

# A Contemporary Public Naming Controversy in Phoenix, Arizona: The Changing Social Perspectives on Landmark Nomenclature

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This article summarizes the events surrounding the controversial renaming of Squaw Peak, a prominent landmark in Phoenix, Arizona. The article provides a commentary on how one state and one city is handling the derogatory name issue (the issue is far from resolved). Information was gathered largely through personal interviews of those most closely involved, including members of the Arizona State Board on Geographic and Historic Names and U.S. Board on Geographic and Historic Names, Arizona legislators and gubernatorial staffers. Information was supplemented by several area media sources including (but not limited to) *The Arizona Republic*, *Indian Country Today*, *The Arizona Capitol Times*.

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Throughout the summer of 2003 and into the spring of 2004, Arizona residents have experienced a high learning curve in relation to the naming of public landmarks. When, in April of 2003, the Arizona State Board on Geographic and Historic Names voted to change the name of *Squaw Peak* in central Phoenix to *Piestewa Peak*, few anticipated the series of events that led to what many felt was the public maligning of a board chairman, the summary suspension of carefully constructed bylaws, the questioning of the motives of respected state leaders, and the resignation of the man considered to have been responsible in 1982 for the original organization of the Arizona State Board on Geographic and Historic Names.

Over the course of the conflict, Arizonans learned that name changes will not be made on maps and other materials produced by such federal agencies as the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service,

the Bureau of Census, and the United States Government Service until they are accepted by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. They also learned about the U.S. Board's Commemorative Name Policy, which since 1995 has mandated that commemorative names are not to be given until five years after the death of the individual being honored.

The reasoning behind this policy (to free decision makers from the immediate grief and emotional attachment that people feel toward a person just deceased, especially toward someone who has made a major contribution to a community or whose life has been cut short) was especially hard for the public to understand. Part of the difficulty is that over the last decade, cash-strapped universities, municipalities, and sports authorities have begun "selling" naming rights, first to corporations as with the America West Arena and the Bank One Ballpark (BOB) and then to individuals. In 2002, Arizona State University renamed its College of Business after financier William P. Carey, while in 2003 it renamed its College of Engineering after local homebuilder Ira A. Fulton, both in exchange for \$100 million donations. Photos of smiling donors standing next to newly named public buildings generated positive feelings of goodwill, but they also undercut the idea that public naming honors should be reserved for individuals who have been deceased for at least five years.

### Arizona's State Board on Geographic and Historic Names

A U.S. Geological Survey drive to complete a once-over large-scale topographic map of the United States in the early 1980s provided the impetus for many states to take a serious look at naming practices. Some states responded by creating entire boards to mediate the myriad naming conflicts that arose, while other states appointed individuals to do the job. Because of its history as a frontier state, where many names

were apparently given by discouraged travelers on their way to greener pastures in California, Arizona seemed to have more than its fair share of problematic names. In 1982 Governor Bruce Babbitt acted on the recommendation of Richard Pinkerton, head of the cartography section at the Arizona Department of Transportation, and created an Arizona state naming board. He appointed its first members from several of the same government agencies that are represented on the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.<sup>1</sup> Pinkerton served as the first chair and remained a member until his resignation in April 2003.<sup>2</sup> He lobbied the Arizona legislature to grant the board of gubernatorial appointees statutory status, which it did in 1990. This meant several things for the Arizona Board.

First, the Board would be more stable. The decision to alter it by changing the membership, for example, or by disbanding it altogether would have to pass through the legislature, whereas an organization created by executive order could also be dissolved by executive order. Statutory status also gave the Board authority in its own right, assumed to be independent of and equal to that of other executive agencies, e.g., the governor, the attorney general, etc. within its statutory purview. The Arizona State Legislature gave the Board responsibility to hear naming proposals from private citizens or groups, to determine the most appropriate names for geographic and historic features within the state, and to recommend approved names to the federal naming authority, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.<sup>3</sup>

The State Legislature kept the authority to override the Board's naming decisions, however. In such a case, or when a state legislature bypasses state naming boards and forwards a proposal to the U.S. Board, Roger Payne, Executive Secretary for the U.S. Board, says that such proposals are decided case-by-case, with "local use and acceptance" being the Federal Board's most important policy.<sup>4</sup>

At its inception, the Arizona Board adopted the U.S. Board on Geographic Names "Principles, Policies and Procedures" as a model. However, it is important to note that none of these principles, policies and procedures were presented to the Arizona State Legislature, and were therefore not considered to be Arizona Statutes. Arizona's Board Chair Richard Pinkerton assembled additional rules by which the Board would conduct business. These were passed into law by the Arizona Legislature and became the Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 41 under Chapter 4.1, Article 3, § 41-835-41-838. The Revised Statutes dealt with such things as the board's authority as sole naming agency, the membership of the board, the powers and duties of the board, and protocols for handling naming issues.

In addition to appointing members, Governor Babbitt gave the Board authority to write bylaws for the orderly conduct of business. The idea was that these bylaws would eventually be sent to the State Legislature to become law. While the Board continued to create bylaws, they did not run them through the legislative process, which meant that, at the time of the conflict, the more recent bylaws could be interpreted as not holding statutory power, despite the public's (and several board members') belief to the contrary.

