

4-1-2012

## The Last Warrior

Jake Albers  
*Marquette University*

Zachary Baldauf  
*Marquette University*

Jennifer Berzin  
*Marquette University*

Kimberly Kluge  
*Marquette University*

Margaret McClain  
*Marquette University*

*See next page for additional authors*

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A four-panel exhibit on the Marquette Warrior nickname and mascots.

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**Authors**

Jake Albers, Zachary Baldauf, Jennifer Berzin, Kimberly Kluge, Margaret McClain, Frank Reynolds, Nicholas Schad, Amanda Scott, Katie Steffan, Emily Swenson, Elizabeth Wyns, Abigail Bourman, and Aaron Hyams



# The Last Warrior

## Our Warrior

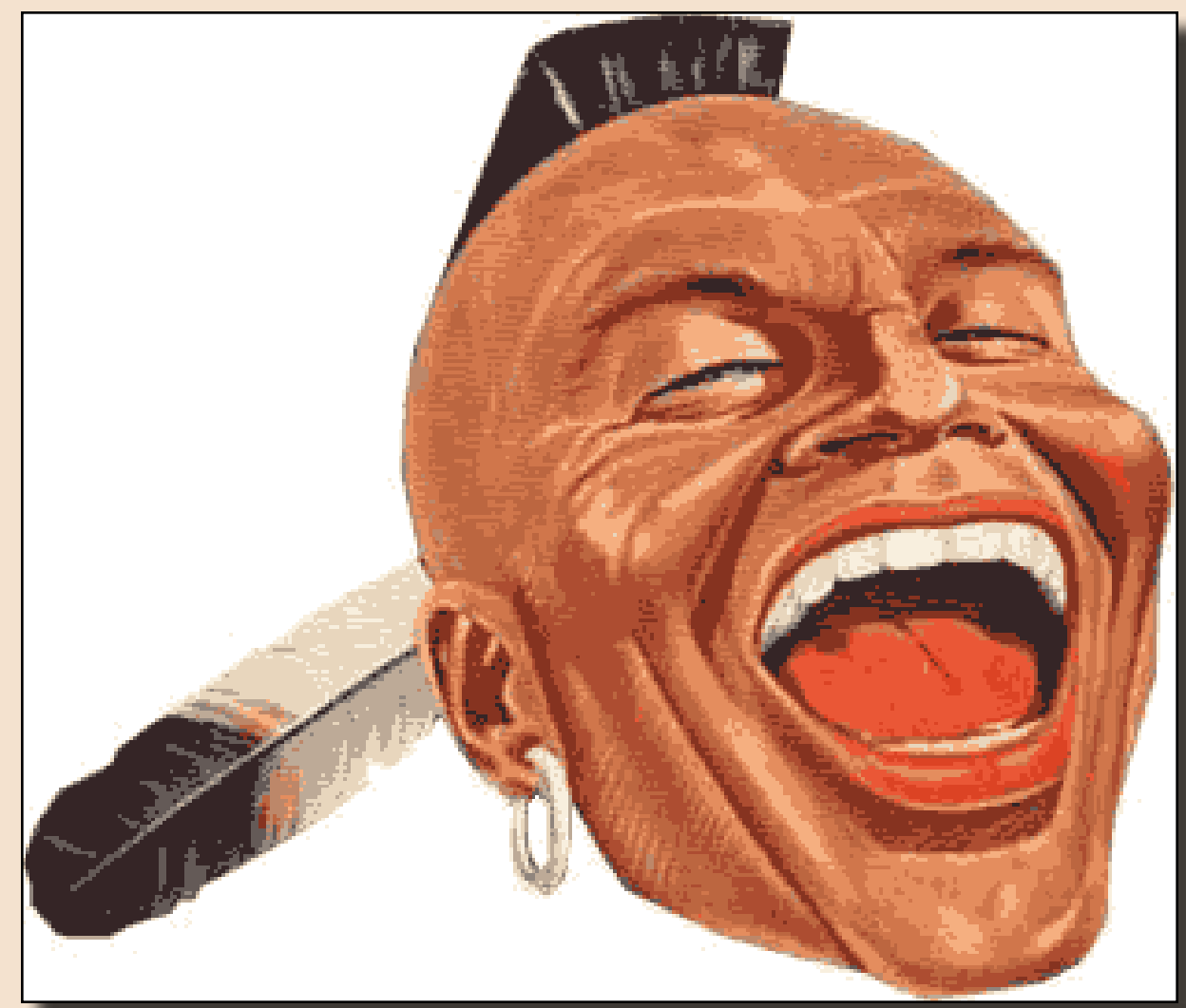


Image courtesy of [dynastyleaguebaseball.mlblogs.com](http://dynastyleaguebaseball.mlblogs.com)

