of environmental degradation, economic instability and social disintegration. Judged by its actions, American society does not revere the earth as a living organism to be preserved for future generations of human beings... The litany of American ills reads badly and manifests itself in beer can-strewn highways and public landfills stuffed with the artifacts of a culture never celebrated in the spiritual ceremonies of Native people nor on the high altars of Western religions.

If the circle of life is to remain unbroken, the teachings of our Creator and the wisdom of our elders must pass from generation to generation. But America’s circle is very small and does not embrace the sacredness of God’s creation. America’s circle cycles every two or four years—from one national election to the next—and would ruin the whole world to get from election to re-election.... We give thanks in our churches for the next world, having forgotten how to walk in a sacred manner in the present world... Christians must speak a spiritual language quite different from the language of the politics of nation or state if we are to clearly identify with the images of love, justice and freedom that are central to the body of Christian teachings.

We must accept responsibility for adopting a spiritually wise, technologically sound, ethical and farsighted stewardship of the planet and a renewed respect for nature on which all life depends, remembering the American Indian saying, “We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.” We gain understanding through love and respect for one another and the living creation. Respect begins



with reverence for God—the life that is within all things. And because all things are created by God, all are relatives and must be treated as family. Their health is our health. Our health is their health. God’s circle of creation must not be broken, for it symbolizes perfections, equality, unity, life and eternity. With Job, we watch for the morning stars singing together and all people of God shouting for joy. We open our minds and spirits to yet another vision that will bring the Great Mystery, Wakan Tonka, the Great Spirit, Yahweh, Elohim, the Lord God, closer to the lives of the people.

In reponse to Dr. Fassett’s admonition, Bishop Dan Solomon very eloquently voiced what is to be an underlying tenet as we move forward: “Respect must be at the heart of how McMurry perceives its honoring of Native Americans. To proceed with respect means a serious focus on the ‘other,’ and not a serious possessiveness on the part of ourselves.” ■



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Thom WhiteWolf Fassett

As emeritus General Secretary of the international rights organization of The United Methodist Church, The General Board of Church and Society, Thom WhiteWolf Fassett brings a rich and varied background of experience as he works in the fields of faith, politics and issues of justice. Receiving advanced degrees from Colgate Rochester Divinity School and The American University, Dr. Fassett’s experience includes teaching high school English; local pastorates in United Methodist congregations; founding Minister of Urban Mission in Rochester, N.Y.; Urban Affairs Officer for United States Operations, the Xerox Corporation; Special Assistant to the United States Senate and House of Representatives conducting investigations into Federal/Indian policy; executive for programming of the General Board of Church and Society; Superintendent of The United Methodist Church in Alaska; and General Secretary of The General Board of Church and. An internationally-recognized champion of human and civil rights and an outspoken defender of Native and indigenous rights, Fassett has traveled throughout the world to assist those whose voices need to be heard—to Zimbabwe and Mozambique as part of a team investigating human rights; to Guatemala as a leader of the International Justice Forum; to Copenhagen, Denmark as delegate to the United Nations Summit on Social Development; and to other nations around the world as well as countless American cities to speak and write for justice and reconciliation.

What's the Big Deal? It's Just a Mascot...

Since the 2006 NCAA ruling regarding McMurry's use of "Indians" as its mascot, the University has made a concerted effort to research and understand the implications and responsibilities in maintaining our connection to our Native American heritage, as bequeathed to us by Dr. J. W. Hunt, first president of the university in 1923. The "Native American mascot controversy" is as widespread in our country as the number of Native American mascots themselves. After "animal" mascots, by far the next most popular athletic mascots are Native American people, followed by "an odd collection of roles and occupations, such as Boilermakers, Cowboys, and Patriots." (King, 2001) This preponderance of Native American mascots is emphasized by the fact that 37 high schools in the state of Texas boast of the generic "Indians" as their mascot, while many more have adopted tribal names and other related monikers such as Apaches, Comanches, Kiowas, Cherokees, Chiefs, Braves, and Redskins. And until recently, "Indians" ranked 8th on the list of most popular collegiate mascots. (Sledge, 2005)

If we as a university are to honor our Native American history and heritage, we must first seek to understand, as non-Native Americans, the perspective of Native peoples. It is with this intention that Dr. C. Richard King, Chair of the Department of Ethnic Studies and author of several books and articles on the Native American mascot controversy, was invited to be a keynote presenter at *The Quest*, an academic symposium hosted by McMurry University in the spring of 2010. Below are printed several perspectives offered by Dr. King both in his presentation and in print. These excerpts from *Beyond the Cheers: Race as Spectacle in College Sport* written by Dr. King and Charles Fruehling Springwood, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Illinois Wesleyan University, bring emphasis and clarity to the challenge of Euro-Americans trying to "play Indian."