The bylaw which caused the most furor was Bylaw #3, created in 1997 and called the Public Member Bylaw. In an effort to protect the Board's autonomy, members, who at the time were all appointed as representatives from the State agencies where they were employed, decided that two public members (that is, people not appointed because of working for a state agency) should be on the Board. The idea was that these people's votes would be free from any government pressure. The bylaw ended with the statement, "In the event that both of the public members are absent from a regular meeting, decisions of the board will be deferred until such time when at least one of the two public members are present to conduct business."<sup>5</sup>

## Commemorative Name Policy and Derogatory Name Policy

Two of the U.S. Board policies that came before the Arizona Board were the Commemorative Name Policy and the Derogatory Name Policy. Regarding the Commemorative Name Policy, the Arizona Board routinely referred petitioners to the policy and explained that they did not entertain petitions until after the requisite five-year waiting period had elapsed. The Arizona Board, because of staffing issues and the sheer number of names with the potential to be seen as derogatory, took a much less proactive stance with the Derogatory Name Policy. This policy states:

The guiding principle of the U.S. Board ... is to adopt for official Federal use the names found in everyday usage. An exception to this principle occurs when a name is shown to be highly offensive or derogatory to a particular racial or ethnic group, gender, or religious group. In such instances, the Board does not approve use of the names for Federal maps, charts or other publications. The Board, however, is conservative ... and prefers to interfere as little as possible with the use of names in everyday language because attitudes and perceptions of words considered to be pejorative vary between individuals and can change connotation from one generation to another ...<sup>6</sup>

In 1963 and 1964, respectively, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall mandated that because of the declared pejorative nature of the words *nigger* and *jap*, the U.S. Board should change the names of all geographic and historic placenames under federal purview if they used these words. However, the Board decided against banning the use of other controversial words, including *squaw* or *chink*, because the Board "prefers to interfere as little as possible." They went on to say that state boards should handle offensive names issues

in their own way, placename by placename, unless otherwise legislated.<sup>7</sup>

### Derogatory Names in Arizona

At the May 1990 quarterly meeting, Chair Richard Pinkerton told members of the Arizona Board that, according to U.S. Board minutes, they "should be concerned that [racially offensive names] may become an issue in Arizona."<sup>8</sup> Pinkerton established a *de facto* derogatory names subcommittee at the August 1991 meeting, telling the Arizona Board that "'potential derogatory names' [are] an issue that Arizona definitely must address in the very near future."<sup>9</sup> He appointed two women and one man (librarian support staff person, Dale Steele) to serve on the subcommittee. According to Steele, the subcommittee did not meet as planned because of time constraints.<sup>10</sup> Don Bufkin, a board member who regularly attended the Western States Geographic Names Conference, told the board "it is very clear that Native American names" will become a major issue.<sup>11</sup> Twice in 1992 the board discussed the issue of derogatory names. The first reference was a question directed to the chair regarding the discussion of Native American names at the 15th Western States Geographic Names Conference in Santa Fe, NM (Sept. 3-7, 1991), and the second a reference to House Bill 2333, which if passed, "would outlaw placenames deemed offensive to Indians," in particular, placenames with the word *squaw*.<sup>12</sup> Chair Richard Pinkerton again advised the derogatory names subcommittee that he had appointed in 1991 to compile a list of derogatory names taken from *The Gazetteer*, the state's official naming publication.

The subcommittee finally met in 1993, but the two original women were no longer members of the board. Chair Don Bufkin, staff support librarian Dale Steele, and two public members, Richard Pinkerton and Tim Norton, now comprised the subcommittee. According to the Board's minutes, the purpose of the subcommittee's first meeting was to discuss procedures for identifying derogatory placenames in Arizona,

including determinant criteria. The subcommittee also reviewed the U.S. Board policies and discussed selecting an advisory panel from affected communities. After some deliberation, they recommended the Board assume a reactive stance, taking no action unless a complaint was filed. Pinkerton said, "There are issues today with derogatory names where different groups within the same ethnic category have different approaches to what they want to be called, or even what they consider derogatory."<sup>13</sup> Norton said at the time the subcommittee felt it was more important to maintain the historical record of the state than to do a wholesale change of names deemed offensive, thereby re-writing history for the sake of political correctness.<sup>14</sup> The year 1993 ended with the chair reaffirming the Arizona Board's policy to not move on Native American names issues until the Arizona Tribal Council (made up of representatives from all 22 recognized Arizona tribes) responded officially.<sup>15</sup>

Explaining the Board's decision regarding Native American placenames, staff support librarian Dale Steele said, "The board is very sensitive to the sovereignty of the tribes. They have tried to maintain good relations with the Indians. The board is reactive. When we get a request, we go to the tribe who has jurisdiction or whoever they have designated responsible and ask for their input."<sup>16</sup> The problem with acting on *squaw* as a derogatory name, said Steele, was that from 1993 to 1998 the Board had the perception that the Arizona tribes really didn't want to give credence to the issue, therefore any action with *squaw* placenames was unnecessary. Steele believed,

The idea was that this was an A.I.M.'s (American Indian Movement) activist issue, a movement that Arizona tribes didn't really care that much about and to some degree some Native American tribal governments didn't want to give any credibility to. There was still some question as to whether this was a

concern for local Native Americans or whether this was just an outside activist agenda.<sup>17</sup>

