



November 4, 2019

The Honorable Muriel Bowser
Mayor, District of Columbia
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mayor Bowser:

Rebrand Washington Football (RWF), a grassroots group advocating that the professional Washington football team change its name, has a deal for you. RWF will fund the removal of the George Preston Marshall monument that stands in the front entrance to RFK stadium.

George Preston Marshall was an avowed segregationist whose statute reminds us of the sad legacies of Jim Crow and genocide of Native Americans. Just as with statues paying homage to Confederate generals, it is time for Mr. Marshall's monument to come down.

RWF has no budget and is run as a volunteer group. The funding for the removal of the monument will come directly from the personal finances of the co-founders of RWF. RFK stadium will be demolished soon, so we are offering the District assistance in this project by paying for the removal of the monument.

In *Showdown, JFK and the Integration of the Washington R-skins*, Thomas G. Smith makes it clear that George Preston Marshall (GPM), the first owner of the team, was an unrepentant bigot whose name for the team had nothing to do with honoring Native Americans but everything to do with pandering to the prejudices of a white fan base.

In the early years, when GPM's team played in Boston, the first coach was Lone Star Dietz, a shady character that may or may not have been Native American. Smith states, "Marshall promptly played on Dietz's Indian ancestry to entertain fans. Not only did he hire a Native American coach and recruit four Indian players..., he required Dietz and the players to wear Indian feathers and war paint before home games."

One of GPM's former players, Cliff Battles states, "In the thirties, we would, at the urging of George, put on war paint before a game and do a little Indian dance to entertain the customers. None of us liked it very much. The showmanship was so overdone, it was embarrassing."

In addition to exploiting Native Americans and their traditions, Mr. Marshall was the last NFL owner to integrate his team in 1962. He was forced to do so by the Kennedy Administration who would not allow Marshall to lease the land beneath the stadium, then known as DC Stadium, unless he integrated his team. His bigotry did not end with this episode. When he wrote his will, he established the R-skins Foundation and stipulated the Foundation "shall never use, contribute



or apply its money or property for any purpose which supports or employs the principle of racial integration in any form.” The foundation was to help disadvantaged children and a court voided the anti-integration clause after GPM’s death.

GPM’s legacy is a dishonor to Native Americans, African-Americans, and all the citizens of the District of Columbia. His monument must no longer soil the ground on which it stands, which is the ancestral home of the Piscataway nation. At no taxpayer expense, RWF offers to relieve the city of this ugly past. Jim Crow and genocide must no longer literally stand on sacred ground.

We hope you take us up on our offer. Please contact us via rebrandwf@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Ian Washburn
Arlington, VA

Josh Silver
Bethesda, MD

Bill Mosley
District of Columbia