

Indigenous Values Initiatives
Statement in Support of Lyle Thompson and
All Haudenosaunee Lacrosse Players

We were horrified by the racist events at the Wing v. Swarm game on 12 January 2019, and know it is urgent that more non-Haudenosaunee people know more about the Indigenous roots of the game. The Haudenosaunee Wooden Stick Festival 2019 (WSF-19), your box clinics and masters tournament are dedicated to fostering respect through education. **Sponsorship of this annual festival will demonstrate your commitment to changing the culture of lacrosse and sports in general. We need your support! Below are the levels of sponsorship. We are also open to in-kind donations.**

[Indigenous Values Initiative](#) (IVI) is a non-profit, 501c3 organization that sponsors the WSF-19 and is closely aligned with the Onondaga Nation leadership, which is the Central Fire of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We are led by Dr. Philip P. Arnold, Chair of the Religion Department at Syracuse University and core faculty in Native American and Indigenous Studies. His class “Religion and Sports” is an extremely popular humanities class based on teaching the roots of lacrosse. His book “The Gift of Sports: Indigenous Ceremonial Dimensions of the Games We Love” has been read by thousands of students. Sandy Bigtree is an enrolled Mohawk at Akwesasne and renown performer in the Syracuse area. Phil and Sandy’s twin boys, Clay and Kroy are enrolled members of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin and have played box lacrosse with the Onondaga Redhawks since the age of 3. They now play with the Peterborough Timbermen in the ALL and are students at Syracuse University. The WSF-19 had a booth at LaxCon’19 in Philly last weekend. Attached is the event flyer. We all went to the Wings game too and were horrified by the treatment of the Thompsons near the end of the game, but we also know from personal experience that this is not an isolated incident. Many of our Haudenosaunee youth with braids are treated this way. It is urgent that the lacrosse community address the issue of cultural ignorance.

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