The Arizona Board maintained their reactive stance until 1998 when Native American teens Delena Waddle (Tsalagi/Choctaw) and Seipe Flood (Akimel O'odham/Lakota), founders of the Arizona chapter of American Indian Movement Youth Council and the Squaw Peak Name Change Project, brought a petition before the board to change *Squaw Peak* to *Iron Mountain*. Along with their petition was a packet explaining why the word *squaw* was considered derogatory by Arizona Native Americans. Though the Board decided against that particular name change, citing as their reason the fact that a mountain four miles away had the name *Iron Mountain*, they did decide that the name of *Squaw Peak* was considered offensive by many members of the 22 federally recognized tribes of Arizona and now had a "declared" pejorative nature according to U.S. Board determinant criteria.<sup>18</sup>

### The History of Squaw Peak

Metropolitan Phoenix is located in what is called *The Valley of the Sun*, a low lying desert area of approximately fifty square miles inhabited by 1.3 million people. The two most prominent topographical outcroppings in the Valley are *Camelback Mountain* and *Squaw Peak*, both located within the city limits of Phoenix, near the affluent suburb of Scottsdale in Maricopa County. *Camelback* has a distinctive shape that resembles the silhouette of a camel. It is the backdrop to some of Arizona's most exclusive and prestigious resorts including the Biltmore, the Phoenician, and Camelback Inn. *Squaw Peak* is only a few miles to the west and is not as distinctive in shape nor in such an exclusive neighborhood; however, the ordinary people of the area feel close to *Squaw Peak*. It is the central feature of Squaw Peak Park, and depending on the season and the weather, its hiking trails are climbed by between 4,000 and 10,000 people each week. Both tourists and local residents enjoy climbing the peak to get a view of



metropolitan Phoenix and to get a physical workout more sociable and more aesthetically pleasing than running on a treadmill.

Local naming experts Will C. Barnes (1935) and Byrd Granger (1960, 1983) attribute the name to Phoenix engineer and surveyor, Dr. O.A. Turney.<sup>19</sup> The entry in Will C. Barnes's *Arizona Placenames* says that *Squaw Peak* is located in the Phoenix Mountains about 10 miles northeast of Phoenix close to Paradise Valley, is north of *Camelback Mountain* and was named by the engineer between 1903 and 1910 (1935, 421). Barnes says this about Turney's use of the word *squaw*: "Many placenames incorporate the word *squaw* for reasons which more often than not have been lost" (171). In her book on Arizona names, *X Marks the Place*, Granger adds this insight into the use of the word: "Many placenames in Arizona bear the designation *squaw*, but for what reason is not usually known. Whether someone actually encountered an Indian woman at such places or the location resembled Indian women is anybody's guess" (581). The Arizona State Historian report entitled *Prehistoric Irrigation* (1929) reports that "when making topographic maps in the U.S. Geological Survey, the writer [Dr. O. A. Turney] gave names to several mountains, among them one on the north boundary of the valley which seemed hardly large enough for a full-sized buck mountain, so named it *Squaw Peak*" (35). This particular mountain was located at legal description T2N R3E according to Turney's handwritten field notes.

Efforts to determine the mountain's original name led to the revelation of some inconsistencies in the records, however. Granger in her 1960 revision of Barnes' book, *Will C. Barnes Arizona Placenames* gives the elevation of the T2N R3E *Squaw Peak* at 2608 feet, but in the book she wrote about Arizona placenames, *X Marks the Place* (1983) she gives the same peak an elevation of 4786 feet. The discrepancy leads one to question which of the many area *Squaw Peaks* Granger and Barnes were actually describing.

Local historian James M. Barney added more confusion to the issue of the "real" location of *Squaw Peak* in an article published in the August 23, 1951, *Phoenix Gazette*. He wrote that the mountain known as *Squaw Peak* was earlier known as *Phoenix Peak* as recorded by "one of the most accurate recorders of early day Salt River Valley history," Herbert R. Patrick. According to Mr. Patrick, says Barney, "The proper *Squaw Peak* is part of the Camelback Mountains, and the figure of a squaw can be plainly seen in profile from any point north of Phoenix and beyond the Grand Canal. *Squaw Peak* is some distance easterly from *Phoenix Peak*." Other locals report seeing the silhouette of a praying monk, instead of the profile of a squaw, as reported in the same article. Regardless of what can be seen where, Barney's point in the article was that the mountain Phoenicians know as *Squaw Peak* is a mistake perpetuated by the uninformed, and the real *Squaw Peak* is located some four miles south in the *Camelback Mountains*.

The next year (1952) during an annual Arizona pioneer reunion Barney persisted in his attempts to correct the historic record, asserting the real *Squaw Peak* was part of *Camelback Mountain*, again citing Herbert R. Patrick's memoirs.<sup>20</sup> The issue remained prominent six years later, at least in Mr. Barney's mind, (1958) at which time he wrote an article for *The Sheriff*, the official publication of the Arizona Attorney's and Sheriff's Association. Barney claimed that persistent efforts to call *Phoenix Peak* by the name of *Squaw Peak* were "senseless." He says this effort was being undertaken by "ignorant and newly arrived land speculators" who had no idea of the historical background of the valley. Barney claims that "at one time early day cowboys and prospectors called the sharp-topped peak *Squaw Tit Mountain*" but the later settlers called it *Phoenix Peak*, a "much more decent and appropriate designation." Barney tells readers that many mountain peaks were called "the rough and uncouth" title of *Squaw Tit Mountain*; in fact, he says, "Almost every sharp pointed peak was given that designation." But, according to Barney, these

names were “never acceptable to the better class of settlers.” In the same article, Barney includes a letter from William P. McCulloch, a man who says he heard from the lips of H.B. Patrick, an early surveyor, that the real *Squaw Peak* was “that bunch of rocks on the northern side of *Camelback Mountain*.” He says he knows because he, H.B. Patrick, surveyed most of the land there. Turney’s handwritten field notes (dated July 23, 1902 to April 30, 1903) in which he gives the legal description of the mountain, however, do not include Mr. Patrick’s name as one of the surveyors or assistants.<sup>21</sup>

That debate aside, modern day Phoenicians have come to know *Squaw Peak* as the tallest of the peaks in the Phoenix Mountain range, the peak that Barney insisted was really *Phoenix Peak*.

