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### The Missing Mascot: A Review for In Whose Honor

Is it stereotype or inspiration? Is it discrimination or respect? Is it destruction or revival? People frequently ask these questions when discussing how others and themselves use cultural elements in all kinds of “mainstream” activities, including fashion designs, commercial logos, and school mascots. Moreover, universities without mascots are rare in the States because they need symbols to love, share, and being spiritually connected. As a result, why doesn't our university, a significant member of the Big Ten with thousands of students from different backgrounds, have our own symbol?

Actually, we had one, but it was discarded for a better reason.

The documentary movie, *In Whose Honor*, showcases and reflects the controversy about “Chief Illiniwek,” the former mascot of UIUC, taken place in 1989. While the universities, including UIUC, showing their “honor” toward Native American Indians and their culture through mascot with Indian elements, the Native Americans were feeling being hurt. The main character of *In Whose Honor* is Charlene Teters, a Native American and a mother of two, who, as the movie indicates, dares to speak out after watching a UIUC basketball game and feeling her daughter are “belittled”. She chooses to fight for her people through protesting by herself. At first, she is attacked, insulted, and even the

security of her family is threatened. However, she doesn't retreat and her endeavor finally calls attention from the mainstream media and Native American associations. UIUC faces great pressure from both the society and other Big Ten schools (*In Whose Honor*).

The cinematography is remarkable. There is no "actor" in the movie but interviews of actual people relate to the incident expressing their point of views. The movie itself is a meticulously formatted argument. I, sincerely, didn't get the point of Charlene Teters' aggressive reaction at first: apparently, the school and the students were not mocking at Native American, instead, they were showing their loves toward the culture. The director, Jay Rosenstein, anticipates the doubts from audiences, and offers counter arguments through editing raw materials. For example, the editor presents the interview of the last "Chief" himself to show how some people firmly believe that the mascot is a serious cultural tradition for the university and its alumnus, the dance is performed with respect, and the audiences don't have offensive behaviors (*In Whose Honor*). However, the scene of audiences doing inappropriate behaviors and the emotional words from Charlene Teters inserted right after the "Chief's" interview makes a strong irony as the counterargument.

The music also performances an important role in the movie. It, for example, reinforces the arguments through contrasting the actual Indian music beats and the music performed by the university orchestra. Furthermore, music also performs as a narrator — at the end of the movie, the consequences of Charlene Teters' protest are shown in slides of white words against black backgrounds. The slides are dull; however, with the music in the genre of Indian music, the slides triggers strong empathy.

Works Cited

*In Whose Honor*. Jay Rosenstein, New Day Films, 1997.