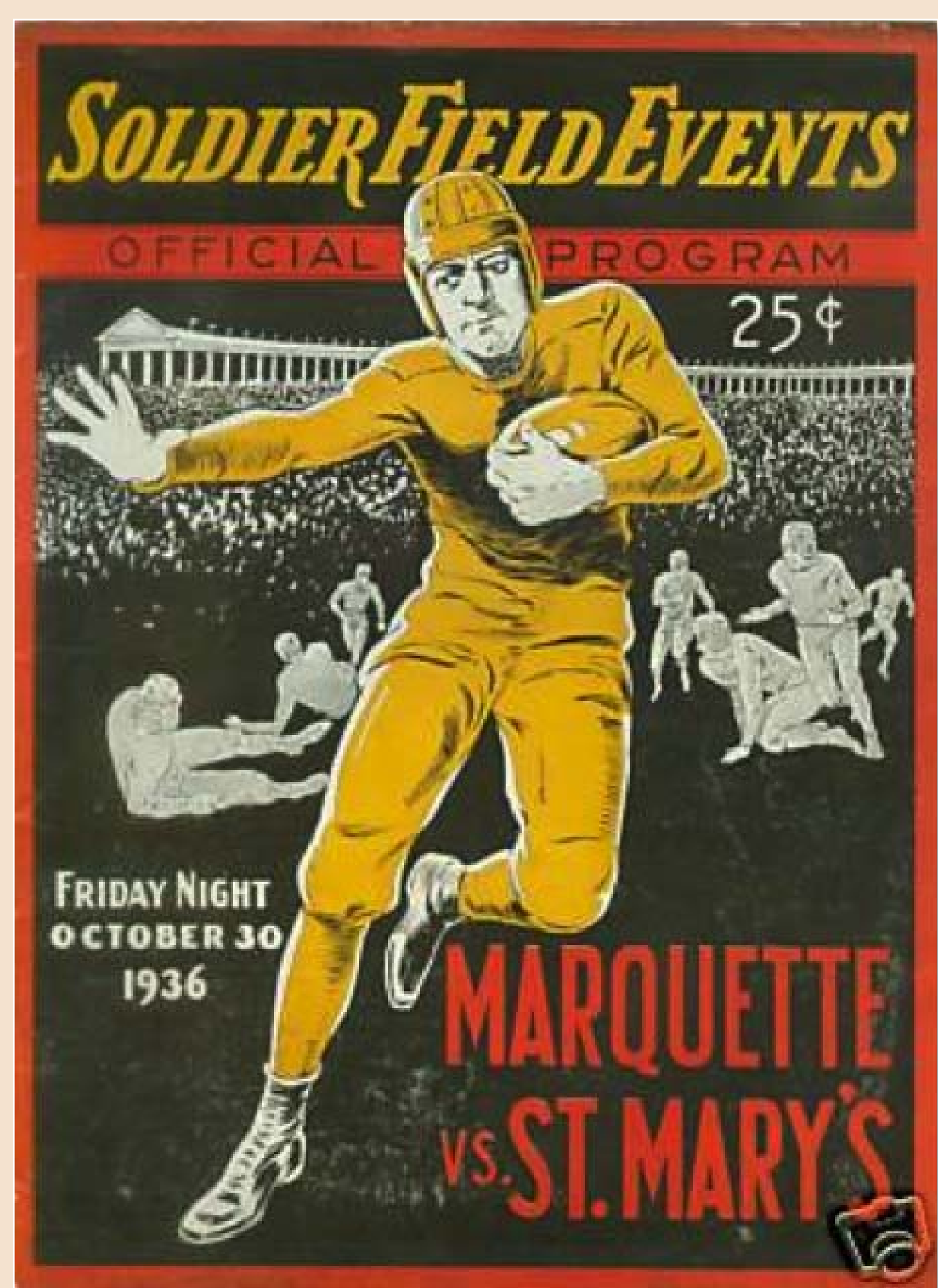


Image courtesy of [wiki.muscoop.com](http://wiki.muscoop.com)

Before 1954, Marquette University teams were known unofficially as the *Hilltoppers* and the *Golden Avalanche*. Marquette's location on the crest of a bluff overlooking the city inspired the nickname *Hilltoppers*. A New York reporter coined the nickname the *Golden Avalanche* for Marquette's football team following its successful 1936-37 season when they played Texas Christian University in the Cotton Bowl. As the football team's success diminished, students became dissatisfied with the nicknames and began looking for a new identity.