#### *Squaw* as a Label of Primary Potency

Philosopher Gordon Allport in his book *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954) says terms like *squaw* have become “labels of primary potency”— words that “affect people’s emotions so strongly their minds do not process or remember the other information that is being presented” (Nilsen, 145). Such labels have an intense effect because they reflect negative stereotypes, inculcating judgments about entire groups of people.

Many notable linguistic experts have debated the meaning of the word based on its etymological roots, but William Bright goes beyond simple etymology (2000). He explains that the word may have held an innocent meaning in earlier centuries, but has acquired a clearly pejorative connotation in this century, changing in meaning from a generic term for a woman or wife (as Ives Goddard of the Smithsonian Institute claims) to a degrading and patronizing slang term ranging in meaning from *hussy* or *floozy* to *harlot* to the most obscene and offensive, *cunt*.

Margaret Bruchac, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and one of the better known and articulate critics on the subject, writes, “*Squaw* is neither historically nor

linguistically appropriate as a universal term to apply to Native women" (2001). Steve Russell, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Indiana University, Bloomington, says, "French trappers carried the word away from its origins, and it came to mean a woman kept for sexual use or sometimes the female organ ...."<sup>22</sup> Student writer Jon Henson said, "The Mohawk people decided that fur traders had shortened their word to describe what they wanted from Mohawk women." Bruchac says of the word's devolution:

Racist settlers carried the insult west in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, into territories of non-Algonquian speaking Native peoples. While the original, harmless usage persisted into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in many places, among both Indians and whites, the insulting usage increased in mixed-race urban and reservation areas.

The most compelling argument that the label *squaw* has a derogatory meaning is that no longer do just a few "activist" Native Americans say it meets the determinant criteria for a derogatory term, but a major policy-making Native American agency, the National Congress of American Indians, says it does. The NCAI, representing 250 of the 550 federally recognized tribes, unanimously passed Resolution #STP-00-049 in November of 2000:

The NCAI recognizes that the use and public acceptance of terms that carry derogatory connotations to Indian people serve only to further negative stereotypes and attitudes; ... the word *squaw* is used today and has been used in the past in a derogatory and demeaning way towards American Indian women, whether intentionally or unintentionally; [...] The American Indian population is offended by the use of the word and does not believe it is appropriate as a name for public lands and places; [...] Now be it hereby resolved that the National Congress of American Indians does hereby request the National Board of Geographic Names immediately remove the

word *squaw* from geographic placenames on public lands just as it has previously removed words offensive to African Americans and Japanese Americans.

Dave Denomie, an Ojibwa from Wisconsin, best summarizes the pan-Indian argument: "This is more a simple question of regarding others with courtesy and respect than it is a question of etymology, or whether or not the term offends some, most, or all Indians" (Bright, 212).

Educating the non-Indian population as well as the Indian population about Native American issues was the goal of the American Indian Movement when it was founded in 1968 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. They were concerned about such issues as 80% unemployment among Native Americans, police brutality, poor housing and education, and ignorance of Native American culture. Dennis Banks, one of the founders, wrote, "We were tired of begging for welfare, tired of being scapegoats in America. [We] decided to start building on the strengths of our own people; decided to build our own schools; our own job training programs; and our own destiny."<sup>23</sup>

Banning the word *squaw* from placenames was just one aspect of the overall movement, but the issue garnered considerable public attention when Susan Shown-Harjo, (Cheyenne and Hodulgee Muscogee) journalist, policy advocate and poet, appeared on the Oprah Winfrey show in 1992. Winfrey titled the segment "Stereotypes" and allowed Shown-Harjo to explain to her audience that the word *squaw* was corrupted from the Iroquoian word *otsiskwa* which could mean *vagina* or *female genitalia*. Shown-Harjo, not claiming to be a linguist, continued telling the mostly non-Indian audience that Indians consider the word offensive because of the negative connotations it had acquired, not necessarily because of its linguistic roots, and that using the word for placenames only perpetuated the negative stereotyping that Native American women are loose and promiscuous.

Her message, like Banks's, was that the real problem with the word was not in its original meaning, but "in the treatment of Native peoples who have become the object of ridicule in their own homelands" (Bruchac, 12).