[Native American mascot symbols] freeze Native Americans, reducing them to rigid, flat renderings of their diverse cultures and histories. At the same time, and this is perhaps the most significant aspect of "Playing Indian," they are primarily moments of writing and rewriting a Euro-American identity in terms of conquest, hierarchy, and domination.

To characterize the indigenous peoples of...any native nation of North America as warlike or bellicose dehumanizes and demonizes them. More importantly, it disregards both their culture and history. It reduces them to a single aspect of life, namely war, ignoring the numerous other experiences and activities more valued than war.

Authentic "Indianness" [as personified by sports mascots] is not about historical accuracy or ethnographic validity but rather derives from a reductive logic that suggests that all native Americans are alike, sharing a universal culture and history. It entails a series of erasures.

Even if it is not an inherently negative stereotype (most believe that it is), it is still a stereotype, and a university has the responsibility to provide intellectually appropriate information about Native American societies that reflects their diversity and complexity.

The very idea of university students parading around in traditional Native American clothing during athletics events for the purposes of inspiring sports fans is offensive and degrading to Native Americans...

It is difficult to understand how the heritage of an indigenous people can be appropriately celebrated in the

context of big-time collegiate athletics. It is unlikely that the images of Indians on the sweaters of football cheerleaders and halftime Indian dances honor Native Americans when, almost without exception, these spaces offer little to the lives and interest of most Native Americans.

“Playing Indian”... may be a good time for some, but it does not promote empathy, understanding, or respect. Instead, as fans applaud and enact Indianness, they perpetuate stereotypes, foster spaces of terror, warp social relations, and ultimately injure embodied people, especially Native Americans. ■



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King, C. Richard (2005). *Beyond the Cheers: Race as Spectacle in College Sports*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Sledge, Rob (2005). *It's a Jungle Out There: Mascot Tales from Texas High Schools*. Abilene, TX: State House Press.



C. Richard King

Dr. Richard King serves as Chair of the Department of Comparative Ethnic Studies at Washington State University. He received his PhD in Anthropology from the University of Illinois in 1996. He came to Washington State University after teaching at Drake University in Des Moines for six years. Concentrating research on the racial politics of culture, he has explored the themes of race and racism in the context of expressive culture (museums, tourism, and sports) and political struggles (indigenous activism concerned with representation, naming, and history). More recently, while continuing to think about the Native American mascot controversy, Dr. King has expanded his inquiry into the racialization of sporting worlds, examining on the one hand the rich heritage and lasting significance of athleticism in Native America, while on the other hand interrogating mainstream and extreme accounts of race and sport. Dr. King has written extensively on the changing contours of race in post-Civil Rights America, the colonial legacies and postcolonial predicaments of American culture, and struggles over “Indianness” in public culture. His work has appeared in a variety of journals, such as *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* and *The Journal of Sport and Social Issues*. He is also the author/editor of several books, including *Team Spirits: The Native American Mascot Controversy* (a CHOICE 2001 Outstanding Academic Title) and *Postcolonial America*. He has recently completed *Native American Athletes in Sport and Society* and *The Encyclopedia of Native Americans and Sport*.

