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What's in a name? In this case: racism

Maureen Fiedler | Oct. 28, 2013 NCR Today

I am delighted to see that the name of our professional football team in Washington, D.C., is being challenged once again for its use of racist terminology. I've been in favor of changing the name for as long as I can remember. You may have guessed it: that team is the Washington Redskins.

Its name is long overdue for a change. And now, opposition is mounting by the day. On Thursday, Washington *Post* columnist Eugene Robinson explained the racist origins of the name [1].

He began by noting that some sport enthusiasts defend the name (and others like Braves, Chiefs and Seminoles) as an attempt to pay homage to Native American "fierceness and bravery." But that doesn't hold water, at least when it comes to the Washington team, he writes.

The owner who changed the team's name from Braves to Redskins in 1933 was one George Preston Marshall. He was an avowed racist who did not hire an African-American player until 1962, when then Interior Secretary Stewart Udall threatened to deny the team the use of the local stadium unless it integrated. That stadium was later named RFK Stadium.

The current owner, Dan Synder, says the name will "never" change. Well, never can sometimes be very short when the pressure mounts.

President Barack Obama, Mayor Vincent Gray of Washington and even conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer have recently spoken against this name. Perhaps it is time for religious leaders to weigh in. Cardinal Donald Wuerl, how about it?

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[1] http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/eugene-robinson-hail-to-the-washingtons/2013/10/24/0a5c0418-3cd4-11e3-b7ba-503fb5822c3e_story.html