

OPINION: “My thoughts on the Dartmouth Indians logo as a member of the Quechan and Pawnee tribes”

“I reached out to the Defend Dartmouth Facebook group and was asked to share with you my thoughts on the Dartmouth Indian symbol.

I am a proud Native American of the Quechan and Pawnee tribes. I am writing in support of the Dartmouth Indian symbol. As a Native, I do not feel that the symbol is in any way disrespectful or insensitive. I know what being disrespected is like.

I grew up in a very small town where there was no Native presence. My brother and I were constantly teased and bullied for being ‘different’ all throughout school. We were called savages and asked if we felt lucky to be living in a house instead of a Tee-pee. Kids would put their hands up to their mouths and whoop as they walked past us in the hallways. Sadly this eventually led to my brother leaving the school. I stayed and it was all because of a field trip that the school took to a Reservation. The pride and connection that I instantly felt seeing other Natives was a huge moment in my life. One I will never forget. My father (who is not Indian) always taught us to be proud to be Native Americans but this was different. It made me feel like I belonged to something that was more.

Seeing the Dartmouth symbol makes me feel the same way. It reminds me of that connection. In a way I feel it keeps our history alive. Fortunately, Dartmouth is a very different town from where I grew up. There is a deep connection and respect for local tribes and our collective history here. If we start

letting a few radical members of the school committee wipe out Native symbols, then I'm scared we as Native people will be eventually forgotten." -Jamie Rua, Dartmouth.