



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Chicano leaders call for the Texas Rangers baseball team to reject namesake's violent history

BY CAMILA GONZALEZ | Editor-in-Chief

SC MASCOT CONTROVERSY

College dropped Apaches in 2000

Southwestern College had its own moment of reckoning with an inappropriate nickname and mascot. For reasons long lost to history, in the mid-1960s SC's sports teams were christened the Apaches. An accompanying mascot was a leather-faced profile of a Native American man much like the image on a worn buffalo nickel.



DR. SERAFIN ZASQUETA

For generations the name and mascot mystified thinking people in the community. Southwestern College had Mayan-style architecture and the Apaches never lived in the South Bay. San Diego County is Kumeyaay Country with a little bit of the Shonshone Wedge in the area that is now Escondido.

Like good soldiers, though, faculty and students embraced the Apache. Legendary baseball coach Jerry Bartow – a full-blooded Native American – named the baseball field he built with his own hands Apache Junction. SC's student newspaper, originally called The Southwesterner, changed

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Porvenir, Texas, has no Texas Rangers baseball fans. • It has no baseball fans. • It has nobody. • Porvenir is an uninhabited ghost town in the West Texas borderlands because its inhabitants were exterminated or driven off in 1918 by the Texas Rangers – the paramilitary vigilantes, not the baseball team. After murdering every man and teenage boy in the frontier village, the Rangers sent away the surviving widows and children on a forced march into the desiccated prairie.

The Porvenir Massacre was just one of many perpetrated by the Texas Rangers, according to historians. Formed in the 1820s as a private army for a corrupt governor who wanted to rid Texas of Native Americans, the Rangers grew in numbers in the early years after the Civil War to resist settlements by freed Black slaves and Mexican-Americans. They have been described by academics, historians and Latino leaders as "America's Gestapo," "the Nazis of Texas" and "the Lone Star Ku Klux Klan." Many Rangers, in fact, were active members of the KKK.

Gente Unida founder Enrique Morones said he does not understand why a Major League Baseball team would name itself for "a gun slinging, racist, terrorist organization." He is calling for the Texas Rangers baseball team to change its name.

"A name like the Texas Rangers is a mockery to the Mexican people and to all Mexican-Americans," Morones said. "Glorifying a hyper-violent



MURDER AT LA MATANZA – Historians say Texas Rangers killed hundreds, possibly thousands, of Mexicans and Tejanos in South Texas from 1915-19, calling the victims "bandits." They were actually legal landowners, ranchers, farmworkers or Latino Texans traveling in their home state. This photo was taken in October 1915 by Texas Rangers proud of their work. Courtesy Dolph Briscoe Center for American History/University of Texas at Austin

private vigilante army that brutally murdered, raped and expelled people of Mexican ancestry from their own lands was an American genocide. The Texas Rangers have been portrayed as heroic cowboys guarding the range, but they are actually lawless thugs."

Morones, a former vice president with the San Diego Padres, said he is heartened by recent decisions by the Cleveland Indians and Washington NFL franchise to change their names after years of pressure.

"We want Major League Baseball

to accept its responsibility and remove the name of Texas Rangers from its Arlington, Texas franchise," he said. "The league should no longer profit off the suffering inflicted on our people. Neither should MLB confuse the players' popularity with acceptance of the Texas Rangers' namesake nor what those hired guns did to tens of thousands of Americans of Mexican ancestry."

Attorney Sheryl Ring said the Texas Rangers baseball team is

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FRANK HAMER

Francis Augustus Hamer (March 17, 1884 – July 10, 1955) was an American law enforcement officer and Texas Ranger who led the 1934 posse that tracked down and killed criminals Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow.

Renowned for his toughness, marksmanship, and investigative skill, he acquired status in the Southwest as the archetypal Texas Ranger.

Hamer and the KKK

Hamer also led the fight in Texas against the Ku Klux Klan, starting in 1922, as senior captain of the Texas Rangers, and he is believed to have saved at least 15 people from lynch mobs. He was inducted into the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame.