The Student Senate recommended *Warriors* as a new nickname on May 13, 1954. The students chose this name for three main reasons. The University's official seal, featuring Father Marquette in a canoe with an American Indian guide, provided the connection to local tribes. Marquette's positive relationship with American Indians also influenced the students' decision to depict an Indian as their warrior. Students hoped that the new name would complement the other Milwaukee sports teams. Milwaukee's major league baseball team the *Braves*, the NBA team the *Hawks*, and the local hockey team the *Chiefs*, all served as an inspiration for the Marquette *Warriors*.



Image courtesy of [wikipedia.com](http://wikipedia.com)



Above left: The Milwaukee Braves mascot served as one inspiration for the Marquette nickname change; the *Golden Avalanche* no longer seemed a proper nickname for the school as the football program began to dwindle. Above right: Fr. Marquette tours the Wisconsin region with help from Native Americans; Milwaukee's minor league hockey team, the *Chiefs*, served as another in-town inspiration for the change to *Warrior*. Left: The Marquette Student Senate for the 1954-1955 academic year.



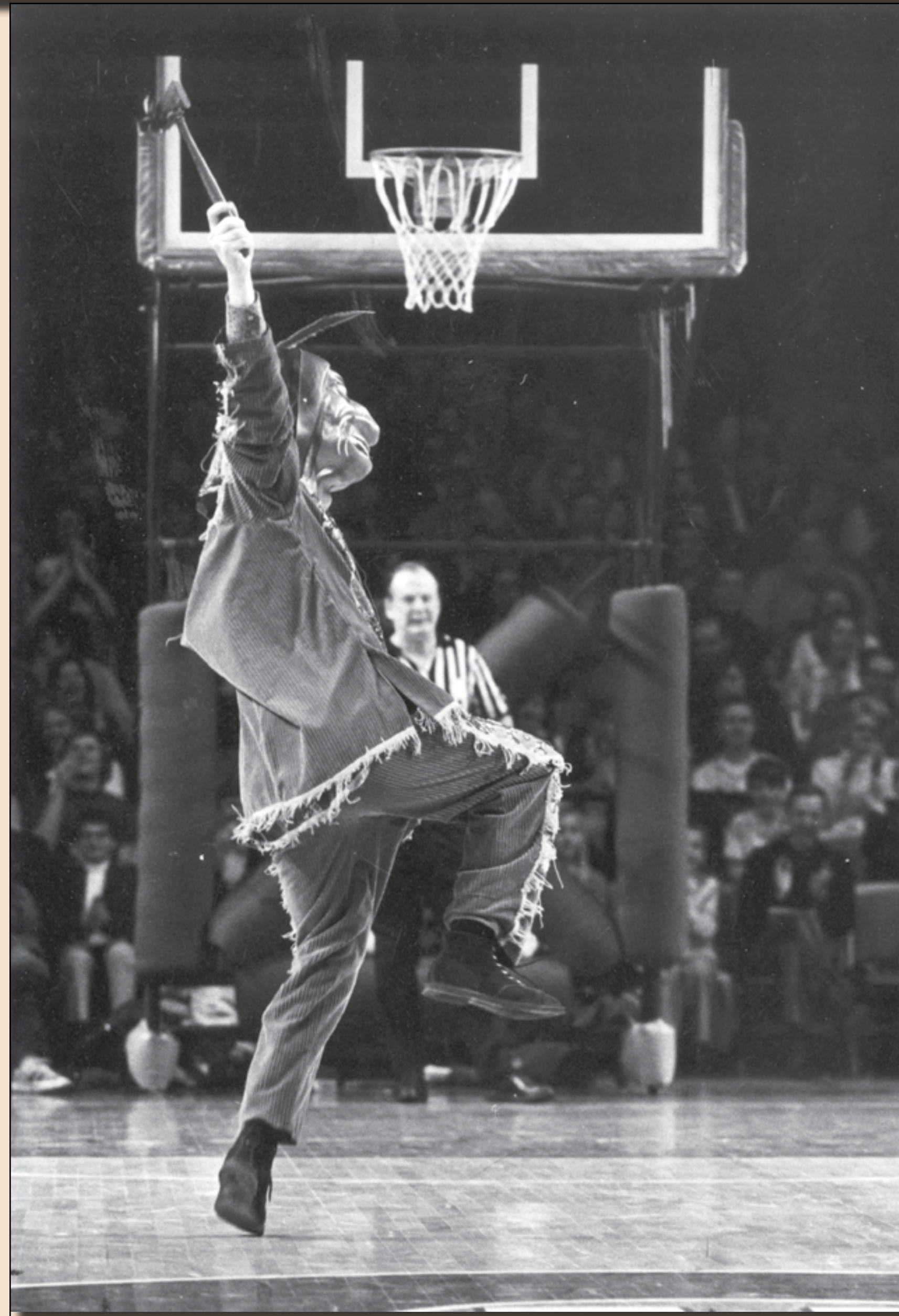
# The Last Warrior

## *Perfecting the Image*

Marquette students sought a face to embody the new name. Patrick Bucket, a Marquette student and local television personality, appeared as *Chief White Buck* in Marquette's 1954 Homecoming Parade. Clad in a traditional headdress and Plains Indian