Seizing Opportunities

The Quest: An Academic Institution Seeks to Honor Native Americans provided the McMurry community a unique opportunity to learn—from our past, from other universities' experiences, from the perspectives of those we seek to honor, and from the research of academicians. It also provided the opportunity to interact with others to share ideas, develop strategies, brainstorm, and share a common commitment to move forward on a path that will allow us to remember our heritage, to maintain cherished traditions, and to truly honor Native Americans. In his role as a keynote presenter, Dr. Gordon Bronitsky, President of Bronitsky and Associates, encouraged us as a unified body to “honor our Native American heritage in new and powerful ways.” He continued, “[McMurry] can begin to partner with American Indian communities, organizations and institutions to create new spaces in which things happen, in which the power and diversity of American Indian voices can be heard and experienced.” What would such a “space” look like? Calling upon his

expertise in international performing artist management and international cultural programming, Dr. Bronitsky provided the following suggestions:

- Showcase the best American Indian performers and artists of today and the future, in all their diversity, from traditional music and dance to theater, modern dance, music, fashion, film/video, photography, written and spoken word;
- Work with Indian community and institutional partners to train American Indian young people how to run the “space;”
- Introduce American Indian performers and artists to the business of promoting their craft, since many people come from isolated rural and urban communities where this information is difficult, if not impossible, to find; and





- Eventually, serve as a performing arts showcase as well, introducing the best American Indian performers to venues and booking agents from around the world.

Whether or not Dr. Bronitsky’s proposal becomes reality, his ideas provide fodder for future discussion regarding our efforts to position ourselves as a “model institution” for others seeking opportunities to truly honor Native Americans. ■



[MCMURRY] CAN BEGIN TO PARTNER WITH AMERICAN INDIAN COMMUNITIES, ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS TO CREATE NEW SPACES IN WHICH THINGS HAPPEN, IN WHICH THE *power and diversity* OF AMERICAN INDIAN VOICES CAN BE HEARD AND EXPERIENCED.

Stephanie Davidson and Sarah Ashton wait in front of the Delta Beta tipi for children to arrive the Friday of Homecoming.



Dr. Gordon Bronitsky

Dr. Gordon Bronitsky currently serves as President and Founder of Bronitsky and Associates, LLC. A long term resident of Albuquerque, New Mexico, Dr. Bronitsky was trained as an archeologist and anthropologist and received his PhD in anthropology from the University of Arizona in 1977. He served as a professor at Rutgers University (New Jersey), University of Texas of the Permian Basin (Texas) and Virginia Commonwealth University (Virginia). Dr. Bronitsky has also been a Senior Fulbright Professor at the Institut für Historische Ethnologie, Johann-Wolfgang-von-Goethe University, Frankfurt, Germany. Since 1992, Bronitsky and Associates, LLC has been providing quality cultural experiences that inspire, educate and entertain audiences and participants around the world. With offices in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA and Breisach, Germany, they offer professional services in international artist management; international performing arts and cultural presentations; international visual arts and crafts presentations; festival and event feasibility, design and management; and cultural workplace training and performance management. Bronitsky and Associates maintains an active database of over 4,500 artists, performers and cultural organizations from 54 countries. Over the past fifteen years, he has brokered performance opportunities, international tours, exhibitions and trade opportunities for indigenous people and folk artists from every continent.



My "Quest" Perspective

By Dr. Robert Wallace, Professor of Sociology



In his famous "Science as a Vocation" lecture the German sociologist, Max Weber, remarked that, "We want to draw the lesson that nothing is gained by yearning and tarrying alone."

University life is forever failing to benefit from this insight. For instance, in any given year at McMurry we have faculty retreats, discipline

specific lecture series, trustee meetings, convocation and graduation ceremonies, chapel, homecoming, McMurry Student Government meetings, concerts, theatre productions, athletic events, etc. While these occasions are important to our mission, all of them are in some way or another about "yearning and tarrying alone." However, on two days in the middle of March, McMurry celebrated the essence of what it means to be an academic community in a well-planned and coordinated symposium. Faculty, administrators, students, alumni, and trustees came together as never before experienced in my twenty years of teaching here. Time was spent listening to lectures and in turn discussing and commiserating about our Native American tradition or what could be referred to as the "J.W. Hunt Legacy." From my perspective, two observations are given.

The first is related to a point made by the presenter, Dr. William WhiteWolf Fassett, regarding a Native American custom of long range planning that considers the next seven generations. A question during the symposium was posed: "If McMurry were to start today, would we adopt the Indian as our mascot?" The

resounding answer was "no." Because of this greater understanding of the consequences of decisions made by an academic community, it speaks to the need for prudence and vision as we go forward. At this point in time we are given an opportunity to influence the next seven generations.