Controversial figure

His professional record and reputation are controversial, particularly with regard to his willingness to use extrajudicial killing even in an increasingly modernized society.

Source: Wikipedia



Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum

Courtesy Enrique Morones

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RANGERS: Latino leaders insist baseball glorifies violent vigilantes

named for “an American Gestapo.”

“The original Texas Rangers are responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of innocents,” she said. “The Rangers were originally formed in the 1820s to forcibly exterminate Indigenous and Native peoples from Texas, with an appalling body count.”

Ring said the Ranger’s terror campaign continued into the 20th century and included prolific lynchings of Black and Latino Texans well into the 1930s.

“The Rangers killed thousands of innocent civilians in a one-year period during the early days of World War I,” she wrote. “They justified the carnage by saying they were trying to dissuade Mexico from siding with Germany.”

The 1918 Porvenir Massacre was a culmination of these murderous activities, Ring said, but even subsequent hearings in the Texas legislature did not slow down the Rangers. If anything, she said, they further emboldened the Rangers and their extra-judicial executions.

Morones agreed. He said the misanthropic activities of the Texas Rangers never fully abated. After Porvenir the Rangers worked to drive the NAACP from Texas. In 1956 they helped to prevent the integration of Texarkana Junior College, allowing a White mob to hurl rocks and racial slurs at minority students attempting to attend classes. They attacked Black children in towns and cities across the Lone Star State who attempted to integrate K-12 schools.

Journalist Doug J. Swanson’s book, “Cult of Glory: The Bold and Brutal History of the Texas Rangers,” examines the long history of racism and lawlessness.

“They burned peasant villages and slaughtered innocents,” he wrote. “They committed war crimes. Their murders of Mexicans and Mexican Americans made them as feared on the border as the Ku Klux Klan in the South.”

Chicano scholar Dr. José Angel Gutiérrez, a native Texan, said he has first-hand experience with the Ranger’s violent intimidation tactics.

“My first encounter with the Texas Rangers was in 1962 when I was a teenager,” he said. “I attended a rally to oppose segregation in my hometown. As we were heading home we were pulled over by two cop cars. One was Texas Rangers, the other local sheriffs.”

Gutiérrez said he and friends were just a block from their homes when Texas Ranger Alfred Y. Allee forced him from his car, then slapped and kicked him. Gutierrez said his mother saw what was happening and burst out of the house with a loaded shotgun.

“Touch my son one more time and I’ll kill you,” she said.

Gutiérrez said he was sure they were all about to die, but Allee waved off the other cops and they left.



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Enrique Morones

GENTE UNIDA

Courtesy José Gutiérrez



“They’re laughing in our faces. (The Texas Rangers commit atrocities) against Mexicans, and yet who goes to the baseball games? Mexicans! That is because we do not know our own history.”

Dr. José Angel Gutiérrez

ATTORNEY, PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

In 1966 the Texas Rangers were brought in to break up a strike by farmworkers in a rural area south of Crystal City in Zavala County, Gutiérrez said. Mexican and Mexican-American farmworkers were beaten, kicked and shot. One laborer, Magdaleno Dimas, was killed.

Naming a baseball team for the Texas Rangers is an affront to Latinos, Gutiérrez said.

“They’re laughing in our faces,” he said. “(The Texas Rangers commit atrocities) against Mexicans, and yet who goes to the baseball games? Mexicans! That is because we do not know our own history.”

Morones agreed. Latino players are foundational to MLB, he said. More than 30 percent of major league players are Latinos, including many of its biggest stars.

Gutiérrez said the education system in Texas and most of the United States is “Anglo-centric” and too often overlooks historic episodes of violence and mistreatment of minorities. Most Americans, he said, never heard of Porvenir, the destruction of the Black town Rosewood, Florida or the White riots of Tulsa, Oklahoma which burned a thriving Black business district to the ground. The Texas Rangers, he said, got the Hollywood treatment.

“Everything written about the Rangers is glorious, fantastic, wonderful,” he said. “None of that is true. They are murderers of Mexicans and they have been for a long time.”

