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We understand that many people feel attached to the tradition of "chief illiniwek," but we live in a different era than when the 'chief' was initiated.

The practice of racial masquerade now belongs to the past. To continue racial masquerade is to perpetuate misinformation and a stereotype of Indian people. Racial stereotypes go against the goals of a great university by miseducating the university community. Stereotypes often feel hurtful to the people whose culture they misrepresent.

American Indian peoples have spoken out for many years about the harmful effects of the University of Illinois's mascot. The Native American House and American Indian Studies Program are pleased that future generations will not be subjected to the caricature and to the performance of 'chief illiniwek,' which we see as a caricature and misrepresentation of actual Indian people.

We hope that students and community members who wish to honor and remember indigenous peoples will do so by learning about actual Indian people, not fantasies of what uninformed non-Indians suppose that Indians are like. One way to learn about actual Indian people would be to attend NAH events and to enroll in AIS courses.