The other observation is connected to a way forward from an academic point of view. In his lecture, Dr. Richard King discussed the many issues facing universities that have adopted the Indian mascot. The one that stuck with me was the dilemma having to do with the ability of controlling how the image is used, displayed and represented. He offered a slide showing the Florida State University "Seminole" mascot being run over by the University of Tennessee "Volunteer" mascot train. It doesn't take too much imagination to consider how the Seminole was depicted in a most exaggerated and stereotypical manner. This made me think of the many t-shirts created over the years when McMurry has played Hardin-Simmons. This has led me to contemplate ways that we can continue the "J.W. Hunt Legacy," but control its use. From my perspective, the greatest chance to do this takes place within the walls of the classroom.

What can we do on the academic side of things in terms of course development and offerings that link with the first observation of planning for the next seven generations? A committee of various McMurry stakeholders has been created that will grapple with this question as we go forward. Needless to say, we live in interesting times concerning the history and future of McMurry. ■



AT THIS POINT IN TIME WE ARE GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY
TO INFLUENCE THE *next seven generations.*



Evaluating Our Traditions

By Josh Neaves, Senior Multidisciplinary Studies Major from Stephenville and President of McMurry Student Government

When the NCAA decision was made, I was still in high school, and the decision did not affect me. However, when I first came to McMurry and learned of the decision, I felt that the decision was foolish and that schools should be able to keep their “Indian” mascot if they seek to respectfully honor Native Americans.

During my time here, I have been involved in almost all of the Native American traditions on campus including Ko Sari’s tipi raising, making presentations to young children who took tours at Tipi Village, the beating of the drum before the homecoming game, and helping crown Chief and Princess McMurry. I have also been a tribe guide and, as of this year, a co-chief for student orientation. In the past, I have not felt that the traditions were truly honoring or dishonoring Native Americans, but they were simply a routine that was a part of McMurry.

When I was informed that we would be hosting *The Quest*, I felt that it was important that I participate as a student leader on campus. I was impressed with the information that was presented by the speakers, and I learned about other schools and their affiliations with and treatment of Native Americans. As a result, I realized that as a university we do try to honor Native Americans, but could improve some of the activities.

I believe we can improve Tipi Village by ensuring that the information we present to the public is authentic, and I think we should work to respectfully honor Native Americans throughout homecoming. I also think we need to analyze the beating of the drum, as well as titles that we use (Tribe Guides, Chief McMurry, etc.). As a student leader, I believe it is important to maintain traditions, as long as we do so in a respectful manner. Also, if we discuss a new mascot in the future, it is my hope that it would still be tied to our Native American roots. ■





The Integral Role of Academics

By Dr. Jerry Hollingsworth, Professor of Sociology and Chairman of the Native American Symposium Committee and McMurry alumnus '95



For the past year, I have had the distinct privilege of chairing the committee that would put together a Native American Symposium in an attempt to bring an academic discussion to a monumental question facing this University: How should an academic institution honor Native Americans? It also presented an

interesting paradox for me, being a former McMurry graduate, as I understood the deep significance of such an event.

In March 2010, our planning culminated in the presentation of three prominent experts on Native America in a two-day academic symposium. Dr. Richard King, Dr. Gordon Bronitski, and Dr. Thom WhiteWolf Fasset presented significant keynote addresses on Native America. The keynote addresses were immediately followed by intensive small group discussions. Those present in the small group discussions were members of our Board of Trustees, students, alumni, and members of the community. As I monitored the comments of the small groups, I was amazed at the insights and the suggestions made during the event. I was also moved by the speakers and their messages to our University.

One of the key ideas emanating from this

symposium was that academics should play an integral role in our overall strategy to honor Native Americans, and it brought forth a number of interesting possibilities, including building upon one offering that the University already has in place.

For the past four years, the sociology department has been working in cooperation with the Servant Leadership program and Religious Life office to direct a mission/study trip to the Navajo Reservation in the Four Corners area of New Mexico. Each year, students travel to the reservation to work, study, explore and learn more about the Navajo culture. We have attended Navajo high school graduation ceremonies, observed Zuni Pueblo dances and worked in Navajo churches

on the reservation. We have also toured important ancient Native American sites, such as Mesa Verde cliff dwellings and Chaco Canyon Anasazi ruins.