attire, *White Buck* led students in dances and appeared as a representative to the local media. While the new nickname flourished in depictions such as *Whoosh the Warrior*, the search continued for an appropriate mascot to appear at sporting events. In January of 1961, the University held a "Name the Warrior" contest that offered a \$5 prize for the student who submitted the best name for the new mascot.



*Pat Bucket as Chief White Buck*



*Willie Wampum served well to encourage school spirit and excite the crowd at sporting events. However, the exaggerated and inaccurate image offended the Native Americans at Marquette and across the country.*

The Student Senate selected *Willie Wampum* as Marquette's new warrior. With a tomahawk and a papier-mâché headdress, *Willie Wampum* represented a stereotypical Indian. His purpose was to foster greater school spirit at basketball games and he proved to be successful. In December 1970, world-renowned Native American ballerina, Maria Tallchief, quietly informed President John Raynor, S.J., that *Willie Wampum* was offensive to some area tribes. In response to new cultural sensitivities, the Student Senate voted to retire *Willie Wampum*. The search for a more respectful representation of the *Warrior* began.



*Maria Tallchief, a prominent ballerina in the 1940s and 1950s, brought the matter of Willie Wampum's offensiveness to the attention of Fr. Raynor. Image courtesy of swiga.com*



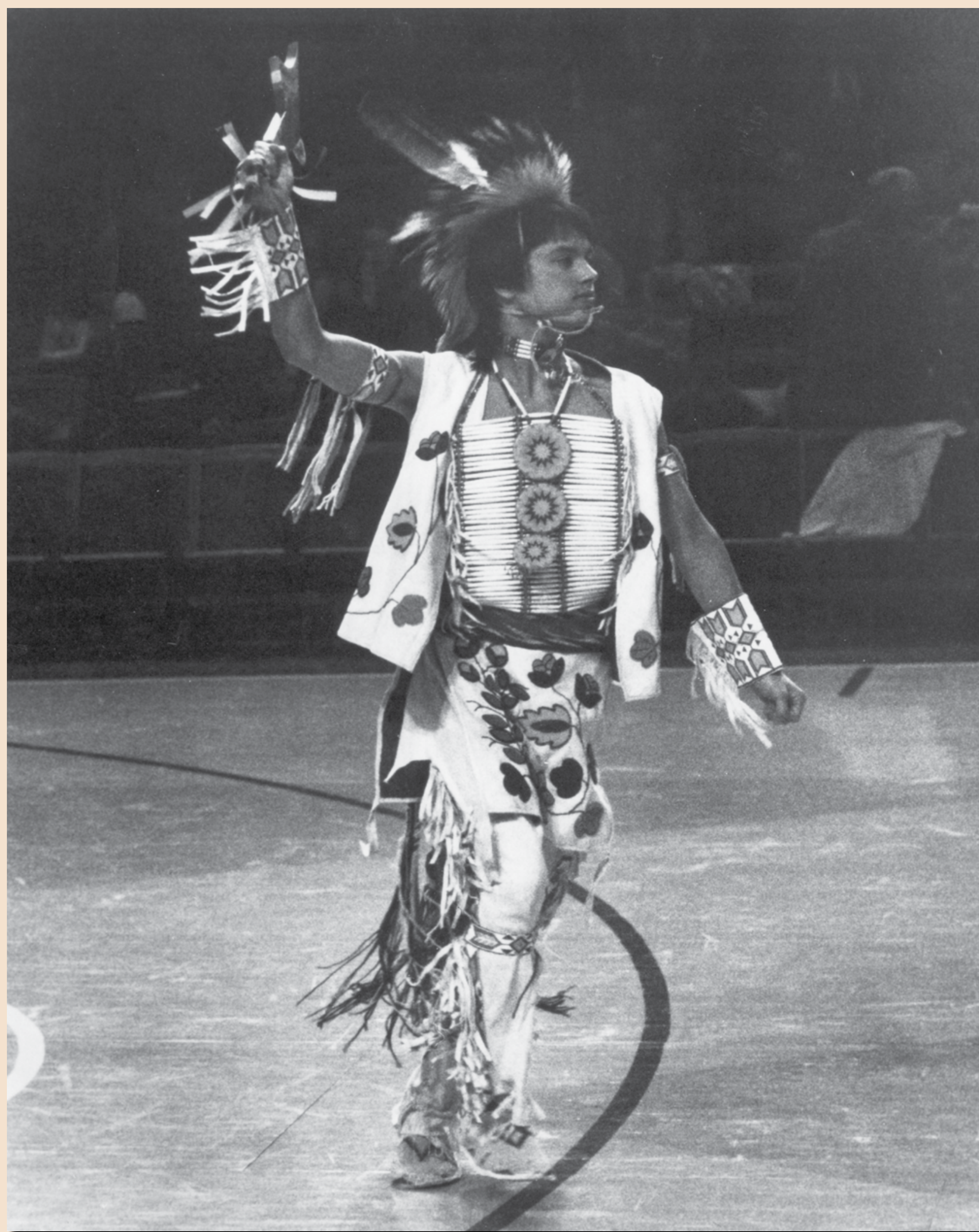
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## *First Warrior*

