

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Carthage retires Red Men, Lady Reds as its athletic team names

KENOSHA, Wis. – After a thorough review, Carthage College has retired its existing athletic team names and will begin to search for a unifying replacement.

Acting on a recommendation from President John Swallow, the Board of Trustees voted to retire both Red Men and Lady Reds. The changes are now in effect.

“While we deeply respect our history and the generations of Carthage student-athletes who competed under our former team names, the trustees believe a change is appropriate,” says board chairman and 1980 Carthage alumnus Jeff Hamar, president and CEO of California-based Galleher Inc. “This provides an excellent opportunity to brand our college and athletic program in a positive, inclusive, and dynamic way.”

President Swallow made his recommendation based on the findings of a broadly representative Task Force on Team Names and Mascot. Citing widely held concerns about the connotations for racial and gender equity, the group concluded that Red Men and Lady Reds were “not unifying symbols for our community.”

Almost 3,000 Carthage stakeholders shared their feedback in a survey, and dozens more elaborated on their perspectives via email and an online form. By a significant margin, respondents expressed their desire to adopt a new team identity.

Carthage sports teams had identified as Red Men (or Redmen) since the early 1900s at the previous campus in Carthage, Illinois. The moniker originally reflected the color scheme of the Carthage team uniforms, but the program later incorporated Native American imagery — including a previous mascot and a feather that remained part of the athletic logo until 2005.

The Board of Trustees also voted to retire Torchie, the Carthage mascot since 1997. Symbolizing the flame of knowledge, the character isn’t directly tied to the outgoing nicknames, but college constituents expressed equally strong support for a change.

As part of a periodic review, Hamar formed the task force last November to evaluate the existing team names and mascot. The group’s members represent Carthage trustees, alumni, faculty, staff (including coaches), and students.

Briefly delayed by the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, the task force resumed its review this summer. Six central questions guided the work:

- Is this team name unifying for the Carthage campus and larger Carthage community?
- Does it represent positive qualities, ideals, or associations around which people can rally?
- Is it broadly relevant across the Carthage community, student body, and among generations of alumni?
- Is it representative of the Carthage experience and/or history, either generally or specifically?
- Does it work equally well for women's and men's sports teams?
- Does it have the potential to translate in a visually pleasing manner?

A member of the College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin, Carthage competes in 27 NCAA Division III sports. Student-athletes make up nearly one-third of the undergraduate enrollment.

During 2020-21, Carthage athletics will proceed without nicknames. Although fall teams continue to practice, CCIW competition has been suspended due to public health concerns.

In the coming months, the college will gather input from a wide range of stakeholders. Leaders anticipate the board making a final determination in time to introduce the new name and mascot for the 2021-22 academic year.



About Carthage – www.carthage.edu

Located on the shore of Lake Michigan in the thriving Chicago-Milwaukee corridor, Carthage College enrolls 2,800 undergraduate and graduate students. Named a Best Midwestern College by the Princeton Review and a Most Innovative School by U.S. News & World Report, Carthage is ranked No. 3 in the country among baccalaureate institutions for participation in short-term study abroad. The Aspire Program™, a comprehensive four-year career development initiative for all students, builds on Carthage's strong history of providing students with the skills they need to succeed after college.