Through this on-going travel project, I've been amazed at how much we learn about the Navajo culture, but also how much more there is to learn about Native American culture in general. Native American culture is extremely diverse, and only through

extensive academic work and education will we be able to understand and truly appreciate the people and their culture. Refining and expanding current academic programming is vitally important in our efforts to educate our campus community and to truly honor our Native American heritage. ■





The Continuing Quest

By Weldon S. Crowley, McMurry University Board of Trustees and McMurry alumnus '57

Since McMurry gave up its institutional identity as “Indian”, we have been in a quandary about what to say about ourselves as we think of the historic relationship we have had with Native American designations. In an attempt to deal with these issues in an academic way, we had a symposium on March 11-12, 2010 with three eminent scholars who addressed our concerns and provided some points for our guidance. Those in attendance were generally heartened and even excited about some of the possibilities they suggested, or envisioned, for us.

From my reading of our proceedings, two intriguing suggestions emerged—one being an Institute on Native American Life and the other a scholar-in-residence who would have, by birth and professional credentials, the soul and wisdom to challenge us as we move ahead. Both of these are excellent suggestions, but they are likely a good ways down the road.

What, if anything, is in the domain of closer and achievable curricular goals? In thinking about this question in light of our symposium, I have formulated some thoughts on topics or questions we might consider:

1. *Origins:* How were the Americas populated? Was the Asian migration across the Bering Straits and subsequent movement south and east an adequate explanation? If so, when and how did the differentiations between groups occur?

2. *Language:* Generally, oral traditions, not written literature, provide insights into the history and customs of American Indians...are those traditions reliable? How do they compare with oral traditions of people in other parts of the world? How does one account for the varieties of spoken language?

3. *Religion:* Before the coming of Christianity, what were the main themes of Native American religion? How did religious understanding differ from region to region? Are vestiges of the earlier religions still extant?

4. *Nature:* Elements of nature were probably tied intimately to religious understanding, but what else was there? Did Indians in the Americas use nature constructively or destructively? How was the use of nature tied to activities of migration?

5. *Civil Rights:* Why were Native Americans not part of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s? Was the history of the Reservation settlements related to this? Is there current progress in civil rights?

6. *Economics:* Is there a Native American middle class? Are the current casino and allied enterprises relevant to this question? Overall, how do Native Americans fare in economic competition?

7. *Education:* Do Indians have adequate educational opportunities that embrace their history and circumstance? Do educational institutions have adequate appreciation of Indian art, music and ritual drama?

These are some of the questions/comments which occurred to me during our symposium. There are, of course, many more, and I am confident that each participant in the meetings has his/her own list. I know that some have suggested using established lectureships at McMurry to bring in Indian scholars, and others have suggested using common readings for first-year students which highlight Native American history and culture in a serious and integrative way. There is also the desire to recruit American Indian students and faculty.

Having spent my career in Academia, I am aware of, and sensitive to, the challenges involved in institutional and curricular change. Addressing such change calls for cooperation and support of all constituencies, and I am confident that such conditions can come into being if we consider seriously some of the attitudes and options presented to us through *The Quest*. ■



A Letter to Our Alumni

By Chris Montoya '00, President of Alumni Association Board of Directors



In the book, *Prexy: James Winford Hunt*, the authors tell a story of how McMurry's founder was influenced by his childhood upbringing among the Kaws Indians. When it came time to name a mascot for McMurry in 1923, Dr. Hunt chose "Indians" to reflect upon that heritage. I did not grow up on an Indian reservation, but McMurry's teaching about Native American culture has had a profound impact on my life.

I was first introduced to McMurry in 1985. I was a kindergarten student at Hamlin Elementary, and I remember taking a field trip to tour Tipi Village. Seeing each social club's tipi and the Native American regalia caused me to have an immediate interest in McMurry. That interest grew when my sisters, Amy '91 and Isabel '95, attended McMurry. When it finally became time for me to choose a college, I knew exactly where I wanted to go.

