

To my Native people
Aho, dear brothers and sisters of the
Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians:
Amongst our great ancestors and
grandfather, "the Creator," to all the new

babiesandchildrengrowingup,remember
one thing, "We are Native."
Striveanddon'tallowyourcommunity
to fail you. I've been in prison five years
and away from my reservation for seven

years. There's no place like home. Bless all
of my people and all in my prayers.
Hereismyinfoifanyonewantstomake
contact: Lakota Bayya #109941, IMSI A-2
#61 B, PO Box 51, Boise, ID 83707.

Respectfully,
Bayya, Lakota Cole III
Remember: I am a Siletz Tribal
member and I am proud to be a "Native"
and the son of Robert Lee Bayya.

Public school named after Native Olympian Billy Mills, becomes first in history

It's the only public school to bear the name of a Native public figure. Kids say: 'I go to Billy Mills Middle School!'

By Rhonda LeValdo, *Indian Country Today*; first published Nov. 5, 2018

Supporters, students, teachers and the gold medal-winning Olympian Billy Mills gathered in Lawrence, Kansas, on Friday to celebrate a historic day in honor of Billy Mills Middle School as the only public school to bear the name of a Native American public figure.

The day was a re-dedication ceremony to commemorate the official name change of South Middle School to become Billy Mills Middle School. The name was put in place over the summer, Friday's dedication makes it official.

In February of 2018, the Lawrence school board voted unanimously to change the name of South Middle School to honor Native Americans and honor the success of the 1964 Oglala Lakota Olympic Gold Medalist Billy Mills. Friday also marked the school's 50th anniversary.



Courtesy photos by Rhonda LeValdo

In February of 2018, the Lawrence school board voted unanimously to change the name of South Middle School to honor Native Americans and honor the success of the 1964 Oglala Lakota Olympic Gold Medalist Billy Mills.

At the commemoration, Mills spoke on the Doctrine of Discovery, the Civil Rights Movement and the Jim Crow laws.

The day before, when Mills answered a question from a student about racism, he said it was a question that brought him to tears but that it needed to be asked and talked about.

"We need to empower our young people. As citizens of Tribal nations, citizens of states, citizens of the United States, we need to come together and carve out the future for our children. As an elder in my Tribe, elders have vision and young people have dreams. I have a vision for your middle school to become one of the most empowering middle schools. I have a dream that your young people dreams can and will come true. We turn on the news every day and feel the pain. The racism today - we know what has caused it - which provides us the answer on how to solve it if we are willing. Our country is on the brink. Do we develop it to become a full-fledged democracy or do we withdraw and become a full-fledged autocracy. How do we put this in our educational system and empower our children?"

"Your community can be one of the leaders in fulfilling the sacredness of democracy. I believe that can happen, I believe it can happen in my lifetime," said Mills.



Olympian Billy Mills, supporters, students, teachers and the gold medal-winning Olympian Billy Mills gathered in Lawrence, Kansas, on Friday to celebrate a historic day in honor of Billy Mills Middle School as the only public school to bear the name of a Native American public figure.

School board member Carol Cadue-Blackwood, Kickapoo, initiated the move to change the name of the school from South Middle School to Billy Mills Middle School after learning about the high dropout rates of Native students from her coworker Jennifer Attocknie, the Lawrence Native American Student Success coordinator.

"She found out that they said, 'No one cared about them and they were invisible.' That always stuck with me. After we successfully changed the name, I spoke with a pediatrician at Haskell Health Center and she said she noticed the kids were more positive. They say, 'I go to Billy Mills Middle School.'"



Outside the Billy Mills Middle School in Lawrence, Kansas

"Billy, thanks for letting us use your name. We all see how one kid can make a change and that was Billy," said Cadue-Blackwood, who revealed another reason for the name change was to acknowledge the gift of land from Haskell to the city of Lawrence for the schools.

As part of the commemoration and acknowledgement to the success of the life of Billy Mills is a mural on the wall painted by Oglala Lakota artist Isaiah Stewart. The mural chronicles the life of Billy Mills from his early life on the reservation to his eventual success at the Olympics.



As part of the commemoration and acknowledgement to the success of the life of Billy Mills is a mural on the wall painted by Oglala Lakota artist Isaiah Stewart.

The Lawrence Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Anthony Lewis, also expressed his thoughts. "This is an amazing day in the city of the Lawrence. I am extremely humbled and proud to be a part of this celebration."

Jerry Tuckwin, Prairie Band Potawatomi, is a Haskell alumni who went to school with Mills. "He was a hero for us little guys. He would always say prayers for us. He was an inspiration. Billy was four years older and we looked up to him. When he went to KU we were inspired again. I am really happy to see them give him this recognition. It is way overdue, especially in this diverse community."

Mills ended his speech by thanking the Lawrence community.

"Patricia and I are thrilled and humbled to be a part of your community I spent nine years in your community. Your community is our community. It was where a dream was born for me."