



Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma

P.O. Box 110 Miami, OK 74355

Statement From the Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma Concerning Ottawa University's Nickname and Mascot

The tribe is aware that questions, objections and calls to end the use of Indian or Native American themed mascots and names persist, and periodically, Ottawa University's use of such may be discussed. The tribe appreciates that the university, founded under the direction and benevolence and named after the tribe, is not only sensitive to this, but is respectful and proactive in upholding every tenet of the treaty between it and the tribe.

The tribe supports Ottawa University's use of the nickname "Braves," the river otter as its mascot, and the appearance of Giego at select university events. The uses are monitored, periodically reviewed, and supported by our Tribal Council.

Ottawa University became known as the Ottawa Braves in November 1922, and since then, the Ottawa Tribe has affirmed its continual use. The tribe believes that Ottawa University in Kansas should continue to be referred to as the Braves. The University actively collaborates and follows the guidance of the tribe in all such matters that include convocations, seminars, experiential learning activities and history lessons and tours, ceremonies and ceremonial attire, and the appearance of Giego, the portrayal of the "Spirit of the Brave" to lead processions at select ceremonies held at the University. This role of Giego is reserved exclusively for a member of the Ottawa Tribe enrolled as a student at the university. Giego's ceremonial costume has been provided by the tribe.

The river otter is the sacred animal of the Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma. With the blessing of the tribe and the student body, this was adopted as the university's mascot and named Gibby in 1999. The tribe and the university work together. The tribe notes and is pleased that as custodians of that which is sacred to us, Ottawa University has endeavored to preserve the practices and trust of the Ottawa Tribe while recognizing that across the nation some organizations and institutions who do not share such a historic connection have caused offence.

Naturally and because of this, questions about Ottawa University's use, especially from those unaware of its affiliation and inseparable bond with the tribe, may arise. The tribe requests that anyone seeking further understanding about these issues and Ottawa University's rich history with the tribe, should contact the Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma's headquarters by phone at 918-540-1536 or by email at adawe.oto@gmail.com.

Ethel E. Cook
Chief