During my tenure as a student, I learned the history of McMurry and its many traditions. As President of the Alumni Association Board of Directors, I have had the opportunity to meet many of you and learn even more about our University. My memories, along with your stories, enable me to proudly call myself a "McMurry Indian."

I was disappointed in 2006 when the NCAA turned down our appeal to keep our mascot for athletic teams. I believe the materials we sent demonstrated that McMurry seeks to honor and preserve Native American culture. My biggest concern about this decision involved current and future McMurry students.



I WALKED AWAY FROM THIS SYMPOSIUM *feeling refreshed* ABOUT MCMURRY'S OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE.

With this concern lingering in my mind, I was excited when the Board of Trustees personally underwrote *The Quest* held in March. The symposium focused on topics ranging from institutions using Native American imagery to theological issues to social and cultural challenges facing Native Americans. This two-day event not only brought national speakers to our campus, but it also provided a forum for alumni, students, faculty and friends of the University to discuss how prepared we are as an institution in dealing with these important issues.

I walked away from this symposium feeling refreshed about McMurry's opportunities for the future. The speakers provided us with a deeper understanding of Native American culture. They also provided insight and ideas on how we can honor Native Americans throughout the school year, not just at homecoming.

Another lasting impression from the symposium was made by the students. During the discussion sessions, students voiced their concerns about not having a mascot. They believe that not having a mascot to rally around negatively affects their McMurry experience. Knowing how important our mascot was for us, I believe we owe it to the student body to resolve this issue.

I therefore challenge each of you to become engaged in helping McMurry expand its honoring of Native Americans and in selecting a new mascot for our students, while preserving our heritage and traditions. ■



Looking Backwards Toward the Future

By Holland B. Evans Jr., McMurry Board of Trustees and alumnus '66



The McMurry University Board of Trustees was pleased to underwrite the expenses of the Native American symposium entitled *The Quest*, which was held on campus March 11-12, 2010. One of the speakers at the Native American symposium used the title of this article in his remarks

to reflect on the influence of past events on the future.

Since the founding of McMurry University in 1923, Native American culture has profoundly shaped the institution's culture and traditions. Dr. J. W. Hunt, McMurry's founding president, sought to honor Native Americans at McMurry as a direct result of his experience living on the Kaw Reservation in Oklahoma from birth to age six (1875-1881).

Of the many new perspectives presented at the symposium, one stands out for me: "Our country is made up of two distinct groups—Native Americans and immigrants (everyone who is not a Native American)." When the emotion surrounding the mascot issue is factored in, there is much for the trustees of McMurry University to think about regarding how best to honor Native Americans.

Several symposium attendees commented that the broad sharing of viewpoints and the intellectual discussion that ensued is what a university should be about. *The Quest* may be the catalyst for other academic forums in the future. ■



Moving Forward

The McMurry Board of Trustees met on March 13, 2010 and approved a recommendation for President John Russell to form a committee of ten to craft a report and make a recommendation on a mascot for the University. The committee, to be comprised of alumni, trustees, faculty, staff and students, will provide a report to the Board at the October 2010 meeting. In response to the Board directive, a committee has been appointed and will begin meeting in the summer of 2010. In addition, another committee is in place to continue the process of evaluating our traditions and practices as a university to determine if they honor Native American peoples and cultures. While committees move forward with their goals, input is being solicited from students, faculty, administration, alumni and friends of the University. Interested individuals are invited to visit the McMurry website at www.mcm.edu to become better informed on the issues and to share their perspectives.



Next Steps on the Path to Honor

By Dr. John Russell, President of McMurry University

As I reflect on the more interesting challenges faced during my eight years as McMurry's president, none approach the complexity of navigating through the "Indian Issues" as some have termed it. Among the early communications—contained in the first five email messages in my inbox—when I drove into town on a Saturday afternoon in August 2002 was an urgent request for guidance: "Should the contractor remove the word 'Indians' from the floor of Kimbrell Arena? We need to know *now* because he'll be here early Monday morning."

What had I gotten into? I'm still learning what I'd gotten into...

