



Matthew B. Johnson, Ph.D., Eastern Region Representative
Rukiya King, Graduate Student Assistant

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For more information contact: Matthew B. Johnson, Ph.D. mjohnson@jjay.cuny.edu (862) 216-4235.

Association of Black Psychologists opposes the racist name of DC football team

The National Board of the Association of Black Psychologists released a statement in solidarity with the National Congress of American Indians opposition to the racist name of the Washington, DC professional football team. The statement declares, “We recognize the term Redsk*ns is an offensive, racist, and culturally aggressive slur derived from the history of violence and genocide against Native American and First Nations peoples”. The statement also indicated the Association of Black Psychologists would conduct community education in Black and other communities to raise awareness of the racist implications of the term Redsk*ns as well as other harmful Indian sports mascots. Dr. Matthew B. Johnson, Eastern Region Representative of the Association of Black Psychologists, noted “Redsk*ns is not an innocent or inconsequential term. It is rooted in the practice among white settlers of killing native people for bounties paid by European companies, colonial, and certain state governments. Upon delivery of the ‘redsk*n’, the settler would receive a payment”. Dr. Johnson stated the Association of Black Psychologists is committed to combating white racism in all of its derivative forms. He stated tolerance of the Redsk*ns name is an example of how widely accepted white racist notions remain noting, “The public would immediately find a team named the ‘Washington Rednecks’ to be offensive”.

Dr. Johnson reported he is encouraged by the growing momentum against the name of the DC football team. He pointed out in June the US Patents and Trademarks Office cancelled the team’s trademark in response to suits by Native American activists. The *Washington Post* also reported (8/20/14) African-American NFL referee, Mike Carey, has not participated Washington games since 2006 due to his opposition of the name. In an (8/22/14) editorial the *Washington Post* announced it would no longer use the Redsk*n name. Dr. Johnson stated much of the momentum is due to the heroic efforts of Washington, DC pastor, the Reverend Graylan S. Hagler from the Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ. Rev. Hagler has been preaching to his congregation, and the community, about the offensive implications of the R-word and the N-word for more than 20 years.

The Association of Black Psychologists (www.abpsi.org/) was founded by Black psychologists in 1968 to address the mental health and related needs within Black communities. The Association of Black Psychologists provides training and support services for professional and student Black Psychologists and also a range of advocacy services for African descent communities in the US and internationally. The Association of Black Psychologists’ national offices are located in Ft. Washington, Maryland. The current President is Taasogle Daryl Rowe, Ph.D. at Pepperdine University in California.

The 7-part statement released by the Association of Black Psychologists is as follows,

1) The Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi) was founded in 1968 by Black Psychologists, guided by the principle of self-determination, to address social problems affecting the Black community and other segments of the population whose needs society has not fulfilled.

2) Our purpose includes developing programs whereby Black Psychologists can assist in solving problems of Black communities and other ethnic groups.

3) People of African-Ancestry share with Native Americans, Alaskans, Hawaiians, Asians, Latinos and others a history of being referred to by racial epithets and racist labels.

4) We assert our support and solidarity with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and others in the struggle against racism and cultural aggression.

5) We fully support the letter and spirit of the NCAI (2013) position paper 'Ending the Legacy of Racism in Sports & the Era of Harmful "Indian" Sports Mascots'.

6) We recognize the term Redsk*ns is an offensive, racist, and culturally aggressive slur derived from the history of violence and genocide against Native American and First Nations peoples.

7) The ABPsi National Board will campaign against the use of the Redsk*n language through our National Office as well as our local chapters. We will campaign against the use of all harmful "Indian" sports mascots and language. We will join with other organizations and groups in a campaign of community education in Black and other communities.