



Q&A: A History of an Anishinabe Family; The Whitepigeons of Holland

- 1. Holland has a statue for the Dutch immigrants in Kollen Park. Is there anything in the city to commemorate the native tribes of the area?**

To my knowledge No there is not a memorial or any monument in Holland honoring Indigenous people.

- 2. I recently learned about Real Rent Duwamish in Seattle (www.realrentduwamish.org), where people pay “rent” to the local tribe, which seems like a form of reparations to me. Is there anything like this for the tribes in this region (thinking mostly about the Tribes of the Three Fires)?**

The tribes in Michigan pay a percentage of their casino revenue to the local and state governments part of their gaming compact. Some tribes have a sales tax at the tribally owned businesses that replaces the state sales tax paid by tribal members. If someone rents a house or an apartment owned by the tribe then they pay rent to the tribe and this is not any form of reparations for the stolen lands, loss of life, and cultural genocide of our Anishinabe Nations.

- 3. Was the Religious Freedom Act a statewide or national law? If national, was there any other key elected representatives, (other than Senator Carl Levin) who was instrumental in getting that accomplished?**

1978 Native American Freedom of Religion is at the national level. It provides the opportunity for our religion to be sanctioned and certified as legitimate under its own terms and our traditions/laws be protected the same as any other church.

The Congregation, Four Councils, Howard La Hurreau, Edward Whitepigeon, Jerome Whitepigeon along with Senator Carl Levin were all essential participants in the Midewewin Mide Widjig gaining the federal and state recognition and certification.

- 3. Please share your thoughts about the mascot changes that have been occurring recently.**

My personal opinion, the mascot issue has been an ongoing issue that at times divides our Anishinabe community. Some people find offense while others don't. I do find it offensive to belittle and mock our Indigenous people. It is not the way I was raised to honor anything God made. The image portrayed by these mascots leaves a misconception that Indian people are disconnected from the past as if we don't really exist and it perpetuates the Hollywood image that is in fact disrespectful to our long history going back before these sport teams even existed. If society wants to honor our Anishinabe people then schools should teach the truth about our Indigenous people's history more than one chapter or one month a year. In most towns and cities here in Michigan we have several streets named after our Anishinabe Ancestors. It would honor those Ancestors and their descendants to have their history shared so that society today knows the truth and how to show honor and respect.