#### Name Change Efforts

Two Native American teenagers from Minnesota, Dawn Litzau and Angelene Losh (Ojibwa-Chippewa), decided to do something about the situation in 1994. They petitioned their state legislators to pass a law banning the use of the word *squaw* for state and local placenames. They wrote, "This word doesn't just put down women, but our whole culture, race and values. We suggest that the word *squaw* be replaced with *ikwe*, which means woman in Ojibwe or *nimaamaa*, meaning mother."<sup>24</sup> Within a few months Minnesota legislators voted overwhelmingly in support of the bill requiring the Commissioner of Natural Resources to change the name of geographic features containing the offensive word. The governor signed the bill into law April 18, 1995. Six other states followed suit within the next few years:

- In 1999 Montana legislators passed a law mandating that the 76 placenames with the term *squaw* be changed;
- In 2000 Maine and South Dakota legislators passed *squaw* name change bills;
- In 2001 Idaho, Oklahoma and Oregon legislatures banned the word in geographic placenames

The Arizona Board was well aware of the sensitivity of the issue, but they, like other state boards and the U.S. Board, did not view their role as proactively changing their state's namespace. Rather, they chose to make recommendations in response to specific proposals, allowing the State Legislature to make any wholesale changes. They agreed that should a suitable name be proposed to replace *Squaw Peak*, they would accept the name with three provisions: first, that protocol (in particular, the Commemorative Name Policy) be followed regarding the replacement name; second, that there not be a

wholesale *squaw* name replacement; and third, that the name selected be concomitant with the historical record.<sup>25</sup>

In 1998, shortly after the *Iron Mountain* petition was voted down, Susan Goldwater contacted then Chair Tim Norton about submitting a petition to rename the mountain *Goldwater Peak* to honor her recently deceased husband, Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater. Norton referred her to the Commemorative Name Policy, and told her to submit her petition in five years. In January of 1999 a group petitioned the Board to name the mountain *Phoenix Peak*, citing evidence from historian James Barney regarding the peak's earlier name. The Board voted against this name because as vice chair Linda Strock said, "*Phoenix Peak* really didn't have any support, particularly from the Indian community."<sup>26</sup>

When Private First Class Lori Piestewa, a Hopi woman from Tuba City, Arizona, was killed in action in Iraq on March 24, 2003, many felt the Board finally had an "elegant fix" to the troublesome naming situation. Piestewa was the first Native American woman to die in combat, a landmark event. Steve Russell (2003), a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma and president of the Texas Indian Bar Association, wrote, "According to *Women in the Military Service for America Memorial Foundation*, Piestewa is the third Indian woman to lose her life while on active duty, but the only one in this war and the only one to die in combat."

Within a few days the media fanned into flames the strong emotions surrounding *Squaw Peak*, the war in Iraq, and the young woman's tragic death. Ken Western, editor of *The Arizona Republic* editorial pages, met with staff members on April 7. Jennifer Dokes, an assistant editor, proposed honoring Piestewa by naming the peak after her, as had been suggested in several letters written to the editorial department. In response, Linda Valdez wrote an editorial urging that *Squaw Peak* be renamed to memorialize Piestewa. That same day E.J. Montini, an *Arizona Republic* columnist, wrote a tribute to Piestewa, "Who would call a warrior a 'squaw'?"<sup>27</sup>

Tim Norton, then chair of the Arizona board, received a call from state representative Sylvia Laughter, a Navajo and an Independent state representative from Baby Rocks, Arizona, inquiring about the process of changing the name to *Piestewa Peak*. He referred her to the Commemorative Name Policy as had been precedent and told her the Board would not hear her petition now, but would hear the petition in five years.<sup>28</sup>

Believing that the Derogatory Names Policy superseded the Commemorative Names Policy and that the board needed to hear the voice of Arizona's Native Americans, Laughter began an e-mail writing campaign. The Arizona Board, Chair Tim Norton, and the governor's office received several emails from Native Americans in support of the name change, a phenomenon Daniel B. Wood (1998) says is unique to Indian activism in the past decade. He writes, "Using cell phones, fax machines, and the Internet, a national Native American movement is coalescing, helping disparate tribes communicate, educate, mobilize, and stand up for themselves."

The unified front that Arizona Native Americans formed regarding the *Squaw Peak* issue impressed board members, especially when it culminated in a formal letter from the Inter-Tribal Council supporting the name *Piestewa Peak*. Explaining the impact of this letter, vice chair Linda Strock said, "The Indian community doesn't always move that quickly, and they can't always reach a consensus where they can have a formal written statement, which was to us very significant."<sup>29</sup> An additional landmark was the NCAI resolution supporting the renaming petition. Like the *squaw* resolution of 2000, it passed unanimously.<sup>30</sup>

Two days after Laughter's phone call Tim Norton received another phone call, this time from Nina Baker, a reporter from the *Arizona Republic*. He explained during the 30-minute interview that the Arizona Board's policy, like the U.S. Board's, was to wait five years before hearing a



commemorative name petition. He also told her the board considered names on a case-by-case basis, and that it would be more fitting to commemorate Piestewa by naming a landmark on the Hopi or Navajo reservations. She reported that Norton refused to place the governor's petition on the agenda for the upcoming meeting, refusing, in essence, to honor the Revised Statutes which say the Board must receive all petitions. Baker's article, which Norton said was filled with misquotes and inaccuracies, appeared in the April 10, 2003, *Arizona Republic*.<sup>31</sup>

Following the publication of this article, he and other Arizona Board staff members received phone calls from Victor Mendez, Arizona Department of Transportation Director, Dora Vasquez, Director of Boards and Commissions and several other government officials, demanding to know why he would not hear the name change proposal. He also received a phone call from Leroy Brady's secretary (Arizona Department of Transportation's Roadside Development). She told him Governor Janet Napolitano intended to bypass the Arizona Department of Transportation and by executive decision rename the freeway leading to *Squaw Peak*, State Road 51 (*Squaw Peak Parkway*), "*Lori Piestewa Memorial Parkway*" that same afternoon.<sup>32</sup>