A group of Native American students with a novel idea approached Dr. James Scott, Vice President of Student Affairs, in 1976. They proposed the *First Warrior* as a culturally sensitive American Indian icon to represent Marquette at sporting events. Their purpose was to educate about Native culture as well as represent the University. The Student Senate supported the idea and the *First Warrior* debuted on February 10, 1980, at the Marquette/Duke basketball game. There were strict rules governing the behavior and selection of the *First Warrior*; the individual had to be of Native descent and was expected to behave with dignity in interactions with the audience and other mascots. According to Mark Denning, an Oneida and the second student to portray the *First Warrior*, the excitement centered around “getting a shot to represent ourselves.” However, the effort to combine cultural education with sporting events was unsuccessful. At a game against University of Wisconsin - Madison, the notoriously fun-loving *Bucky Badger* failed to engage the *First Warrior* in typical mascot play. Instead, students and alumni treated the solemn cultural dances with considerable disdain, even uttering racial taunts and slurs. Unfortunately, the *First Warrior* could not fill the shoes left by *Willie Wampum*.



*The First Warrior was meant to serve as a symbol for the university rather than a mascot. However, the message got lost in translation at basketball games, and the First Warrior was retired soon after its inception.*





# The Last Warrior

## *Retiring the Warrior*

*Bleuteaux served alongside the First Warrior for several years before both were retired. The blue fuzzy suit was meant to create a more fun environment at basketball games, but he did not represent the nickname of "Warrior."*



In an effort to revitalize school spirit at basketball games, Marquette introduced *Bleuteaux*, hoping that his presence as a crowd-pleasing, inoffensive mascot would improve the reception of the *First Warrior*. This experiment was ultimately unsuccessful and Student Affairs abandoned the *First Warrior* following the 1986-87 basketball season. With *Bleuteaux's* continuing unpopularity, the University dropped him after 1990. The Athletic Department refused to yield to student requests to return to an Indian mascot. On October 12, 1993, Marquette University announced its decision to discontinue the *Warrior* and the logo. Once again searching for a new name and mascot, the selection process was open to Marquette students and alumni. The finalists were the *Lightning* and the *Golden Eagles*. In July of 1994, the University unveiled the new Marquette *Golden Eagles*. Alumni and students, dissatisfied with the decision, continued to call for a return to the *Warriors*. After an extremely unpopular change to the Marquette *Gold*, the *Warrior* mascot was finally laid to rest by the administration. Even today, the controversy continues as some students and alumni rally around the Marquette *Warrior*.



*Image courtesy of gom.marquette.com*



*Image courtesy of sportslogos.net*



*Image courtesy of Darren Hauk/Associated Press*



*The Marquette Warrior lives on. Above: Fr. Wild attempts to mediate a "No to Gold" rally on campus in 2005. Right: A Marquette Student wears a "Warriors Forever" t-shirt at a basketball game. Left: Not only has Marquette's nickname changed over time, but the logo and mascot have undergone transformations as well.*

