Marquette's new nickname ... the 'Gold'

Trustees decide to drop Golden Eagles moniker, not reinstate Warriors

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The Marquette University Board of Trustees today decided to drop the Golden Eagles nickname in favor of a new one.

Beginning in July, the school's athletic teams will be known as ... the Marquette Gold.

The board decided to pass on going back to the "Warriors" nickname, the moniker that so many alumni had embraced for decades.

The highly anticipated announcement came from university president Robert A. Wild at a news conference at the Alumni Memorial Union.

"We live in a different era," Wild said in regard to the debate over whether to reinstate the Warriors nickname.

Outside the news conference, the decision was met with general shock, and a dose of anger, by about a 100 students at the union watching the announcement on television.

The nickname decision comes after several months of study and a steady stream of input from alumni, students, faculty and others.

The debate over Marquette's nickname effectively began in late 1993, when the school, sensitive that the word "Warriors" might offend Native Americans, decided to change the nickname. The next year, the Warriors became the Golden Eagles.

In May 2004, Marquette trustee Wayne Sanders made headlines when he said at the end of his commencement address that he and another unnamed trustee would each donate $1 million to the school if it switched back to Warriors. The school rejected the offer.

On campus, a group calling itself Marquette Students for Warriors claimed it had gathered nearly 900 signatures to present to the trustees in favor re-adopting the Warriors nickname. The group condemned stereotypical references to Native Americans, and argued that Warriors represent courage, strength and determination.

The Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, a group of Indian tribes in the region, didn't agree. Its leaders have said that, even if the university removes references to Indian imagery, the connotations remain.

Complete coverage and reaction to this story will appear online later tonight and in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel in the morning.
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