#### The Governor Submits a Proposal

On Friday, April 11, 9:40 a.m., the governor's Chief Deputy for Boards and Commissions Mario Diaz called Norton. At issue was Norton's reported refusal to place the governor's petition on the agenda for the upcoming Board meeting. The events, told in Mr. Norton's words, unfolded as follows:

He told me I was to prepare a letter of resignation from the board; he also said it was an opportunity for me to save face, and I should use the excuse of time constraints as the reason for resigning .... I asked him why I was being asked to resign, and he told me it was because I was not representing the governor or her wishes. The words 'we will get rid of you' and 'we will

find a way to remove you' were used many times throughout the conversation."<sup>33</sup>

Later, General Counsel for the Governor Tim Nelson said of the conversation between Diaz and Norton, "The governor was not happy that Mario had called this guy. It was not a good situation. There wasn't anybody up here but Mario doing it on his own."<sup>34</sup> Diaz later told news reporters, "When a board member doesn't comply with the policies and procedures, I think I have a right to ask the individual to resign."<sup>35</sup> Mark Shaffer, staff writer for *Indian Country Today*, quoted the governor as saying, "I regret that my staff member dealt with Norton with a very heavy hand. It's not a way to deal with people that I sanction. It is something that will not happen again."<sup>36</sup> Mario Diaz, a staffer who had been working with Napolitano since 1993, subsequently resigned.

Three days after the phone call from Diaz (on Monday April 14) Governor Napolitano presented her application for a name-change from *Squaw Peak* to *Piestewa Peak*. She included the name proposal/name change application form and over a dozen letters of support from the leaders of regional tribes. In an unprecedented decision, vice chair Linda Strock placed the governor's petition on the agenda for the upcoming meeting, citing concerns about public perception.<sup>37</sup>

#### The Arizona State Naming Board Meets

On April 17, 2003, the quarterly Arizona State Board on Geographic and Historic Names meeting began with more than 150 people present and seven items on the agenda, including the *Piestewa Peak* name-change petition and officer elections. Tim Norton, Chair, and Richard Pinkerton, Chair Emeritus, both public members, did not attend the meeting.<sup>38</sup> Because of their absence, the board grappled with Bylaw #3, the bylaw that required at least one public member to be present in order for the board to conduct business. After some discussion, Theresa Craig, the state assistant attorney general who attended the meeting to provide legal advice, said the bylaw was not legally binding because Bylaw #3 contradicted

the Revised Statutes: "A majority of the members constitutes a quorum," a majority being 50% plus one. Bylaw #3 gave the public members weighted votes, rather than giving each member (regardless of status) only one vote. And, since the bylaws had never gone through the legislative process, they did not carry the weight of law, thus could not be enforced. Board representative from the Arizona State University Geography Department Dr. Martin Pasqualetti moved that Bylaw #3 be suspended just for this meeting so the Board could vote on the governor's name-change petition.

Eight officials spoke in favor of the proposal, as did 15 members of the public. Seven members of the public spoke in opposition. In Board discussion during the testimonies, Lloyd Clark, Board member, local historian and former *Phoenix Gazette* copy editor, said, "There are 29 or 30 other *squaw* placenames no one has objected to. The U.S. Board won't waive the five-year waiting period because ... it ... takes five years for the emotions and the passions to subside."

Acting Chair Strock then explained to the assembly the procedure for voting on the issue. Clark asked if the governor submitted the necessary paperwork; Strock told him she had, via email and prior to the meeting. Clark asked if this meeting met the requirements of Arizona's Open Meeting Law. Strock said the notice was published the day prior, and Pasqualetti added that the notice was sent out via email 24 hours prior, as was required by state law.

Pasqualetti attempted to "get things rolling a little bit" by discussing the importance of making exceptions in some circumstances.<sup>39</sup> Clark reiterated the importance of a five year wait, then read aloud Richard Pinkerton's letter of resignation as part of his argument against the governor's petition. Pinkerton wrote that the Board was created as a statutory board not subject to the governor's beck and call, and that the integrity of the Board had been compromised by both internal and external pressure to "satisfy a certain political venue." He

resigned, he wrote, because he refused to “sacrifice and prostitute [his] integrity ....”

Pasqualetti disagreed “strenuously” with Pinkerton (and Clark) and said the name needed to be changed, regardless of what or who said it. He said the governor’s petition was no different from a petition submitted by “a felon on death row.”<sup>40</sup>

Strock called for a vote, but Clark requested a roll call vote so each member could share reasons for voting as he or she planned to vote. Strock denied Clark’s request in the interest of time. After the vote (5 for, 1 against, 1 absent, 1 vacant position, due to Pinkerton’s resignation), Clark again asked for the opportunity to explain his vote. Pasqualetti told him, “You’ve already had your opportunity.” Clark persisted, and this time Strock deferred.

