

**A Statement from Director Kevin Gover
and
Board Chair Bill Lomax**



Image: Shan Goshorn (Eastern Band of Cherokee, 19572018). "NO HONOR," 2014. Tulsa, Oklahoma. 26/9634. Shan Goshorn made this basket from paper splints printed with the dictionary definitions of American racial slurs. A banner from the Washington, D.C., NFL franchise—one of the slurs—is woven into the side not shown. You can just see just the tip of the banner at the left edge of this view. Goshorn titled the artwork NO HONOR in capital letters, in reply to team owner Dan Snyder's 2013 declaration, "We'll never change the name. It's that simple. NEVER—you can use caps."

Dear friends,

As the country debates racist symbolism in monuments, racist names and mascots for sports teams, and racially charged images as brands, the conversation has turned to the Washington, D.C., NFL franchise and the announcement that the team will consider changing its name. Unfortunately, some of the new names discussed in the media continue to allude to Native America—under the banner of honoring Native peoples.

The museum strongly believes that Native names, other words associated with Native people, and Native-inspired mascots do not honor Indigenous people, our histories, or our cultures. On the contrary: Any team name or image that evokes Native people emboldens disrespectful fans to continue to paint their faces, don headdresses, and act out faux-Native performances.

The commercial use of images and words that evoke Native cultures perpetuates racism and legitimizes racist acts. As the Washington football team navigates its way forward under pressure from sponsors, the mayor of the city it claims to represent, and many other Americans working to build a fairer society, we strongly support sports teams and other organizations that end the use of Native American imagery depicting racism. Let's get this right.

Kevin Gover, Director

Bill Lomax, Chair of the Board of Trustees

To read more on the impact of Native American team names and mascots, see Kevin Gover's commentary ["Dear Dan Snyder: Don't pick a new Native-inspired team name"](#) in the Washington Post.