

It's about time: retiring the name Crusaders

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When I heard the *crusaders* logo will be changed, my immediate reaction: wow, finally.

I know there would be push back. The following is long reply. It took me awhile to compose my thoughts. I hope you will indulge me and read it to the end, especially if you disagree with me.

I have read the arguments against the name change, let me try to address a few of them one by one:

1. Who is offended? Why change for a handful of people who are offended? In other words, why the majority has to yield to the minority?

First of all, we don't know how many people are offended. However, I would argue that the number doesn't matter because right is not by agreement. Historically, just because a majority agreed on something did not always equate to being right. Any decision should be based on its merit and not head counts. Times change, additional information become available. In a civilized society, we need to listen to each other. Yes, the majority gets to make the rules but it would be tragic if it ignores the voice of the minority.

2. Why all the changes? Why can't we leave things alone? Are we to change it every time someone complains?

Although it's human nature to resist, changes are inevitable for a variety of reasons. I didn't take me long to think of a list of things that have changed at WO since my arrival in 1985: the school had gone from 3 terms to 2 terms and then to 2 semesters this year. Start time was at 8:55 am way back when to 8:00 am now. Gone is one of two auto shops (and no, the shop was not eliminated because the school wanted to tick some people off, it was re-purposed because declining students enrolment in that program.) It has been converted into a weight room. Gone is the old drafting room and it was converted into a much needed additional music room. The TV studio and Physic Lab are recent additions. I have not heard the term Excelsior uttered by anyone for many years and the students' newspaper was renamed W-O Say So from, I think the Crusader Chronicle. Gone are the annual Grade 10 History trip, Christmas Assembly, Grade 9 initiation (one tradition that I wish I was more vocal to help to eliminate). Oh, when you refer to the W-O School song, you are referring to one of the three possible versions. We have also added a number of new traditions and a few new clubs that you might not recognize. Yes, we have a gay-straight alliance club, two hall monitors, a in-school youth worker, but no more sick room or school nurse. We have an Outdoor Movie Night but no more lunch time sock-hops. These are the ones just came to my mind. The list goes on and on.

The point is whatever experience you had at W-O, and I hope it was a positive one, changing the name does not take away your memories. You can continue to call yourself a crusader. The

WO Community is not defined by a name. It has a history: many are good but some not so much.

It would be wrong for you to insist that for the future students have to use the same moniker as you to have an authentic W-O experience. For me, it is up to the current W-O community to decide if they wish to keep or change the name and we can only hope they would make the best decision based on what they know now.

A name is not eternal and if the future generations want to change it again. So be it.

3. People are too sensitive; the name Crusader is not offensive.

I disagree; the word by itself is offensive because it's tainted with the rhetorics of wars. The logo with a knight carrying a weapon on a horse reinforces that idea. As recent as 2001, George W Bush invoked the term crusade for the war against terror. I can accept that you might not know the origin of the word, but I would argue it's a loaded word. Ignorance is only an excuse until someone points out the missing information. You can argue the word no longer carries the same connotations. At least you should appreciate why it may be offensive to some people. By the way, historically, the crusade was waged not only against muslims but also against the Cathars (Albigensian in southern France) and the people in Northern Europe (Baltic Crusades).

A final thought: to live together harmoniously in a multicultural and multiracial society, it requires a lot of civil discourse and - dare I say - compassion and understanding. A democratic civil society requires its citizens to live with disagreements. We can disagree on issues but we cannot call each other names.