Lloyd Clark told the other members they had voted for the governor’s petition only because they were afraid for their jobs. His comments were published in several area newspapers. In subsequent interviews, Linda Strock denied this was the case, as did Dr. Pasqualetti, a university professor, who simply said, “Tenure has its benefits.”<sup>41</sup>

The next week, April 23, 2003, Tim Norton filed a legal challenge to the name change decision with the State Attorney’s office. He claimed that, first, the meeting violated Arizona’s Open Meeting Law; second, the board voted to suspend Bylaw #3 without the item being included on the agenda; and third, no public members had been present. In addition, both Norton and member Dale Steele said the Arizona Board routinely followed U.S. Board precedent in not voting on a naming petition at the same meeting the petition was presented. Nothing ever came of his challenge.<sup>42</sup>

Rep. Jack Jackson, Jr., and his father, Senator Jack Jackson, Sr., (Navajo), members of the Arizona legislature who had introduced legislation against the use of the word *squaw* in placenames (1991) House Bill 2333 and (2003) House Bill 2424, told the press the peak’s name had long been a source of

irritation to the state's 22 federally recognized tribes, and that the Arizona Board had made the right decision.<sup>43</sup> The National Congress of American Indians gave their unanimous support to the name change in the form of Resolution # PHX-03-017 at their Mid-Year Session on June 18, 2003, stating that the continued use of *squaw* for placenames is "an example of disrespect for and racism toward Native women, who are often the political and social leaders of our communities." The NCAI also urged the Arizona Board to retain the names of *Piestewa Peak* and *Lori Piestewa Memorial Freeway* "in perpetuity."<sup>44</sup>

To assuage concerns regarding the legality of the April 17<sup>th</sup> board meeting, the Board convened for their second quarterly meeting on July 6, 2003, to vote again for the name change to *Piestewa Peak*, thus waiving the five-year waiting period. After more public comment and Board discussion, they voted unanimously to adopt the name *Piestewa Peak*. In response to a petition, newly elected Chair Linda Strock then asked for a vote to change the new name back to *Squaw Peak*, which failed.

Navajo and member of the Navajo County Board of Supervisors Jessie Thompson commended the Arizona Board's actions, saying it was important that bureaucrats not "become so wrapped up in their rules that they fail in their mission."<sup>45</sup> The mission of the Arizona Board was to eliminate derogatory names, name duplicates, and names originally authorized on the basis of incorrect information, all of which may or may not have been the case with *Squaw Peak*.<sup>46</sup> Board member Martin Pasqualetti defended the board's actions, saying, "We're not violating the laws of gravity here. Do we have the power to make this change? Yes. Should we make this change? It [was] the right thing to do."<sup>47</sup>

In summary, neither the Commemorative Names Policy nor the Derogatory Names Policy is included in the Arizona Revised Statutes, therefore the Arizona State Board on

Geographic and Historic Names was not legally bound to honor either policy. Even if they had been, the situation the board faced was the classic Catch-22: honoring one policy would void the other, and vice versa. Because the board established in 1998 that the word *squaw* did meet derogatory name determinant criteria, the decision to waive the five years required by the Commemorative Naming Policy in 2003 was not only justified, but morally expedient.<sup>48</sup>

That the Arizona Board made the right decision continues to be the source of acrimonious debate. The U.S. Board informed the Arizona Board they would uphold the five-year waiting period and would reconsider the petition in 2008.<sup>49</sup> Efforts to strip the mountain of its controversial name continue within Arizona, and local map maker, James Willinger (president of Wide World of Maps) says for the next five years his Arizona maps will show both names for the peak, *Squaw* and *Piestewa*, with the word *squaw* in bold and in a slightly larger font, then a hyphen and *Piestewa* in plain text.<sup>50</sup> The dual name reflects the racial and social division now even more evident in Phoenix, and the controversy shows little sign of a quick or satisfactory resolution.

### Acknowledgements

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### Endnotes

1. Like the U.S. Board, the AZ Board has members from the Department of Commerce and the State Library. They also have one member each from the State Land Department, the Arizona Historical Society, the Department of Economic Security, and from a geography department at one of Arizona's three state universities.

2. Dale Steele. 2004. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. March 13, 2004. ADOT Research Department, Phoenix.
3. Dale Steele, E-mail discussion, 10 January 2004.
4. Roger Payne, E-mail discussion, 2 February 2004.
5. AZSGHN Meeting minutes: April 2, 1997.
6. U.S. Board of Geographic and Historic Names Principles, Policies and Procedures: Domestic Geographic Names. <<http://geonames.usgs.gov/pppdgn.html>>
7. U.S. Board of Geographic and Historic Names Principles, Policies and Procedures: Domestic Geographic Names. <<http://geonames.usgs.gov/pppdgn.html>>
8. AZBGHN May 23, 1990 Meeting Minutes
9. AZBGHN August 7, 1991 Meeting Minutes
10. Dale Steele. 2004. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. March 13, 2004. ADOT Research Department, Phoenix.
11. AZBGHN November 6, 1991 Meeting minutes.
12. AZBGHN February 5, 1992, and May 13, 1992, Meeting minutes.
13. AZBGHN November 11, 1993 Meeting minutes.
14. Tim Norton. 2003. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. September 9, 2003. Arizona State Historical Society, Tempe.
15. AZBGHN November 11, 1993 Meeting minutes.
16. Dale Steele. 2004. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. January 30, 2004. ADOT Research Department, Phoenix.
17. Dale Steele. 2004. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. January 30, 2004. ADOT Research Department, Phoenix.
18. AZBGHN September 24, 1997 Meeting minutes.
19. *Arizona Placenames, Will C. Barnes' Arizona Placenames and X Marks the Spot*. Byrd Howell Granger updated Will C. Barnes' book in 1960 because she felt had he lived long enough, based on his handwritten notes in the original *Arizona Placenames*, he would have made several updates himself. Instead she took the changes and additions of nearly a quarter of a century and compiled them into a new book she entitled *Will C. Barnes' Arizona Placenames*. Her own book *X Marks the*

*Place* (1983) includes much of the same information, but again, with many updates because of the population surge.

