

Dear President Kupchella,

It means a great deal to me that the University of North Dakota has offered me an honorary degree. I would like to thank the professors and members of the administration who worked so hard for my nomination, and also the trustees for this great sign of support.

The University of North Dakota has educated members of my family, and members of my tribe, the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa. I am proud of my family's association with this fine institution. I would be only too happy to accept this degree, were it not for the UND endorsed logo. The Fighting Sioux logo has alienated many good and hardworking tribal people, as well as decent folk who do not like to see others denigrated as sports symbols.

I know all of the arguments about the logo inside out, as do you, President Kupchella, but I would just like to add these comments. The Fighting Sioux logo has become a locus for hatred. By holding onto this antiquated symbol, UND tacitly endorses biased and racist behavior against the very people I believe you would, truly, rather honor and know as the complex people we are.

The University of North Dakota could provide great leadership and further the cause of human understanding, as well as take a step toward acknowledging the first people of the Dakotas, by removing this symbol and declaring peace. No more Fighting Sioux. Let us stop using American Indians as mascots the way animals are used.

Again, I regret having to having turn down this wonderful honor. My family regrets this too. I really do wish that I could accept.

Sincerely Yours,

Louise Erdrich