While working with the Padres in the 1990s, Morones had an opportunity to meet with the managing owner of the Texas Rangers Baseball Club, Texas governor and future U.S. President George W. Bush. Morones pressed his case that his team should not be named for the Rangers. Bush, generally considered a moderate on race for a Republican, was not receptive.

“I got nothing but a blank stare,” he said. “Governor Bush wasn’t having it.”

Domingo Garcia said he likes baseball, but is no fan of the Texas Rangers moniker. Garcia said his mother, grandmother and grandfather lived in Porvenir. Pedro Cano, his great grandfather, and Chico Cano, a great uncle, lost their land resisting the Texas Rangers.

“Remember, the Anglos write the history,” he said. “So Chico Cano is a Mexican bandit even though he was a resistance fighter and hero to the Latinos. The Texas Rangers are responsible for the lynching of 5,000 Mexican-Americans. They stole the land of Mexican-American people. They committed robbery and arson.”

History books, however, paint the Tejanos as the bad guys and the



ONE TOUGH CAT – After about 35 years as the Apaches, SC switched nicknames in 2000 and became the Jaguars. Sycuan donated \$10,000 to the athletic department for new uniforms. There was little pushback from the community.

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APACHES: Sycuan donation motivated SC name change

its name to The Athapascan, the ancient language spoken by The Apaches.

Efforts by Native Americans in the 1970s and 1980s to pressure high schools and colleges to eliminate Indian mascots bypassed Southwestern. It just did not seem like anyone’s priority, though in the 1980s The Athapascan switched its name to The Sun.

Change came in 1998 after Dr. Serafin Zasueta took the helm as college president. A child development scholar, Zasueta had served in K-12 schools in poverty stricken communities of Southwest U.S. Native American reservations, including the Dine’ (Navajo) and Hopi.

Empathetic to Native American culture and steeped in their history, Zasueta was receptive to a proposal by the Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation. Newly affluent San Diego County Na-

tive American gaming tribes made a push to eliminate Indian mascots in the region. A Sycuan leader offered Southwestern \$10,000 to purchase brand new uniforms for all its ath-

letic teams if the college would change its name and mascot.

Zasueta and the coaches agreed. There was some pushback in the community, mostly based on nostalgia, but it was insignificant. Zasueta thought the college needed a photogenic, powerful animal from Mesoamerica to tie in with the Mayan architecture. The jaguar pounced at the opportunity and became the college’s new mascot in 2000.

★ A Sycuan leader offered Southwestern \$10,000 to purchase brand new uniforms for all its athletic teams if the college would change its name and mascot.

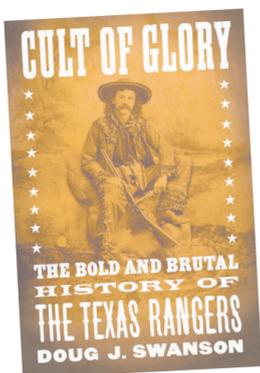
SC’s first jaguar was a kit-tinish spotted cat that did not exactly strike fear in the hearts of collegiate athletic opponents. S/he was sent back to the jungle and replaced with the badass black jag today’s students wear on sweatshirts and football jerseys.

Bartow changed Apache Junction to Jaguar Junction, which he admitted rolled off the tongue with a certain elegance. SC’s Native American godfather sent five Jaguars to Major League Baseball, but none to the Cleveland Indians.



JERRY BARTOW

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BLOODY HISTORY – Doug J. Swanson’s ‘Cult of Glory: The Bold and Brutal History of the Texas Rangers’ is considered a seminal study of the group that began in 1820 as a private army to exterminate Native Americans in the Texas territories.



‘A BLANK STARE’ – Former San Diego Padres executive Enrique Morones said his meeting with former Texas Rangers owner George W. Bush (r, then governor of Texas), elicited just “a blank stare.” Pictured in Bush’s Texas Ranger office are his father, President George H. W. Bush (l) and baseball Hall of Famer Joe Morgan, an MLB broadcaster. *Courtesy Wikipedia*