In the eight years since that arrival weekend, I've engaged with you on the "Indian Issues" and drawn strength from the passion that McMurry's alumni, friends and students have for these issues, and *all* elements of the McMurry Experience. In a similar fashion, I've wrestled with the "Indian Issues" and how they are manifested to the community in which McMurry operates. NCAA sanctions and appeals, and United Methodist Church restrictions notwithstanding, the journey we've taken has been a learning experience for the entire McMurry Family. And that journey continues.

Through its support and financial underwriting of the recent symposium, McMurry's Board of Trustees is invested in our successful journey down a Path to Honor. The Board has directed that we develop a strategy for addressing the mascot issue, guided by our love for McMurry and the insight we've gained since the October 2006 Board decision to discontinue the use of the Indian mascot. Better armed with perspectives gained from *The Quest*, the Board wants us to ensure that the activities and themes that are part of our campus incorporate the intellectual honesty expected of an institution of higher education. And for a university affiliated with the United Methodist Church, those same activities and themes need



to reinforce our commitment to the human dignity of all God's people. We will do both.

We're on a journey, defined by excitement and growth within the McMurry Family. Growth in every sense of the word—we'll grow as individuals and as an institution. Excitement because of the potential—we'll realize new potential as individuals and as a university committed to the respectful valuation and celebration of our individual differences. Moving Forward...*Paths to Honor*. ■



Cherish the Past, Embrace the Future

By Dan E. Solomon '58, Bishop in Residence



When I was a little boy, a friend loaned me a toy (which he actually had borrowed from one of his friends). I kept the toy for so long that I soon felt very possessive about it, so much so that I was somewhat resistant and defensive when he asked for it back at the urging of its rightful owner.

As I listened to the speakers in the Native American symposium, I came to the realization that the name “Indians” was something Dr. J. W. Hunt loaned to McMurry, though he did not own it.

Being a graduate of McMurry, I am steeped in McMurry traditions. One of our most important traditions is Tipi Village. Regardless of the presence or absence of a mascot, Tipi Village will continue to afford us the opportunity to demonstrate our respect and appreciation for Native Americans through this wonderful

expression of historical preservation.

Some campus practices and traditions need to be amended in keeping with our stated desire to be a community of respect. Often we have little or no institutional memory as to why we do certain things. In fact, when I returned to McMurry, specific “ancient traditions” did not even exist when I was a student. Participating in the Native American symposium challenged me to set aside my preferences for the sake of listening to, learning from, and walking with my Native American sisters and brothers.

Now is the time to return a name that was loaned to us. In no way will this result in the diminishing of the rich memories of prior years. Parting with a cherished name does not have to mean parting with a cherished experience. We can cherish the past, even as we embrace the future. ■



PARTING WITH A *cherished name* DOES NOT HAVE
TO MEAN PARTING WITH A CHERISHED EXPERIENCE.



WHAT'S *Your* PERSPECTIVE?

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www.mcm.edu/thequest/



A Change of Heart and Mind

By Dr. Pug Parris, Professor of Physical Education and McMurry graduate '73



Since I first came to McMurry, entering as a freshman in the fall of 1969, I have loved the traditions of McMurry. I felt almost giddy as I saw my first Tipi Village. I loved the rituals of the opening ceremony at homecoming, and I think my own heart beats to the Ala Cumba rhythm I have clapped for years.

When the NCAA denied McMurry's appeal to keep our Indian mascot, I was not pleased. I felt the denial was arbitrary and the NCAA was picking on the smaller Division III schools, while avoiding legal conflicts with large Division I universities and their alumni. I did not want to drop the mascot; I truly felt we were honoring Native Americans with our mascot and traditions. I shared a somewhat defiant attitude with many of my close McMurry friends—if we can't be Indians we won't be anything at all!

I have supported McMurry teams named Indians for over 40 years. Largely out of habit, and partially out of spite, I continued to yell "Go, Indians!" at games during the recent no-mascot years. I remember the quick retort I gave when a Hardin-Simmons fan at a cross-town rivalry contest turned to me and said: "You can't say that anymore." "Who's gonna stop me?" I replied. "I have a First Amendment right to freedom of speech." I knew the NCAA had no jurisdiction over me; their control only extended to the teams, especially in regard to play-offs. I continued as a McMurry Indian!

In the midst of *The Quest* session on Friday evening, March 12, I had a change of heart and mind.