20. Taken from a cutting of a *Phoenix Gazette* article, possibly 1952, *Squaw Peak* files,

Arizona State Library Map Room,

21. Copy kept in *Squaw Peak* files, Arizona State Library Map Room.

22. H-Amindian@h-net.msu.edu, March 12, 2003, American Indian list serve, Arizona State University Library, American Indian Section.

23. American Indian Movement website, <<http://members.aol.com/Nowacumig/aim.html>>

24. "Respect Native Women - Stop using the S-word" *Indian Country Today*, February 28, 2001.

<http://www.indiancountry.com/?2704> "Students making a Difference" *Native Monthly Reader*, Volume 11, Issue 6. Academic Year 1999-2000.

25. Tim Norton. 2003. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. September 9, 2003. Arizona State Historical Society, Tempe.

26. Linda Stock. 2003. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. August 13. Arizona Dept. of Economic Security, Phoenix.

27. Benge, George. "Phoenix Editorial, Column Inspired Name Change." *Gannett News Watch*. April 25, 2003.

<<http://www.gannett.com/go/newswatch/2003/april/nw0425-3.htm>>

28. Norton, Tim. 2003. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. September 9, 2003. Arizona State Historical Society, Tempe.

29. Linda Strock. 2003. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. August 13. Arizona Dept. of Economic Security, Phoenix.

30. Nat'l Congress of American Indians Resolution #PHX-03-017 passed 2003 Mid-Year session.

31. Tim Norton. 2003. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. September 9, 2003. Arizona State Historical Society, Tempe.

32. AZBGHN members discussed the parkway's name change during the April 17, 2003 meeting, but ADOT made the decision to change the name, not Governor Napolitano,



because roadway names are under the jurisdiction of ADOT, not the AZBGHN or the governor's office. (April 17, 2003 AZBGHN meeting transcript)

33. Tim Norton. 2003. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. September 9, 2003. Arizona State Historical Society, Tempe.

34. Tim Nelson. 2003. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. August 8. Arizona State Capitol, Governor's office, Phoenix.

35. Sherwood, Robbie, Judy Nichols and Tom Zoellner. "Arm-twisting before peak vote." *Arizona Republic*. April 19, 2003: 1.

36. "Controversy stirs questions over naming of peak" *Indian Country Today*. April 28, 2003. <http://www.indiancountry.com/?1051535354>

37. Strock explained, "So, given the situation, we chose to go ahead and put it on the agenda, rather than waiting for the next scheduled meeting. Then you get into the perception issues, i.e., are we using this excuse of timing to really refuse to do what the law says: we will receive and evaluate *all* of the proposals ... this had become a sensitive issue. If we hadn't had all of the media coverage, if there had been a calmer environment, it would have been a lot easier to say we should wait for the next meeting. I didn't feel pressured by the governor, no. Did I feel pressured because of the notoriety of the issue, or the sensitivity of the issue? Absolutely, and I think all of the members did ... but the law says, the Board shall receive and evaluate all requests" Strock interview notes. August 13. Arizona Dept. of Economic Security, Phoenix.

38. Linda Strock said, "He [Pinkerton] signed his resignation at 2:00 which was supposed to be the beginning of the meeting and left. He didn't make any comment in terms of why he did it in that fashion. We were in a bit of quandary because all of a sudden we didn't have any public members." Strock was told by State Librarian Gladys Ann Wells that "there could be an issue in terms of whether or not Tim [Norton] was going to be willing or available to conduct a meeting." Dora Vasquez, Director of Boards and Commissions told her to put the governor's petition on the agenda, and Strock chaired the

- April 17 meeting because Norton did not show up nor did he call to tell her what his intentions were. Strock interview notes. August 13. Arizona Dept. of Economic Security, Phoenix.
39. Martin Pasqualetti. 2003. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. September 4. Arizona State University, Tempe.
40. Martin Pasqualetti. 2003. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. September 4. Arizona State University, Tempe.
41. Martin Pasqualetti. 2003. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. September 4. Arizona State University, Tempe.
42. Tim Norton. 2003. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. September 9, 2003. Arizona State Historical Society, Tempe.
43. Dale Steele. 2004. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. January 30, 2004. ADOT Research Department, Phoenix.
44. Jack Jackson. 2003. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. October 16. Arizona State Capitol legislative office, Phoenix. Rep. Jackson introduced a *squaw* name ban bill in the 2003 legislative session, but the bill failed in committee.
45. National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PHX-03-017 passed 2003 Mid-Year session.
46. Sherwood, Robbie. "It's Official: Squaw Peak now Piestewa Peak." *The Arizona Republic: Online Print Edition*. April 18, 2003. 1 5 J u l y 2 0 0 3 .  
<<http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/news/articles/041piestewa18.html>>
47. U.S. Board of Geographic and Historic Names Principles, Policies and Procedures: Domestic Geographic Names. <<http://geonames.usgs.gov/pppdgn.html>>
48. Martin Pasqualetti. 2003. Interview by Wendy Kelleher. September 4. Arizona State University, Tempe.
49. Staff. "Board Votes 5-1 to Rename Peak." *Arizona Capitol Times*, April 18, 2003: 33.
50. Roger Payne correspondence with AZBGHN, Julie Hoff, staff librarian.
51. Summary Minutes, Squaw Peak Park and Recreation Area Naming Advisory Committee, November 13, 2003.

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<<http://search.csmonitor.com/durable/1998/02/19/us/us.html>>