

# Former Stanford mascot dies

## 'Prince Lightfoot' hoped to return as school symbol

By Leslie Saul  
Staff writer

Former Stanford Indian mascot Harry Delmar Williams, who hoped one day to return and dance at a football halftime show, died in a car accident Sunday at the age of 64.

Williams, who was known as "Prince Lightfoot" to generations of Stanford fans, was driving through an uncontrolled intersection in Crescent City when his car was struck on the right side by a sedan, according to California Highway Patrol Officer Johnny Jones. The exact cause of the accident is still under investigation.

Williams died before he arrived at Sutter Coast Hospital, according to Nadine Johns, a nursing supervisor, who cited the cause of death as "blunt trauma."

A Yurok Indian, Williams served as Stanford's unofficial mascot for 21 years until then University President Richard Lyman and the Stanford Student Senate decided to drop the Indian symbol in 1972 because of protests by Native American students, who called the nickname "demeaning."

But Williams always maintained that his portrayal of the Stanford Indian was not derogatory. Williams, who was outspoken on Native American issues, saw his position as a "great boost to the Indian people," according to Jack Lindow, a Stanford alumnus and close friend of Williams.

Lindow said Williams used his prominence as the Stanford mascot to bring recognition to Native Americans. He added that Williams inspired Stanford football teams to do their best. By invoking Native Americans' struggle to survive in America, Lindow said Williams hoped to encourage players to "reach inside . . . to overcome obstacles."

Some time after the University decided to change the school nickname, Williams was quoted as saying, "I thought it was wrong for them to make a decision about my position as an Indian or a person without even



Courtesy News and Publications

Harry Delmar Williams, shown here as "Prince Lightfoot" performing at the 1968 Big Game, died in a car accident Sunday. Williams had served as the Stanford Indian mascot for 21 years before the University adopted the Cardinal nickname.

asking me."

Outside of the stadium, Williams served as chair of the California Rural Indian Health Board, consultant to the U.S. Department of Interior-Indian Affairs and vice chair of the National Indian Health Board. He was also appointed director of the California Indian Assistance Project by then California Gov. Ronald Reagan.

In addition, Williams appeared several times before Congress to represent Native American concerns.

The decision to drop the Indian as the Stanford mascot angered many students, who tried

to recall the decision with two unsuccessful referendum votes in that year.

The University has firmly retained its decision to remain the Cardinal.

Having no formal affiliation with the University, Williams first agreed to perform at the Big Game rally in 1951 in exchange for two Big Game tickets.

Williams made his last official appearance as the Indian at the 1972 Rose Bowl, where he was carried off the field after quarterback Jim Plunkett and the Stanford Indians defeated the Michigan Wolverines.