By chance, I sat at a table with Abby Austin, the wife of a McMurry alum, who saw *The Quest* brochure at her home in Rochester and was intrigued by the topic.

Abby is Navajo. Throughout the evening, I used her as a gauge for reason as I battled through the emotional issues of stereotyping that Native American mascots create. Somewhere during Dr. Richard King's presentation, I got it! I understood how opponents can slander and defile a group of people. I understood how it is impossible for non-Native Americans to comprehend the sacredness of rituals that McMurry mascot loyalists perform methodically.

If we truly wish to honor Dr. James W. Hunt, I think there's one custom that needs to be continued, and another one started. I fervently hope Tipi Village will be elevated to a higher place of prominence by our student leaders. I see no harm in the custom, provided students diligently maintain historical accuracy and seek to learn even more about their chosen tribe. In recent years, the display has focused only on the tipi, with lesser emphasis on the actual plot. In bygone days there was an emphasis to show the lifestyle of the representative tribe with artifacts and implements around the tipi including brush arbors, hides, travois, horses, and even makeshift corn fields.

James W. Hunt was an energetic man who used his God-given intellect to develop a plan for this place called McMurry. Decades of students have learned from the McMurry Experience. Forged friendships, life lessons, and an education provided by faculty and staff who believed in the mission of this Methodist school have bound us together as McMurry alumni. The mascot is not McMurry; McMurry is not a mascot. The McMurry community can honor James W. Hunt—and the wishes of many of our current students who desperately want an official nickname—by adopting a new mascot.

But please, no four-legged furry things! Let's find a mystic symbol to portray something worthy of the McMurry Experience. ■



Random Thoughts...

(Transcribed from handwritten notes at *The Quest* table discussions)

...on honoring Native Americans.

Can you uphold honor, but also have fun and include traditions that students have been familiar with?

McMurry needs to understand personal identity over the identity of a culture to which we are not a part.

Generation after generation continues to play out the first stereotypes. We move further and further from actual reality. Once stereotypes are repeated enough, they become fact.

McMurry as an academic institution has a responsibility to everyone, not just Native Americans.

Colleges should hold themselves to a higher standard in educating their students. We should challenge ourselves to look for teachable moments.

Develop a mission statement to honor Native Americans and ask for input in writing.

...on social clubs.

The fact that a social club will make Indian regalia a part of their uniforms is not true to history. If Indian connections go away, do social clubs eventually go away?

Social clubs should partner with, and be mentored by, the tribes they represent at Tipi Village. Rebuild Tipi Village if necessary.

If McMurry partnered with just one tribe, it would lose sight of the tribal communities connected with social clubs. There would be the direct focus on the tribe chosen.

...on relationship-building.

We should ask Native Americans what we are specifically doing to offend Native Americans.

We should have a Native American advisor on campus.

We should invite tribal councils to campus and approach tribal leaders to speak at McMurry.

Interact with tribes and show respect. Show presence at tribal events. We have to learn to interact with tribes on their level.

We should seek counsel from Native American tribes and other entities who have already gone through this process.

...on mascots.

Whether mascots enhance or limit peoples' understanding of Native American culture depends on the people and how they respect the tradition of that tribe.

Just because a tribe signs off on using an "Indian" mascot, it doesn't make it OK for a school to use it.

Is the lack of control over fans' use of the mascot powerful enough of a consequence to halt the use?

It is possible to honor the Native American culture, but it is easy to fall into dishonoring people.

Mascots do not enhance culture. A mascot does not incorporate such things as art or history.

Mascots serve a different purpose than academia; they provide identity and a sense of community.

We have little control over an image, but if you have no image, you have even less control.

If you get away from the mascot, how do you archive and preserve Indian culture?

...on event programming.

Host a folk festival, a Native American science symposium, or music, dance or drama performances by Native Americans.

A spring event or performance would be an ideal way to honor Native Americans. Our traditional homecoming would be fine with a separate spring event.

Homecoming is like a pow-wow; we can invite tribes to make it an actual pow-wow; though expensive, we can showcase the best singers and dancers.

Maybe McMurry should consider a multicultural week to teach separate from homecoming.

Share your own thoughts at www.mcm.edu/thequest/

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